

THEORY ‘ESC’ & the Intercultural Communication of Values

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Abstract: Like ‘Buying the news and not the paper ...’ an exploratory study which describes a pattern of newspaper consumption that gives meaning to an otherwise ordinary activity, a pattern of communal cultural consumption and a phenomenon that reveals a unique socio-cultural reality of the larger Nigerian environment, this paper will attempt to situate some other otherwise ordinary activity as a Cultural Product that promotes Intercultural Communication of Values.

Within the context of this paper, these otherwise ordinary day-to-day activities are viewed as rather puissant agents of 21st Century contemporary political power dynamics. They include: Gossip, Rumour and Religion - i.e. – all, potent agents of political propaganda; and as such, ‘Established Structures of Community’ (‘ESC’). Put differently, information and experiences drawn from our day-to-day lives create meanings for political issues as they relate to our daily lives and the decisions we make as citizens.

Using as evidence some common experiences from Nigeria, post-apartheid Republic of South Africa and the United States of America (USA) as its units of analysis, this paper argues that Gossip, Rumour and Religion are not simply Cultural Products, but also, the Intercultural Communication of values; as Gossip, that ‘small-talk’ often viewed as ordinary activity soon balloons into Rumour – normative or suspect evidence that gives meaning to the decisions we make.

The paper concludes that, the general objective of the use of gossip, rumour and religion as tools of political propaganda has always been to convince as many people as are targeted; and that is what qualifies the ‘ESC’ as Intercultural Communication of Values.

Key Words: Cultural Product, Intercultural, Communication, Values, “ESC”.

Note: The original version of this article was simply a verbal presentation at the 9th International Conference on Intercultural Communication ICIC2017.

I. INTRODUCTION:

‘Buying the News & not the Paper...’ [1] is an exploratory study which describes a pattern of newspaper consumption that gives meaning to an otherwise ordinary activity. It is a pattern of communal cultural consumption and a phenomenon that reveals a unique socio-cultural reality of the larger Nigerian environment. It explains a readership behavior which

radically enriches and shape human energy into a ‘structured feeling’ of gratified usage of media product.

For a better understanding of the concept of “Buying the News ...” it is prudential to step back in time to capture the origin of the practice of newspaper purchasing, which, puts the practice as part of the emergence of consumerism; whose functions include, guiding new consumers in the choices they make.

As I have argued elsewhere [2], as against the idea of sharing, borrowing and buying second-hand, actual first hand purchase of newspapers dates back to the end of 19th century England. It is arguable therefore that over time, different practices and patterns of consumption may have obtained in different domains.

But, ‘buying the news and not the paper...’ which carries the news, as a concept, is different and perhaps in comparative terms, relatively new. Thus, in what this author considers a formative (if not seminal) work [3], I have tried a definition of ‘Buying the news and not the paper...’ or ‘read and return’ or even ‘Swap’; all of which, within the context of my exploratory study of the phenomenon simply refers to a communal social practice as well as the economics in the consumption of a cultural product - i. e. - the newspaper.

This paper, as in ‘buying the news and not the paper...’ attempts to equally, situate what this author considers as some other otherwise ordinary activities as Cultural Product that promotes Intercultural Communication of Values. These otherwise ordinary day-to-day activities include: **Gossip, Rumour and Religion**; all, potent agents of political propaganda that are ordinarily, common-place day-to-day activities.

These otherwise ordinary day-to-day activities viewed by interpretive experts as puissant agents of 21st Century contemporary political power dynamics are as such, ‘Established Structures of Community’ (‘ESC’) [4]. Thus, put differently, information and experiences drawn from these day-to-day common-place activities create meanings for political issues as they relate to our daily lives and the decisions we make as citizens.

The ninth edition of the International Conference on Intercultural Communication (9th ICIC 2017) with its theme as *One Belt One Road Initiative* anchored that conference's debate around *Multiculturalism & Intercultural Communication* [5]. In our world where 'globalism coexists with anti-globalism and cultural pluralism with cultural separatism', the Conference inspired the continuing debate between different thoughts and ideas while exploring the wisdom on peaceful coexistence and free communication.

If one were to isolate and x-ray '... exploring the wisdom on peaceful coexistence' part of the debate, my initial reaction will be a debate based on the uncertainties surrounding the idea of 'exploring the wisdom on peaceful coexistence' and the reasons are so obvious; with the communication of 'hate speeches', 'fake news' and threats of Nuclear war on parade. However, I am rather certain with the 'free communication' quotient of the debate, and that, is what this paper is about - The 'ESC' as Intercultural Communication of Values.

Explaining the "ESC":

The Established Structures of Community (ESC) refer to those ordinarily common-place day-to-day activities that we, as citizens, engage in without quite often, realizing the enormous influence they exert in our lives – the decisions we make, the opinions we make of others and of course, our general value judgment. Thus, they are 'Established' (for as long as we can recall), 'Structures' (not as in physical structures but, perhaps subconsciously configured as part of our complex existence and possess' the quality of being organized as part of the composition or formation of our socialization process) of 'Community' (our environment, our society, considered collectively, with its common interest, attitude etc.).

