Articles

ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
A World Association of Academics and Researchers
8 Valaoritou Str., Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece.
Tel.: 210-36.34.210 Fax: 210-36.34.209
Email: info@atiner.gr URL: www.atiner.gr

(ATINER)   *Established in 1995*   (ATINER)

Mission

ATINER is a *World Non-Profit Association* of Academics and Researchers based in Athens. ATINER is an independent **Association** with a **Mission** to become a forum where Academics and Researchers from all over the world can meet in Athens, exchange ideas on their research and discuss future developments in their disciplines, **as well as engage with professionals from other fields**. Athens was chosen because of its long history of academic gatherings, which go back thousands of years to *Plato's Academy* and *Aristotle's Lyceum.* Both these historic places are within walking distance from ATINER's downtown offices. Since antiquity, Athens was an open city. In the words of Pericles, **Athens"...*is open to the world, we never expel a foreigner from learning or seeing".* (**"Pericles' Funeral Oration", in Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War). It is ATINER's **mission** to revive the glory of Ancient Athens by inviting the World Academic Community to the city, to learn from each other in an environment of freedom and respect for other people's opinions and beliefs. After all, the free expression of one's opinion formed the basis for the development of democracy, and Athens was its cradle. As it turned out, the Golden Age of Athens was in fact, the Golden Age of the Western Civilization. *Education* and *(Re)searching* for the 'truth' are the pillars of any free (democratic) society. This is the reason why *Education* and *Research* are the two core words in ATINER's name.

The Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications
Editorial and Reviewers' Board

President's Message

All ATINER's publications including the e-journals are open access without any costs (submission, processing, publishing, open access paid by authors, open access paid by readers etc) and are independent of the presentations made at any of the many small events (conferences, symposiums, forums, colloquiums, courses, roundtable discussions) organized by ATINER throughout the year. The intellectual property rights of the submitted papers remain with the author.

Before you submit, please make sure your paper meets some basic academic standards, which include proper English. Some articles will be selected from the numerous papers that have been presented at the various annual international academic conferences organized by the different divisions and units of the Athens Institute for Education and Research.

The plethora of papers presented every year will enable the editorial board of each journal to select the best ones, and in so doing, to produce a quality academic journal. In addition to papers presented, ATINER encourages the independent submission of papers to be evaluated for publication.

The current issue of the The Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications (AJMMC) is the third issue of the fifth volume (2019). The reader will notice some changes compared with the previous issues, which I hope is an improvement.

Gregory T. Papanikos, President
Athens Institute for Education and Research

Athens Institute for Education and Research
A World Association of Academics and Researchers

18th Annual International Conference on Communication and Mass Media, 11-14 May 2020, Athens, Greece

The Mass Media & Communication Unit of ATINER organizes its **18th Annual International Conference on Communication and Mass Media, 11-14 May 2020, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications. The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers of Communications, Mass Media and other related disciplines. Please submit a proposal using the form available (https://www.atiner.gr/2020/FORM-MED.doc).

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **8 October 2019**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **13 April 2020**

Academic Members Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. John Pavlik**, Head, Mass Media and Communication Research Unit, ATINER & Professor, Rutgers University, USA.
- **Dr. Yorgo Pasadeos**, Director, Social Sciences Division, ATINER & Professor Emeritus, University of Alabama USA.

Social and Educational Program

The Social Program Emphasizes the Educational Aspect of the Academic Meetings of Atiner.

- Greek Night Entertainment (This is the official dinner of the conference)
- Athens Sightseeing: Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk
- Social Dinner
- Mycenae Visit
- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit
- Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Conference Fees

Conference fees vary from 400€ to 2000€
Details can be found at: https://www.atiner.gr/2019fees

It's Not Just *If* You See It, It's *How* You Process It: Conceptual and Perceptual Fluency Effects for Brand Names

By Temple Northup[*]

There has been a consistent body of research that has shown that increases in accessibility of an item within memory, often referred to has processing fluency, causes there to be more positive affect toward that item. This relationship has particular importance for advertising and consumer behavior research as one of the outcomes of an advertising campaign is an increase in brand salience. Although there has been interest in investigating the relationship between fluency and attitudes in relation to brands, little research has attempted to distinguish between the two different types of fluency that exist: perceptual and conceptual. Over three studies, this research investigated the extent to which perceptual versus conceptual fluency impacted attitudes toward known brands, with results suggesting that it is conceptual fluency that makes a significant contribution.

Keywords: advertising, affective judgment, implicit memory, processing fluency.