Again, 'Structures' here may as well have been mediums, but it is 'structures' in the sense that the word is used anthropologically, if not sociologically, to emphasize the basic relationships that lie underneath these communal mediums of information exchange.

My romance with the 'ESC' began with a 2006 study [6] - *Agenda-Setting: The Neglected Role of some Agents of Power* ...an attempt at declaring a proposition of great utility, the Media's Agenda-Setting hypothesis a fractured paradigm on the one-hand and proposing on the other, what I refer to (in my study) as the "Established Structures of Community", as a tool in setting the 'territorial agenda'. These other neglected agents of power referred to here include Gossip, Rumour and religion.

However, with advent of the 21st Century technological wonder of the electronic super-high-way with its associated

Internet and Social Media (all by-products of New Media phenomenon), and of course our frequent travels to other lands, these other neglected agents of power no longer only set the territorial agenda but, also, the global agenda as puissant agents of 21st Century contemporary political power dynamics. Putatively, the ESC, has not only acquired a diaspora status but equally, a cultural product of note and value.

The 'ESC' – A Critical Discourse:

Two of the units of analysis here – Gossip and Rumour- had been used in a previous article within a different conceptual framework to demonstrate their potency in setting the territorial agenda. They are here again used to confirm and perhaps as added impetus emphasizing their roles as communal mediums of information exchange that has acquired universal reputation as channels in the communication of value.

Gossip:

Gossip is the guilty pleasure of talking about other people; but it is more than just idle talk.

Nicholson [7] opines that, gossip is also how people arrange their world as social animals; as humanity becomes a beehive of communication, gossip sometimes illuminates while at other times 'it just burns'.

Gossip is the human equivalent of social grooming among primates and as such essential to our 'social, psychological and even physical well-being' [8]. Gossip is a deep-seated human instinct which over time has acquired some pejorative connotations, but its origin is said to have been derived from the neutral if not positive term -. 'God-sibb'; simply referring to 'a person related to one in God, a close friend or companion'. Fox [9] asserts that, whatever may be the moral status of gossip, there is some evidence to show that far from being a trivial pastime, it performs a function that is vital as well as socially therapeutic.

Thus this author advance, as I had argued elsewhere [10], that, within the purview of this paper, gossip is not only a major source of information but also a binding force. According to Nicholson, it facilitates relationship-building, group-bonding, clarification of social position and status, reinforcing shared values, conflict resolution and so on.

Although opinions [11] have it that fragmented lifestyle, pervasive competitive striving and rampant individualism can drive gossip down a poisonous channel, this author citing Nicholson, confirm that, '...anyone who has lived in a small

community knows that gossip is something that people who share a collective identity do naturally’.

Yet, gossip which Rosnow & Fine [12], simply describe as a transitory behaviour, small talk or a pre-occupation with the ‘nonessential’ has acquired a global status of relevance; gossip is no more the rural dweller’s mere idle talk or community trivia.

Rather, gossip within the context of this paper has value as a social resource – thanks to Citizen Journalism and the Social Media -; it has become talk with a social purpose in which people find expression for the inequality of stratified class system.

II. RUMOUR:

Rumour as a concept lacks a precise definition both in the study of the humanities as in the social sciences. But the general consensus amongst scholars and experts of different hues is that rumour involves information/messages whose veracity is quite often notoriously difficult to confirm. Rumour, then, can be referred to as communication constructed on unverified information and thus hearsay, normative or suspect evidence [13].

Rumour is generally associated with the negative connotation of falsehood. Harsin [14] in his examination of several key transformations in mediated American politics that promise the efficacy of rumour as well as encourage its use as a privileged communication strategy confirms rumour as a claim whose truthfulness is in doubt; adding that, even if its ideological or partisan origins and intents are clear, rumour’s sources often remain unclear.

But, whereas other interpretive experts [15] corroborates Harsin’s view and defines rumor as a persuasive proposition that lacks ‘secure standards of evidence’, Ellis [16] observes that some rumours eventually turn out to be not just part of the truth but accurate, providing a voice for the poor and powerless; and quite often serving as a channel this author elsewhere [17] refers to as, ‘deviant communication’; that is, the timed release of unusual piece of information concerning an opponent – especially in political contests.

Rumour is as old as human society itself and has been a subject of interest for as long as it has flourished; arousing in

interpretive experts and scholars amongst other interest groups, diverse viewpoints, equaled by diverse areas of inquiry. And, although rumour is usually associated with false and damaging accusations against its victim and quite often dismissed by victims as bits and pieces of lies sometimes interjected with half-truths, contemporary rumour is curious enough not to be viewed from the perspective of lies interjected with half-truths. Rumour is now laced in suggestive language, carefully timed and filtered to: ‘whom it may concern’.