Introducing

An underlying assertion in research examining "fluency" effects (e.g., the mere exposure effect, Zajonc, 1968) is that exposure to a stimulus item causes it to become more accessible in memory. This increase in accessibility enhances the ease with which it can be identified or recalled, which is known as processing fluency. Past research has found that processing fluency is affectively positive (Hansen & Wanke, 2009) and can be conceptually or perceptually based (Tulving & Schacter, 1990). Conceptual fluency relates to the ease with which an item can come to mind when thought about in a semantic or meaningful manner, whereas perceptual fluency reflects how easily and quickly the surface features of an item can be recalled. For example, within the domain of consumer research, if someone is exposed to an advertisement for the gum Orbit, conceptual fluency could be reflected in how quickly and readily that item (Orbit) comes to mind when the category of gum is presented, whereas perceptual fluency could be reflected in how quickly an image of the product Orbit could be identified (e.g., if flashed momentarily on a screen).

Butler and Berry (2004) argue that implicit memory is what drives the increase in perceptual or conceptual fluency. Implicit memory is "revealed when previous experiences facilitate performance on a task that does not require conscious or intentional recollection of those experiences" (Schacter, 1987, p. 501). In the example above, the "previous experience" would be exposure to Orbit and the performance facilitation would be the top of the mind

---
[*]Director & Associate Professor, Jack J. Valenti School of Communication, University of Houston USA.

awareness or ability to recognize the brand. The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between fluency and attitudes by using implicit memory procedures to gauge and estimate how accessible certain brands are in memory and see what relationship, if any, emerges between that accessibility and affective evaluations.

Literature Review

In the literature on implicit memory, researchers differentiate between perceptual and conceptual forms of implicit memory. Perceptual forms of memory tend to relate to a shallow form of encoding whereas conceptual forms relate to a deeper processing. Tests of perceptual implicit memory feature fragmentary or rapidly-presented cues that the participant attempts to identify. In contrast, conceptual implicit tests present participants with cues that are meaningfully related to the to-be-retrieved material. An example is the category production task in which category names are used to elicit examples (see Mulligan, 2004; Roediger & McDermott, 1993, for reviews).

There has been a steady increase in the use of both perceptual and conceptual implicit memory measures in advertising research (e.g., Choi, Lee, & Li, 2013; Coates, Butler, & Berry, 2004, 2006; Finlay, Marmurek, & Morton, 2005; Hervet, Guerard, Tremblay, & Chtourou, 2011; Krishnan & Shapiro, 1996; Lee, 2002; Vandeberg, Murre, Voorveld, & Smit, 2015; Yoo 2007, 2008, 2010). For instance, Yang, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Dinu, & Arpan, 2006; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007), who investigated perceptual implicit memory for product and brand placements within movies and video games, found similar levels of perceptual implicit memory performance for products in movies and video games regardless of whether they were heavily featured in the storyline (or game). In contrast, Northup and Mulligan (2013a, 2013b) used a category-exemplar production task—a conceptual implicit memory measure—to test for priming after participants were presented with brand names. Their results demonstrated that conceptual priming could be found for brands presented as words (just the brand name), images (with the brand name clearly identifiable in the image), or ads embedded within a website.

Together, these studies suggest exposure to a brand name—whether through advertisements, product placements, or any number of other mechanisms—can increase accessibility of that brand in memory. This accessibility can be measured via perceptual or conceptual measures, which reflect different types of processing fluency. However, to date, little extant research has tried to connect the extent to which increased brand fluency as measured by implicit memory procedures correlate with positive affect.

The research that does exist suggests increases in accessibility may lead to increased positive affect. Indeed, the perceptual fluency/attributional model, developed by Bornstein and D'Agonstino (1992, 1994), posits that repeated exposure to a stimulus results in increased fluency for that item. That fluency translates into an increase of positive affect. Furthermore, when people

experience that increase in fluency, they do not attribute the fluency to the prior presentation of the stimulus; rather, they generate an alternative but feasible explanation for the feeling of familiarity. In one of the few examples in which conceptual and perceptual fluency effects were tested together, advertisements received positive evaluations whether the ads were read or viewed in either a perceptual or a conceptual context (Lee & Labroo, 2004). In other words, conceptual and perceptual fluency operated similarly.

Bornstein and D'Agonstino (1992, 1994) articulate the importance of awareness as key to understanding the effects of this increased affect— specifically; an awareness of the prior presentation can dampen or extinguish the change. For instance, when stimuli are presented subliminally, there is generally a robust increase in positive affect toward those stimuli. In contrast, for items presented supraliminally, there still may be an increase in positive affect, but it is typically not as pronounced. According to Bornstein and D'Agonstino, an awareness of the connection between presentation and fluency explains this reduction.

Within the implicit memory research, awareness is one of the most important aspects to be taken into account and controlled for as a lack of awareness is critical for a measure to be truly implicit. In the typical implicit memory procedure, participants are exposed to stimulus materials and then later complete the implicit memory measure. If the participant is aware during the memory measure that the responses are related to the earlier exposure, the implicit measure can no longer be considered implicit as explicit retrieval strategies may be used. To counter these effects, participants are typically either warned of the possibility that they may notice responses that are similar to earlier presentations and to ignore that (e.g., Parker & Dagnall, 2009) or participants complete an awareness questionnaire after completion of the memory measure that helps to identify those who were using explicit retrieval strategies (e.g., Northup & Mulligan, 2013b).