Gossip and rumour are like Siamese twins; always going together and thus the saying that: if talk had feet and could walk, gossip has wings and flies. So, like its Siamese half, Rumour has also acquired a global status of relevance; a cultural product of value, serving various purposes, including that of ‘Raw Material of the Media’ [18].

III. RELIGION:

Religion (treated as a ‘neglected agent of power’ elsewhere [19]), which the German Philosopher – Karl Marx – described as ‘opium of the masses’ for the purposes of this paper is our third established Structure of society - ‘ESC’. Religion is not here used as defined by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary [20], that is, the belief in and worship of a super human controlling power, especially, of a personal God or gods. The word is neither used here as a particular system of faith and worship nor as in interest followed with great devotion; rather, religion is here used to represent the enormous and propelling influence places of worship exert on followers.

Religion to a lot of people is a common-place regular activity for worshipers to atone for mistakes made as well as supplicate. But like the other Established Structures of Community, religion is no more as simple a common-place activity as wanted. It too had acquired a global status of a cultural product for the communication of love or hate.

That is why the ‘Preacher man’ and the Imam will turn an otherwise puritan sermon into a political speech, an agitation or even a revolutionary platform. Hence on Sunday’s Christian worshipers come out looking dazed, thoroughly bombarded with information and ideas that evoke love or hate; their Muslim counterparts on the other hand come out of the ‘jumat’ prayers on Fridays sober or charged for “Jihad”.

Indeed, the Established Structures of Community, which is Gossip, Rumour and Religion within the context of this paper are tools, instruments and even channels of propaganda for the intercultural communication of ‘values’.

‘ESC’ as Instruments/Channels of Communication of Value.

Again, the word value is applied in this paper to buttress the point that, in a world where globalism coexists with anti-globalism and cultural pluralism with cultural separatism, what may pass for a culture of value in a particular community may not necessarily be of any value in another. However, that a culture of value somewhere is valueless elsewhere would equally, in no measurable way neither stop, deter nor even affect the flow of the Intercultural Communication of that value; because, we live in a globalized village where modern technologies of communication and frequent travels hardly understand the difference of globalism from anti-globalism and cultural pluralism from anti-pluralism.

Indeed information and experiences drawn from our engagements in ordinarily common day-to-day activities like gossiping, rumour mongering or religion as in active participation at places of worship create meanings for political issues as they relate to our daily lives and the decisions we make as citizens.

Thus this author argues that Gossip, Rumour and Religion are not simply Cultural Products, but, rather agents, tools and channels of Intercultural Communication of values; as Gossip, that 'small-talk' often viewed as ordinary activity soon balloons into Rumour – a normative or suspect evidence that quite often gives meaning to the opinions/decisions we make.

Using Nigeria, post-apartheid Republic of South Africa (RSA) and the United States of America (USA) as its units of analysis, this paper bellow herewith, demonstrate with some historical as well as anecdotal evidence that gossip, rumour and religion as the 'ESC' are vital agents in the communication of Intercultural values.

But, perhaps, having earlier attempted an explanation of the 'ESC' in this paper, it is essential at this juncture to situate our subject of discourse properly, by attempting to also establish a relationship or commonality in or between the key components or concepts of our discourse. These include: (a) Intercultural (b) Communication and (c) Values.

Culture is synonymous with civilization and ethos. That is, it deals with the way of life of a people - their customs, ethnicity, traditions and belief system; their philosophy, principles and values.

Communication readily brings to mind the ideas of 'message' and 'contact'. It refers to interaction, exchange, transmission and announcement amongst other examples. Communication could also mean different things, as in letter writing, making contact through the telephone lines etc. But, basically, communication within the context of this paper simply put, is a means of sending and receiving messages (which includes travels, anyway).

Value (s) on the other hand is associated with significance, worth, importance and usefulness. There are indeed common grounds between culture and value or values in the sense that

value could also mean standard of behavior or better still, principles.

With the above description of culture, communication and value, Intercultural communication of values thus refers to the anthropological understanding of how people of different linguistic and cultural origins communicate, act and perceive the world. But for starters, here is one Nigerian example of the 'ESC' as harbinger of communication of cultural value, especially, as this one relates to gossip and rumour emanating from a place of worship, its effect and outcome in an electoral contest.

The Priest, the Goat and the 'Guber' [21]

In 1998, during the electioneering campaign to return Nigeria to the fold of democratic nations, rumour spread in one of the South-South states of the country against a gubernatorial candidate – the 'Guber' - who also doubled as a priest in a white garment religious sect. The 'Guber' was rumoured to have named his male and bearded white goat after a prominent family in the area, with the prefix 'Elder' - i.e. - an elder of the sect; and, the same goat was rumoured to have died just before elections and was accorded a human burial by its owner - the 'Guber' - and the white garment sect as a 'church elder'.