The purpose of this research, then, is to build on this previous research in two important ways. First, to specifically investigate the extent to which implicit conceptual and perceptual memory performance is a predictor of attitudes. In their model, Bornstein and D'Agonstino (1992, 1994) focused on perceptual fluency and therefore did not differentiate between conceptual and perceptual processing and how that distinction could lead to different relationships between fluency and affect. Second, the vast majority of applied research that has looked at effects related to processing fluency has relied on the use of brand names that are fictitious or not well known. This research aims to build on the previous literature by using known brands to examine any effects that may be present.

Based on this literature, the following two primary hypotheses are presented:

H$_1$: Perceptual implicit memory performance will positively correlate with attitudes toward brands in the advertisements.
H$_2$: Conceptual implicit memory performance will positively correlate with attitudes toward brands in the advertisements.

In order to test these hypotheses, three studies were conducted. The first two were designed to investigate the relationship between conceptual and perceptual fluency for both brand names as well as brand logos. The third study builds on the first two studies by adding a control (non-exposure) group to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between fluency, exposure, and attitudes.

Study 1

The purpose of the first study was to explore what relationship, if any, exists between perceptual or conceptual fluency and affect. One hundred ninety-eight students from a large, public university in the Southwestern United States (mean age=20.32, 112 women) participated in a 2 condition (conceptual or perceptual implicit memory measure) between-subject experiment in which they, after being exposed to brand names presented within advertisements, performed either a conceptual or perceptual implicit memory test. They then participated in a forced-choice measure that included the earlier brands from the advertisements to gauge their attitudes toward those brands.

Procedure

At designated times, participants entered a computer laboratory. The first task the participants had to complete was to rate how familiar or unfamiliar they were with 21 brands, a task that previous research has shown will induce sufficient processing to elicit priming results on both conceptual and perceptual measures (Northup & Mulligan, 2013a). Each brand name was presented within the context of an image (see Figure 1 for examples).

Figure 1. Example of Brand Names Presented Within Images

Importantly, 15 of the brands were the target brands with an additional six being fillers serving as recency and primacy buffers. After completing a 10-minute distraction task, participants were presented with either a conceptual or perceptual implicit memory test. For the conceptual test, participants were asked to generate the "first brand that comes to mind" for a number of categories (e.g., name a brand of gum). For the perceptual test, they were asked to complete a word fragment

from a well-known brand name (e.g., O_b_t for Orbit). For either memory measure, the target categories or word fragments were preceded by 20 unrelated brand categories or brands so that participants became acclimated to the task. Furthermore, the target tasks were alternated with unrelated brands so that no two of the target brands were ever back-to-back. After completing the memory measure, the participants performed a forced-choice task where they had to choose between two brands within a similar category (e.g., choose between the following two shoe brands: Nike or New Balance), one of which related to the brands previously seen. The implicit memory performance serves as the independent variable while the performance on the forced-choice task serves as the dependent variable.

Of note, the procedure closely followed Parker and Dagnall (2009) to control for explicit contamination and keep the implicit memory measure implicit (i.e., non-intentional). To do this, participants were explicitly warned both when they were performing the memory measure and the forced-choice task that the brands they generate (or choose between) may be related to the earlier brands they evaluated and to not allow that to influence their results as the tasks were unrelated. Nevertheless, after the procedure, questions were asked as to whether, despite the warning, participants felt that they were using explicit retrieval strategies. Those participants who indicated they were using explicit strategies were removed from the main analysis. Worth noting, the number who indicated using explicit strategies in this and the subsequent study was small (<10) and so results comparing the groups were not possible.

Results and Discussion

In line with previous research, to calculate the independent memory measures, responses for each target task (i.e., each brand generation or word fragment) were coded as either matching the earlier seen brand (=1) or not (=0). The responses to the 15 target brands were then summed and average to represent a proportion of brands generated during the implicit memory measure (conceptual M=.20, SD=.13; perceptual M=.21, SD=.15). A similar procedure was used for the dependent variable, with the key difference being that the brands were either chosen (=1) or not chosen (=0) in the forced-choice task (M=.50, SD=.12).

To explore the relationship between fluency and affect, correlations were performed between conceptual and perceptual implicit memory performance and forced-choice performance. Results suggest there was a significant and positive correlation between conceptual memory performance and forced-choice, r=.22, p=.04; however, there was no significant relationship between perceptual memory performance and forced-choice, r=.17, p=.11, although the results did approach significance and were only slightly different than the conceptual correlation. Nevertheless, initial evidence from this first study does not support H1 as there was no relationship between perceptual fluency and affect, whereas H2 is supported as conceptual fluency and affect were related. This suggests that increased conceptual accessibility of brand names predicted the brands being

chosen when given brand-pairs, whereas perceptual accessibility did not. This would mean that conceptual-based fluency is more strongly related to positive affect, at least when choosing between known brands.

Study 2

Study 2 closely mimicked Study 1 in procedure. The purpose was to first replicate the results of the first experiment and then change the design slightly, this time using logos instead of images of products. This was to determine whether the logo alone—that is, without any specific mention of the brand name and without the brand name in written text—is sufficient to increase conceptual or perceptual fluency, which in turn could increase positive affect.

Procedure

One hundred seventy-nine students from a large, public university in the Southwestern United States completed the procedure (mean age=21.70, *SD*=3.10, 118 women). Participants took part in a similar procedure as the first study with the following change: instead of seeing the brand names for each brand, participants instead rated the logos associated with the brands. These logos did not include any text (see Figure 2 for examples).

Figure 2. Example of Logos

Participants rated the logo on familiarity with the brand name, which should again induce conceptual processing sufficient to activate increases in both conceptual and perceptual fluency. Beyond this change, the procedure was entirely identical to the first study.

Results and Discussion

Similar analyses were run as in the first study with correlations being performed between conceptual and perceptual implicit memory performance and forced-choice performance. Results suggest there was a significant and positive correlation between conceptual memory performance and forced-choice, $r=.31$, $p<.001$; however, there was no significant relationship between perceptual memory performance and forced-choice, $r=.16$, $p=.13$, although the results again did begin to approach significance. As with Study 1, these results

therefore do not support H1 as perceptual fluency did not correlate with affect, whereas H2 was supported as conceptual fluency and affect were related.

Although comparisons between correlational coefficients from different studies are difficult to do, it is worth noting that the correlation between conceptual fluency and positive affect was a little higher (that is, stronger) in the second study as compared to the first. This is interesting because the second study used logos that did not include the text name of the brand. One possible explanation of why there was a stronger correlation is that evaluating a brand logo alone causes the participants to first generate the brand name itself (that is, to come up with the name of the brand that is associated with the logo), and then to evaluate how familiar the brand is. If that is the case, it is possible that there is a deeper processing that occurs, which could increase the fluency and the subsequent increase in positive affect. Although this is merely one possible explanation, it is interesting to that the logo appears to have produced stronger results.

Study 3

Although the first two studies were compelling, a third study was run to build upon the results in a few important ways. First, this study would use an attitude instrument instead of a forced-choice measure. By changing the type of dependent variable, a more complete picture can begin to emerge in terms of the importance of different types of fluency. Second, this procedure was altered to attempt to more thoroughly isolate the effects of awareness on the participants, thereby making the implicit measures more "implicit." Finally, a control group was added to explore the extent to which the exposure to the brands was driving the effects obtained in the first two studies, as compared to a baseline level of fluency that might exist already.

Procedure

Two hundred eighty students from a large, public university in the Southwestern United States participated (mean age=20.70, 156 women) in a similar procedure as the previous studies with the following changes. First, instead of rating brand names, participants viewed screen shots from news websites that included what was presented as an advertisement. Because previous research (Northup & Mulligan, 2013b) has demonstrated that clicking an ad is sufficient to induce conceptual and perceptual processing, there were no instructions presented to the participants outside of clicking on the advertisement. In fact, the first part of the study was presented as a website usability task for online news websites with the participants going through a series of tasks for each website (e.g., click on the first thing you see; click on the link to the weather report; and, importantly, click on the advertisement). This was done to help mask the true purpose of the task. See Figure 3 for sample screen shots.