Rumours of the 'church elder' and his human burial (true or false), transformed into gossip/rumour and soon after became a political issue. The 'Guber' not only lost at the polls; he was also labeled as being 'fetish', 'anti-Christ' and had ever since, gone politically very quiet.

In an unsophisticated traditional environment like the one in context, the people take serious exception to what they consider to be untraditional or cultural taboos. Untraditional or cultural taboos such as, not just giving an animal human identity but a known and localized prominent name with the prefix 'elder', ordinarily, amounts to committing political suicide for an aspirant to political office.

The 'ESC' as Instruments/Channels of Intercultural Communication of Values:

This paper view the 'ESC' as cultural products as well as purveyors or harbingers of cultural value, in the sense that what may have begun somewhere as a common-place gossip snowballs into an embroidered rumour carrying with it, some social value; and thereby, promoting some type of cultural convergence.

Gossip, rumour and religion (religion of all hues) is not the exclusive preserve of any particular linguistic or cultural origin. They have existed for as long as primates could recall but may have been limited in its diffusion process because, until the advent of 'new media' and its heterogeneous

audience, the dispersal of such ‘socialization information’ that gives meaning and voice as we have it today was limited.

Today, no matter how remote or culturally backward a people might be, so long as there is access to telephony, whatever trends there will trend elsewhere. So it is that wherever one visits these days, the fad for the contemporary male seems to be, wearing the Osama binLaden facial beard. This effect of intercultural communication of values is not noticeable with just fashion but more so with popular political culture; as in ‘carpet crossing’ and popular judicial pronouncements, especially in developing countries.

For example, available information have it that the nullification of results of the most recently conducted presidential elections in Kenya began as a common-place gossip that the winner, incumbent president Uhuru Kenyatta did not win the ballot fair and square. That common-place gossip turned into a rumour that the outcome of that elections will be annulled; and it came to pass that within minutes of the cancellation of the results by that country’s Supreme Court, the social media was awash with texts and images of a section of jubilant Kenyans.

The result of the above was that almost instantly, Nigerians were also asking the judiciary in that country, to take a cue from the Kenyan experience, and this is one example of the Established Structures of Community functioning as agent or channel of Intercultural Communication of values.

Perhaps, the veracity of the ‘ESC’ as purveyors of information with cultural relevance even at the local level is worthy of note. In a 2006 [22] study, though within a different setting but relevant for the purposes of this paper, produced some interesting results worthy of note. Of the 1,000 Nigerians asked what informed their decision to vote for a party of their choice, a significant percentage of respondents attributed it to the influence from their different places of worship.

Also, when asked how, in their opinion the police gets their information to tackle a rampant societal crime like ‘419’ – advance fee fraud - , another significant number of respondents equally attributed that to the rumour mill.

But, again and perhaps within the context of this paper, the story of the ‘Speaker’ and ‘Toronto Certificate’ below is more relevant. More relevant because of its impact in recent times on politicians who thought that certificate forgery to get into public office is not a crime as such. Indeed the effect of the spread of this otherwise ordinary gossip item had checkmated not only politicians in Nigeria but also across borders to Ghana, South Africa and possibly others whose stories are yet to come to the open.

‘Speaker’ and ‘Toronto Certificate’ [23]:

AlhajiSalisuBuhari, a young man, then in his early thirties from the northern city of Kano, was the first Speaker of the House of Representatives in the 1999 – 2003 National Assembly of post-military rule Nigeria.

Buhari's political enemies may not have considered him worthy of that exalted position and started a commonplace rumour and gossip that he did not have the academic qualifications that he claimed. All public office seekers in Nigeria are required to file evidence of their academic credentials and Buhari [24] had accordingly filed among his credentials a degree certificate from the University of Toronto, Canada. The rumour that he had no such qualification persisted and the Speaker threatened to sue whoever was responsible for the spread of what he considered false information at that point, with a sizeable segment of the media speaking up for him too.

But the pressure behind the rumour, obviously political, was quite intense and Buhari eventually owned up to filing a ‘fake’ degree and was charged to court for forgery and perjury, subsequently found guilty and sentenced to prison with the option of paying a fine. Although he was later given a presidential pardon, Buhari not only lost his exalted position for what began as a rumour, he also left the legislature and had remained politically quite ever since. This is one story of what started as a rumour that turned out to be fact and in it the media also found abundant raw material for processing as news.

EmekaIzeze, then Managing Director of *TheGuardian*, an influential Nigerian daily, agrees that rumour is vital in the spread of information and, as a concept in communication; a positive phenomenon in a very strange kind of way [25].