Figure 3. Examples of News Website Screenshots with Created Advertisements
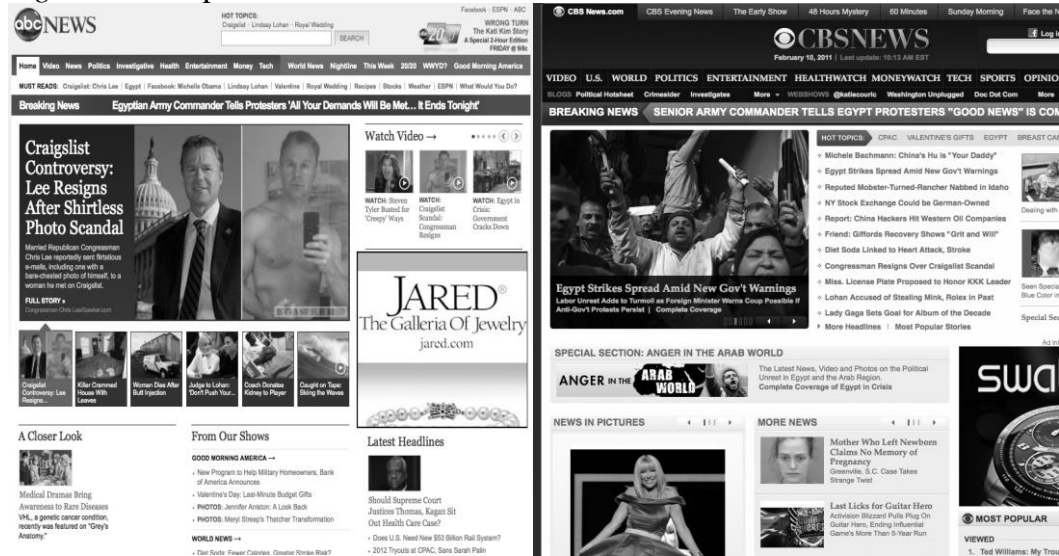
After participants finished a filler task, they proceeded to either the conceptual or perceptual implicit memory measure. There were also two "control" groups (one for conceptual fluency, one for perceptual fluency) who did not view the websites but began the procedure at this point. All participants then completed an attitude measurement for each of the brands presented within the websites. To do this, participants rated on a 7-point semantic differential scale their attitudes toward each brand on four dimensions: like-dislike, good-bad, positive-negative, and favorable-unfavorable. Past research has suggested these four dimensions are valid measures of attitudes toward brands (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986). The four items that related to each participant's overall attitude toward each brand were averaged to create a mean attitude toward the brand. Each individual attitude measure was reliable (all alphas above .90). The means of all 15 attitudes toward the brands were then averaged across all brands to create a single, overall mean attitude variable to serve as the dependent variable.

Finally, participants who had viewed the websites completed an awareness questionnaire that included five questions to identify participants who may have "caught on" to the purpose of the experiment. This is another technique used to assess awareness in implicit memory research (Bowers & Schacter, 1990). Following all the measures, participants are asked a series of increasingly specific questions about the purpose of the study. This test has been shown to be, if anything, conservative in its assessment of test aware versus unaware (Barnhardt & Geraci, 2008). Those participants who indicated they were unaware of any connections were put into the test unaware group (=0). All others were put into the test aware group (=1). The advantage of this procedure, compared to the previous studies, is that it allows for the isolation of participants who were truly using implicit memory to guide their responses.

Results and Discussion

The relationship between perceptual and conceptual fluency was investigated again using a bivariate correlation between memory performance (conceptual or perceptual) and attitudes. Because awareness has proven to be an important consideration, all analyses were conducted separately on the test aware and unaware groups.

Considering first perceptual fluency, regardless of whether the participants were test unaware, aware, or in the control group, none demonstrated a significant correlation between fluency and attitudes (*rs* of .11, .20, and .18 respectively, *p*>.05). These results replicate the first two studies and suggest that when making brand evaluations, perceptual fluency does not appear to have a strong relationship with attitudes. H1 was therefore not supported.

Considering conceptual fluency, those who were test unaware demonstrated a moderately strong correlation between implicit memory performance and attitudes, *r*=.59, *p*<.001. In contrast, those who were test aware did not show any relationship, *r*=.05, *p*>.05, nor did the control group, *r*=.07, *p*>.05. This also replicates the previous studies and suggests that conceptual fluency does correlate with positive affect—provided individuals are unaware of the source of their fluency. H2 is therefore supported.[1]

To further understand the relationship among exposure, fluency, and affect, steps were taken to assess whether exposure via website ads moderated the relationship between conceptual fluency and attitudes. In order to test this, a hierarchical regression was performed to predict attitudes toward the brands, with implicit memory performance as well as exposure (0=no exposure, 1=exposure) entered in Step 1. The two-way interaction between exposure and memory performance was entered into Step 2. A significant two-way interaction would indicate a moderating relationship.

According to the results of Step 1, both exposure (*B*=.42, *SE B*=.15, *p*<.01) and implicit memory performance (*B*=2.20, *SE B*=.56, *p*<.001) predicted overall attitude performance, R^2=.27, *F* (2,46)=8.56, *p*<.01. The addition of the two-way interaction (*B*=2.75, *SE B*=1.18, *p*<.05) in Step 2 yielded a significant improvement, ΔR^2=.08, ΔF(1,45)=5.45, p<.05. Next, simple slope analyses were performed to examine the significant memory X exposure interaction. Simple slope analysis was conducted to isolate the contribution of exposure in overall attitudes, depending on the level of implicit memory performance. The slope of the resulting lines is larger for the "ad exposure" condition (*B*=2.98) than the "no ad exposure" condition (*B*=.23). According to subsequent one-tailed *t*-tests (Aiken & West, 1991, p. 17), the ad exposure slope was significantly different from zero (*t*(45)=2.86, *p*<.05), whereas the no exposure slope was not (*t*(45)=1.72, *p*>.05).

---

[1] Although not directly related to this research, it is worth pointing out that significant priming did occur—that is, those exposed to the advertisements generated the products more frequently than the control groups (all p values less than .01). For the conceptual tests, the memory performance after exposure (*M*=.38, *SD*=.14) was higher than control (*M*=.18, *SD*=.10). A similar pattern was observed for the perceptual performance after exposure (*M*=.28, *SD*=.15) compared to perceptual control (*M*=.17, *SD*=.11).

These results suggest that exposure to the ad does indeed act as a moderator enhancing the effects of implicit conceptual fluency.

Taken together, the results of Study 3 generally give further support to the idea that conceptual rather than perceptual fluency has the most influence on affect at least with known brands. That is, exposure to brand through website advertisements increased conceptual fluency and triggered more positive evaluations—provided the participants were unaware of the source of that fluency.

Conclusion

Bornstein and D'Agostino's (1992, 1994) perceptual fluency/attributional model suggests that fluency is affectively positive—that is, increases in accessibility should translate to increases in positive affect. The purpose of this research was to examine the extent to which perceptual and conceptual fluency each predict feelings about a brand—measured in Studies 1 and 2 through a forced-choice instrument and in Study 3 by an attitude measurement. Although their original model was framed in terms of perceptual fluency, there was no reason to assume that conceptual fluency would act differently (Lee & Labroo, 2004). However, results from these studies suggest that conceptual fluency is driving affect much more than perceptual fluency, which did not make a significant contribution in any of the studies. This implies that the type of memory accessibility matters when interested in brand attitudes—in other words, merely having a brand accessible is not the same as having that information accessible in a conceptual or meaningful manner.

One explanation for conceptual rather than perceptual fluency being more important is that this research used actual, known brands. Most previous research studies investigating fluency effects have used fictitious brand names or abstract items such as Chinese symbols (Zajonc, 1968). Under conditions when participants were unfamiliar with the attitude object, having it be merely accessible may be sufficient to create positive affect. However, when it comes to fluency and attitudes toward familiar objects, these results suggest it is conceptual rather than perceptual fluency that is essential. It is possible that small increases in perceptual fluency are simply not sufficient to cause any immediate or measurable changes in attitudes.

Also worth noting is that in Study 3, when differences based on awareness could be assessed, those classified as unaware showed a relationship between conceptual fluency and affect whereas those who were aware did not. This conforms well to Bornstein and D'Agostino's (1992, 1994) model as they specifically recognized that individuals needed to be unaware of the source of their fluency in order to show increased positive affect. Although much of their research compared those who were subliminally primed (and therefore unaware) to those who were explicitly shown stimuli, a parallel could be made here as those who did not realize that the brands they were generating or rating were the same they had seen earlier were presumably equally unaware of the source of their feelings.

In fact, these results appear to fit well with Jacoby and Kelley's (1987) conceptualization of memory being capable of being used as an object or as a tool. When used as a tool, the focus is on the present task at hand and memory works to unconsciously influence behavior. When used as an object, memory is used as something to be searched and used in a much more effortful and intentional way. In the present research, those who treated memory as a tool focused on the attitude questions only and their memory—as measured through the increased conceptual fluency—guided their judgments. On the other hand, those who were aware of the connection between the tasks used memory as an object to be searched, helping them to understand the source of their conceptual fluency, which in turn helped to discount any increase in positive affect.

Similarly, these results suggest a type of sleeper effect may have occurred. Although time is typically seen as an important element of the sleeper effect, causing individuals to remember a message while forgetting the source of the message, Jacoby, Kelley, Brown, and Jasechko (1989) argued that it was not that time caused participants to forget the source; rather, time caused participants to not think back to the source of the message and instead use memory as a tool to influence attitudes. In other words, it is not that individuals forget the source, it is that individuals are cognitive misers who do not want to exert the energy it requires to remember the source. In the context of this study, then, it is possible that participants could have remembered that they had seen the brands before but did not try to recall them, which therefore means that they did not connect the source of their positive feelings with that previous exposure.

The results of Study 3 also suggest that advertisement exposure acts as a moderator between conceptual fluency and attitudes. Without exposure to the brand names, there were no differences in attitudes based on fluency; however, once exposure was taken into account, a relationship developed. In this way, it can be conceptually explained that the presence or absence of the advertisement is moderating the relationship between conceptual fluency and attitudes. On its face, this is of note because the baseline (control group's) fluency alone did not predict positive affect; rather, it was only once the advertisement exposure occurred that there was an increase in positive affect associated with the fluency.

Moving forward, the results of this research suggest that it is important not just to measure memory accessibility, but rather the type of memory accessibility. Previous research has repeatedly demonstrated that perceptual fluency is affectively positive, yet this was not found to be the case here. Although some possible explanations were suggested, there is a need to further explicate fluency to try to understand when perceptual or conceptual matter most—if at all. A starting point could simply be re-conceptualizing Bornstein and D'Agostino's (1992, 1994) model as the fluency/attributional model, losing the perceptual component in its name as it fails to consider the contributions of conceptual fluency.