As it were, the ‘ESC’ also propels the media to push its job a bit further, either to authenticate as rumour or to prove that it is not just some unverifiable piece of information. According to Izeze, rumour is a spur on the journalists to go to work: ‘You hear it, people tell it to you and then it makes you want to do what you need to do. Sometimes you’re definitely sent on a wild goose chase but at other times, you find that, as we say here, there is hardly any smoke without a fire’ [26].

Ray Ekpu, one of Nigeria’s most respected columnists, editor, media manager and the CEO of the now defunct Newswatch Communications, publishers of the country’s pioneer newsmagazine, *Newswatch*, knows the importance of rumour to the media’s finished product. According to Ekpu, ‘Rumour is an important ingredient in the news production business; it is the raw material for news because it gives you the tip-off’,

Journalists and media organizations may follow the lead provided by rumour and it doesn't lead to anywhere just as they may follow it and it leads to a story.

Ekpu narrates that, the important thing is that rumour gives the journalist an indication of what people are talking about and the role of the media in choosing a story-line becomes that of verifying, cross-checking and confirming so as to 'get the story out which then changes the terrain of rumour into facts that can be published ... something important that you can concretize and it becomes a front page story.

In South Africa, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has a history of break-away Factions. The ANC, since its days of freedom fighting is no stranger to comrades breaking away to find new political platforms; because *ab initio*, the ANC was a bed of strange bedfellows who agreed to a marriage of convenience inspired by the common purpose of defeating and dethroning apartheid.

Therefore, the periodic episodic babble of dissenting voices threatening to de-roof the house built with the youth of Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela on grounds that infidels have infiltrated the 'sanctum sanctorum' of the ANC on the one hand, and the radical militancy exhibited by those who claim to be the authentic protectors of the faith on the other are, for want of a functional description, not unexpected.

Each time tempers get combustible and dissenting voices become high in the ANC, 'comrades' part ways to find or form a new movement or party; the most recent notable of which include the formation of COPE – Congress of the People (launched on Sunday, December 14th 2008 by the MosiouaLekota - led break-away faction and that led by Julius Malema - the Economic Freedom Fighters, inaugurated in July 2013. Like Lekota, Malema too was a ranking member of the ANC.

But, this break-away from the mother organization is not the first and most likely may not be the last. In 1959, the 'Africanist' faction within the ANC (led by Robert Sobukwe) left to create the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). There was the exit of the Ambrose Makiwane-led 'gang of eight' after the Morogoro conference in 1969; Jordan Ngubane, a known ANC Youth-leader left the ANC to become Liberal Party member and then before that of the MosiouaLekota-led break-away faction was of course the departure (in this case, expulsion) from the ranks of the 'comrades' Bantu Holomisa – now leader of the United Democratic Movement (UDM).

Indeed, the ANC has a history of break-away factions and dissenting voices, accusations and counter accusations of 'dividing the party'; even the Madiba, the iconic figure in whom the ANC, Tom Lodge observes [²⁷], found some form of quasimesianic leadership was vulnerable and fell victim of the accusation of 'breaking the party'.

The Madiba was accused of 'breaking the party' with his faction that pitted against Oliver Tambo's while both men were under incarceration on Robben Island. NgoakoRamatlhodi, former premier of Limpopo province and member of the ANC national executive committee confirms that, former president Nelson Mandela, while being violated at a meeting chaired by MosioauLekota (now COPE president), was called a 'lair' and accused of having a '... history of dividing the party...'

The organization has therefore been fraught with factionalism that points to the gregarious nature of the different occupants of the house of ANC from its early days and the excess weight the organization has not been able to shed, twenty years after the dismantling of apartheid.

Whereas, Robert Sobukwe's 'Africanist' dissenters who left to form the Pan Africanist Congress – PAC - did so by contending that the ANC had been 'deradicalised and deracinated' by its alliance with 'communists, white democrats and Indian Gandhists', Makiwane's so-called 'gang of eight' claimed to have left because they were uncomfortable with the presence of communists influence personified in Joe Slovo and Yusuf Dadoo in the ANC.

In all, neither the Africanist faction that neither left in 1959, Makiwane's 'gang of eight' (1969) nor Holomisa's UDM, seem to have succeeded in significantly, negatively affected the ANC in its days of 'struggle'; nor had it (until the two recent elections of 2011 and 2014) seriously, the party's electoral fortunes.

Every time 'comrades' break away to form a new party, the move is hailed by some people - mostly described by ANC insiders as 'disgruntled party members' - as the long awaited alternative to the ANC; but no sooner than they come into existence, every public outing of this long awaited alternative to the ANC, seem to confirm a dwindling popularity or relevance followed by a progressively disintegrating electoral fortunes. For example, Bantu Holomisa's UDM upon its formation in 1997, was hailed as described above.

It received over three percent (3.4 per cent) of voters' approval in 1999, but recorded significant decline thereafter with just about two per cent of votes in the 2004 elections; and, neither the April 2009 elections nor those of 2014 were any better.