That said, this study did contain a few limitations worth acknowledging as they point to additional needed studies. The first relates to the nature of the participants themselves. The sample was entirely composed of undergraduate students in the Southeastern United States. Although there is no reason to

believe that the processing effects that were being investigated in this research should be age or location specific, it would still be desirable to have a more diverse sample.

Another potential limitation relates to the artificial nature of certain components of the research design. Everything was designed to look like what participants would encounter in real life; nevertheless, this is not entirely possible, especially in Study 3 when real news websites were being used as stimulus materials. Although the "realness" of the study was strength, especially with the use of known brands, using screenshots created an artificial web environment. It is, of course, unusual to look at a website and not be able to click on any of the links or be able to scroll down the page. Future research would be greatly served by creating environments that are most like what users experience in everyday life.

A second artificial aspect of this research is that the encoding was caused entirely by instructions—that is, participants were specifically instructed to evaluate a brand or logo (studies 1 and 2) or click on an advertisement (study 3). Although this appeared to work well, it is still an artificial manipulation. After all, individuals are never given instructions on how to look at a webpage whenever they are surfing the internet on their own time. Finding ways to manipulate the formal structure of the advertisement in order to induce different types of processing is one major line of future research. In advertising research, the ultimate goal is to establish the most effective ways to persuade the target audience without their knowledge. Although it would be nice to be able to tell the audience how to encode a message, that is never going to happen. Instead, it is possible to try to explore ways to change the features of the message in order to induce the type of processing in which you are interested.

Another important research question that would build on the current results would be to investigate how long the increase in fluency can last. Past research investigating implicit memory performance has suggested that the durability of cognitive primes can last quite a considerable time. In fact, implicit memory measures have shown enhanced performance after an entire week has passed (Tulving, Schacter, & Stark, 1982). An interesting question, then, is to see how long a prime with a known brand would last. This question is particularly important when thinking about the many messages an individual receives in the course of a day. Future research could explore what Bargh (2006) has termed "second generation" priming questions. If we know that showing the ad for Nike or Adidas primes those brand names, what happens when both are shown to participants? In other words, which "prime" wins? Or would they simply cancel each other out?

The answer to that question could, in part, rely on various moderators that could play an important role in determining the effectiveness of a prime. For instance, familiarity has been used as a moderator in past advertising research (Coates, Butler, & Berry, 2006). Could brand familiarity moderate the effectiveness of the prime, therein setting up a mediation-moderation model of advertising effectiveness?

Finally, future endeavors could also use behavioral measures as the key dependent variable. Although it is nice to be able to demonstrate that implicit memory performance correlates with attitudes, an even better outcome—especially from the perspective of advertising—is to demonstrate that there could be actual changes in behavior. Although the design of those types of experiments can be tricky, behavioral outcomes have been used in consumer behavior research in the past and so trying to determine the relationship between fluency and behavior could be fruitful.

In summary, though, the present research makes a number of significant contributions to the current literature. First, it differentiates between conceptual and perceptual fluency. In that differentiation, results suggest that for known brands, it is conceptual rather than perceptual fluency that drives positive affect—a clear break from most prior research. Second, it demonstrates that an awareness of that fluency may dampen or extinguish any positive gains made by the prior exposure. This suggests that if consumers make effortful attempts to consider their evaluations of brands, they are much less likely to be susceptible to the influence of advertisements.

Bibliography

Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. London: Sage Publications.

Bargh, J. A. (2006). What have we been priming all these years? On the development, mechanisms, and ecology of nonconscious social behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *36*(2), 147-168.

Barnhardt, T. M., & Geraci, L. (2008). Are awareness questionnaires valid? Investigating the use of posttest questionnaires for assessing awareness in implicit memory tests. *Memory & Cognition*, *36*(1), 53-64.

Bornstein, R. F., & D'Agostino, P. R. (1992). Stimulus recognition and the mere exposure effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *63*(4), 545-552.

Bornstein, R. F., & D'Agostino, P. R. (1994). The attribution and discounting of perceptual fluency: Preliminary tests of a perceptual fluency/attributional model of the mere exposure effect. *Social Cognition*, *12*(2), 103-128.

Bowers, J. S., & Schacter, D. L. (1990). Implicit memory and test awareness. *Journal of Experimental Psychology. Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, *16*(3), 404-416.

Butler, L. T., & Berry, D. C. (2004). Understanding the relationship between repetition priming and mere exposure. *British Journal of Psychology*, *95* (4), 467-487.

Choi, Y. K., Lee, S., & Li, H. (2013). Audio and Visual Distractions and Implicit Brand Memory: A Study of Video Game Players. *Journal of Advertising*, *42*(2-3), 219-227.