Quite often and in the long run, the ANC's break-away factions turned new parties remain local champions; that is, they are most noticed and perhaps appreciated within the native 'homelands' of the founder.

Therefore, the ANC's latest break-away factions, the 'Shikota movement' which eventually emerged as COPE and even Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters if not properly articulated to stand the test of the polity, may equally end up like others before it. 'Shikota' is a coinage by the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper to refer to the Shilowa breakaway faction of the ANC before it launched as COPE. Apparently

'Shikota' is derived from the first three letters of Shilowa and the last four letters from Lekota – two of the leaders of the ANC's break-away faction turned COPE.

Although arguments are afloat that unlike the circumstances that led to the exit of the earlier mentioned 'comrades' and their break-away factions, the troika of MosiouaLekota, MbhazimaShilowa and Mluleki George's exit and the consequent formation of an alternative political party from the ANC had neither racist nor very apparent ideological reasons. COPE, they insist was formed simply to protect and keep the original ANC 'fate'. But, there are abundantly confusing signals from voices within the 'Shikota' stable as to why they left the ANC.

Whereas Lekota who has been at the forefront of the new party has, 'defending the constitution' and modernizing the antiquated ways of the ANC as his mantra and, at different times and places, complained about the new leaders at Luthuli House (home of the ANC) deviating from the 'freedom charter' while also hinging his decision on the violated norms, values and traditions of the ANC; MbhazimaShilowa who during the week ending October 17th 2008, declared himself 'convener and volunteer-in-chief' of the breakaway faction gave his reasons for leaving the ANC as the decision by the national executive committee of the ANC to 'recall' Thabo Mbeki as President and the dismissal of some provincial premiers.

But, interestingly, Mluleki George's grouse is similar to that of Makiwane's 'gang of eight' – the 'communists' and the 'unions' in the tripartite alliance with the ANC – 'they want to make statements about Parliament and how the state should be run. If they want to do that, they must go it alone' Mr. George declared in a news-story.

For now, there are too many voices from within COPE, each shooting astray from the hips and generally accusing the new leaders in Luthuli House of defecating on the holy (my emphasis) 'freedom charter' and deviating from the ANC's norms, values and traditions; but both the 'ancient' ('authentic' ANC perhaps) and 'modern' ANC, that is COPE, are guilty of the offence of invoking the 'freedom charter' without being specific as to who violated the freedom charter, where it was violated, how and perhaps why.

In the process, all they have commonly succeeded in doing is turn the more than half a century old freedom charter (the 'Freedom Charter' was adopted June 26th, 1955 at the Congress of the People in Kliptown, Soweto) into another 'Melian dialogue' which warring 'comrades' seem to be at liberty to interpret as it suits their purpose. Quite often, these various interpretations of the '... charter', range from the realistic to the idealistic; but seldom the critical which would have given meaning to exactly what is meant by violating the 'freedom charter'.

Again, 'comrades' from both Luthuli House and COPE haul accusations and counter-accusations of the other party

violating, disrespecting and deviating from the ANC's tradition, norms and values generally, without any clarification. But, these traditions, norms and values hackneyed so freely, may likely not be remarkably different from that of any other freedom fighting organization's like the 'struggle days' Mozambican FRELIMO (Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique - The Liberation Front of Mozambique) or SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) in Namibia.

They all seem to have the common tradition of strategic radicalism which incidentally is still quite manifest, though somewhat differently, in the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and its avalanche of threats and unguarded verbal missiles – courtesy of Julius Malema, the then died-in-the-wool worshiper (and now an arch enemy?) of former president Jacob Zuma.

Struggle organizations are also noted for a norm and value code which ensures that members do not 'step out of line' by amongst others, publicly criticizing, disrespecting or howling insults at the leadership of the movement. These so frequently hackneyed phrases of 'tradition, norms and values' may have obtained then; when a commonality of purposes united the organization - ANC.

In recent times however, about the last 25 years or so, 'comrades' danced naked in the rain. They openly, publicly without restraint muck-raked, mud-slinged, disrespected senior comrades, called themselves unprintable names and even accuse their perceived competitors and opponents within the 'movement' turned ruling party of plotting their downfall.

For example, the trio of Cyril Ramaphosa, Tokyo Sexwale and Mathews Phosa, all senior members (sorry, *cadres*) of the ANC, were allegedly accused of plotting against then President Thabo Mbeki in 2001, of which, Ramaphosa says he carries with him 'scars and had endured ... uncomfortable years within the party under Thabo Mbeki'. Cyril Ramaphosa is South Africa's sitting president.

The country's first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela, was also said to have been thoroughly verbally dealt with at a 2002 NEC (National Executive Committee) meeting chaired by MosiouaLekota (now, leader of COPE) while now 'recalled' (then) president Mbeki watched and 'sat quietly throughout the orgy'. According to ANC insiders, party stalwart Jessie Duarte escorted Mandela out of the NEC meeting and the old man never again showed up at NEC meetings until he passed on.

The disrespect and sometimes near violent attack of senior 'comrades' is not the exclusive preserve of a particular group or camp within the ANC. All camps, most notably the Mbeki and Zuma factions in the 2008 ANC reality check were equally guilty.

Former president Thabo Mbeki has had his own dose of insults and verbal assaults too, in the hands of much more junior 'comrades'. He was booed; his posters burnt and even

heckled at rallies and other ANC- related outings. MosiouaLekota, a former Chairman of the ANC (before decamping to form COPE) has been unnecessarily abused and called names for exercising his human and democratic rights of parting ways with his erstwhile comrades. As for Jacob Zuma, the immediate past ANC as well as the country's President, he must have developed an unusually thick hide for verbal and media mugging.

In retrospect, the events beginning from 2005, when then President Mbeki fired Zuma as South Africa's deputy president on grounds of an 'alleged generally corrupt relationship' with his friend and financial adviser ShabirShaik – found guilty and convicted to do time in jail - , Zuma's alleged rape charges, trial and acquittal, his prosecution by the National Prosecution Authority (NPA) – which eventually led to the 'recall' of Mbeki by the ANC, and perhaps more prominently, the 'battle' of Polokwane 2007, suggests a power contest between the Jacob Zuma camp and supporters of Thabo Mbeki (even though Mbeki had been seemingly detached) for the soul of the ANC.

In 2005, then President Thabo Mbeki relieved Jacob Zuma of his post as South Africa's Deputy President on the still yet to be proven accusation of bribery and the assumption of having 'a generally corrupt relationship' with his erstwhile financial adviser, SchabirShaik, who was found guilty and sentenced to serving a jail term for soliciting and accepting bribe from the German military hardware company, Thint, supplier of South Africa's Defense Ministry arms contract.

Jacob Zuma was relieved of his position as South Africa's deputy president; but he continued as ANC deputy president, a rather costly mistake for Mbeki and very strategic victory for Zuma when considered against the (then) anticipated battle ahead – 'Polokwane 2007' - venue for that year's general congress where (as a tradition of the ANC), the next party leader [28] will be elected.

The import of all of the above as it relates to our subject of discourse is that there are similarities between the political drama in South Africa and that of Nigeria and perhaps to some extent in Ghana too. Because, most, if not all of the political drama in the former apartheid stronghold began somewhat as some ordinary activity of gossip that Mbeki and his supporters were too high handed. Then it became a rumour that, followers of '*Mchiniwami*' [29]- Jacob Zuma, had perfected plans to teach President Thabo Mbeki a lesson at 'Polokwane 2007' on how to be popular with the masses; and, it came to pass that grassroots politics prevailed and Thabo Mbeki was recalled, back to party headquarters.

All of the above became Cultural Products for export courtesy of the 'ESC' predominantly, through channels of the New

Media and frequent travels between the two countries – Nigeria and South Africa.

For example, whereas 'Polokwane 2007' in South Africa was a general congress for the choice of the next party leader of the ANC, in Nigeria, the year 2007 was for general election; and, as it began in South Africa, gossip had it that the country's sitting president – OlusegunObasanjo – a retired former military head of state with dictatorial tendencies was neither an 'insider' of the immediate past ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) nor was he the favoured candidate to fly the party's flag for that year's general election. Then rumour had it that Obasanjo's deputy, AtikuAbubakar – like Zuma, a grassroots politics tactician – was poised to challenge his principal for their party ticket as PDP presidential candidate.

Furthermore, rumours then circulated that Obasanjo had gone on his knees to plead with Atiku to forgive him for overstepping his (Obasanjo's) limits with the promise that if Atiku forgave him to run for office just one more time, it will be all for Atiku's keeps thereafter.

But that was never to be; and, hard as Obasanjo tried to deny his involvement, there were ample indications that there were desperate efforts to manipulate the country's constitution to elongate his stay in office for a third term as against the stipulation of the country's constitution. Ever since, perhaps not quite like Mbeki and Zuma (because, Mbeki has since recoiled into his political shell), but the relationship between the two –Obasanjo and Abubakar -, could perhaps be best described as political 'Tom and Jerry' (albeit, there seem to have been some visible improved relationship of the two in recent times).

Political animosity has not only acquired the status of a cultural product of value but the 'ESC', via channels of New Media and frequent travels has accentuated that value into a global export product by communicating across borders. Political animosity between rival politicians for example, is one cultural product of intercultural value as demonstrated in the example above. Like the call for the annulment of the Kenyan presidential elections and its follow-up in Nigeria, one could perhaps equally argue the power tussle in Mbeki's South Africa and Obasanjo's Nigeria as the intercultural communication of value from one to the other.

Finally, in the United States of America (USA), the story may perhaps change somewhat because what this author proposes as the Established Structures of Community may simply but admirably have been systematized as '*Intelligence*'. Even so, the 2016 edition of that country's presidential election is entitled to its fair share of the 'ESC'.

In the heat of the campaigns for that election, Donald Trump the then controversial presidential candidate of the Republican Party for the contest (now immediate past president) at every turn of the road acted like there was something he knew and perhaps saw that everyone else was myopic to, to the extent

that he boasted not to accept outcome of the results of the polls if he turned out not to be the declared winner.

Then gossip and rumour (sorry, not yet '*Intelligence*') had it that, there were some forces, deliberately concealed but bent on seducing the electoral process in favour of Mr. Trump.

Then, eventually, it came to the open in the form of allegation that Vladimir Putin's Russia interfered with the 2016 American presidential election to brighten the chances of Mr. Trump, against that of Hilary Rodham Clinton, presidential candidate of the Democratic Party.

Albeit, Mr. Trump (and later President Trump) continue to feign ignorance of the above, what began in America as ordinary activity of gossip and rumour in 2016, had in 2017 become centre stage of global politics. It is now common-place knowledge that, countries can influence and indeed possibly determine the outcome of other countries electoral process (no matter how powerful) through the instrumentality of the ESC.

Eventually, with all the denials and theatricals, this paper's proposition as 'ESC' (perhaps '*Intelligence*' in the USA) resulted in the appointment of a Special Prosecutor to determine the veracity or otherwise of Russia's 'influence campaign' allegedly, personally ordered by Russia's President Vladimir Putin, not just to favour Mr. Trump but also to undermine public faith in the democratic process that America prides in.

Indeed, what seem to have become the consensus among American intelligence community is that there were reasons enough to believe that Russia interfered with the American electoral process of 2016 [³⁰]; and that, former President Donald Trump's (former) chief of staff, (Reince Priebus) was the first senior official of the Trump administration to answer questions from office of the Special Counsel, Robert Mueller.

IV. CONCLUSIONS:

Twenty first Century global politics is not only information dense but contemporarily embedded in Gossip, Rumour, Religion and the other neglected agents of political power dynamics (not mentioned for purposes of this paper) which this author proposes as the 'ESC'.

The 'ESC' which in times past arguably was limited territorially has gone global and like a verbatim speech or a written Holy Wood movie script, what is socially, politically and even economically (economically: as in rampant systemic corruption) obtainable in a linguistic or cultural origin is easily replicated in another as a communication of intercultural value.

As demonstrated earlier, the factional struggles for the soul of the ANC in South Africa which resulted in the founding of a new political umbrella (as in the formation of COPE) were ably replicated in Nigeria as if it was a planned coincidence.'

If the ANC in South Africa had to experience breakaway factions as a result of complaints of 'Communists within' the ranks of the *comrades* and desecration of the 'Freedom Charter', the PDP in Nigeria simply imploded with the excuse that party leaders had abused the democratic process as well as too much latitude within the then ruling party in government.

However, the truth with the breakaway factions of the ANC in South Africa and the PDP in Nigeria was that all of the drama leading up to the breakaways and subsequent formations of new political platforms were earlier 'ESC' generated or motivated; and, as against the advanced reasons for the breakaway factions, the new platforms were created for seemingly two reasons: (a) for the achievement of individual or group political ambitions and (b) ultimately to gain control of political power; to determine who controls the national treasury.

In other words, the formation of new political platforms in both countries were not necessarily for the advancement of democratic norms and ethos but arguably, wholly and singularly motivated by corruption which Tom Lodge [³¹] observes as: 'the scramble for power, state resources and a tendency for comrades to regard local structures as their own fiefdoms'.

Whereas in Nigeria, the PDP was trounced and sent packing from governance in the 2015 presidential election by the All Progressives Congress (APC) – an aggregation of strange political bedfellows (quite a number of who had earlier wreaked havoc in the PDP before jumping ship), the ANC had remained the ruling party in South Africa; even though the split in the ranks of the comrades had significantly, adversely depleted the legislature numbers of the party.

Indeed the 'ESC' as channels of Intercultural Communication of Values has provided a *rendzina* for the harvesting and exporting of otherwise territorial ordinarily common-place activities like gossip or what this author refers to as socialization information obtained from a place of worship as in: The Priest, the Goat and the 'Guber'.

Political propaganda tools like treachery, manipulation, violence, agitation, blackmail and even hate-speech, all of which, quite often begin as ordinary activity of 'small talk' has acquired the status of 'Cultural products of Value' that influence as well as affect the decision we make as citizens; and as long as we continue to have access to telephony and travel away from our linguistic or cultural origins to other faraway places, we take along with us our 'structures of established community.'

After all, the general objective of the use of gossip, rumour and religion as tools of political propaganda has always been to convince as many people as are targeted; and that is what qualifies the 'ESC' as Intercultural Communication of Values.

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