Coates, S. L., Butler, L. T., & Berry, D. C. (2004). Implicit memory: A prime example for brand consideration and choice. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *18* (9), 1195-1211.

Coates, S. L., Butler, L. T., & Berry, D. C. (2006). Implicit memory and consumer choice: The mediating role of brand familiarity. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *20* (8), 1101-1116.

Finlay, K., Marmurek, H. H. C., & Morton, R. (2005). Priming effects in explicit and implicit memory for textual advertisements. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *54* (4), 442-455.

Hansen, J., & Wanke, M. (2009). Liking what's familiar: The importance of unconscious familiarity in the mere-exposure effect. *Social Cognition*, *27* (2), 161-182.

Hervet, G., Guerard, K., Tremblay, S., & Chtourou, M. S. (2011). Is banner blindness genuine? Eye tracking internet text advertising. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *25*(5), 708-716.

Jacoby, L. L., Kelley, C., Brown, J., & Jasechko, J. (1989). Becoming famous overnight: Limits on the ability to avoid unconscious influences of the past. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *56* (3), 326-338.

Jacoby, L. L., & Kelley, C. M. (1987). Unconscious influences of memory for a prior event. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *13* (3), 314-336.

Krishnan, H. S., & Shapiro, S. (1996). Comparing implicit and explicit memory for brand names from advertisements. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, *2*(2), 147-163.

Lee, A. Y. (2002). Effects of implicit memory on memory-based versus stimulus-based brand choice. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *39*(4), 440-454.

Lee, A. Y., & Labroo, A. A. (2004). The effect of conceptual and perceptual fluency on brand evaluation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *41*(2), 151-165.

MacKenzie, S., Lutz, R., & Belch, G. (1986). The role of attitude toward the ad as a mediator of advertising effectiveness: A test of competing explanations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *23*(2), 130-143.

Mulligan, N. W. (2004). Memory: Implicit versus explicit. In L. Nadel (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of cognitive science* (pp. 1114-1120). London: Nature Publishing Group/MacMillan.

Northup, T., & Mulligan, N. W. (2013a). Conceptual implicit memory in advertising research. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *27*(1), 127-136.

Northup, T., & Mulligan, N. (2013b). Online advertisements and conceptual implicit memory: Advances in theory and methodology. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *28*(1), 66-78.

Parker, A., & Dagnall, N. (2009). Effects of retrieval practice on conceptual explicit and implicit consumer memory. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *23*(2), 188-203.

Roediger, H. L., & McDermott, K. B. (1993). Implicit memory in normal human subjects. In F. Boller & J. Grafman (Ed.), *Handbook of Neuropsychology*, vol. 8, 63-131. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Schacter, D. L. (1987). Implicit memory: History and current status. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, *13*(3), 501-518.

Tulving, E., & Schacter, D. L. (1990). Priming and human memory systems. *Science*, *247*(4940), 302.

Tulving, E., Schacter, D. L., & Stark, H. A. (1982). Priming effects in word-fragment completion are independent of recognition memory. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, *8*(4), 336-342.

Vandeberg, L., Murre, J., Voorveld, H., & Smit, E. (2015) Dissociating explicit and implicit effects of cross-media advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, *34*(5), 744-764.

Yang, M., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R. (2007). The effectiveness of brand placements in the movies: levels of placements, explicit and implicit memory, and brand-choice behavior. *Journal of Communication*, *57*(3), 469-489.

Yang, M., Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R., Dinu, L., & Arpan, L. M. (2006). The effectiveness of "in-game" advertising: Comparing college students' explicit and implicit memory for brand names. *Journal of Advertising*, *35* (4), 143-152.

Yoo, C. Y. (2007). Implicit memory measures for web advertising effectiveness. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *84*(1), 7-23.

Yoo, C. Y. (2008). Unconscious processing of web advertising: Effects on implicit memory, attitude toward the brand, and consideration set. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *22* (2), 2-18.

Yoo, C. Y. (2010). Effects beyond click-through: Incidental exposure to web advertising. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *15*(4), 227-246.

Zajonc, R. B. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Monographs*, *9*(2 Pt. 2), 1-27.

A Multi-layered Analysis of *The New York Times* Op-Ed: A Case Study

By Nashwa Elyamany[*]

Newspaper Opposite-Editorial articles (Op-Eds) represent an important form of intellectual debate that communicate views on issues of public policy and help shape public opinion. They are challenging, information rich, and persuasive short media texts imbued with worldviews, arguments, sarcasms, and biases, hence provide saliency cues regarding key national and international affairs. Recent police killings of citizens in the US have attracted massive coverage in the media, predominantly in the Op-Ed section of The New York Times in 2015. Instances of killing unarmed African Americans have come to the forefront of the discussion on race and race relations. Informed by Critical Discourse Analysis, this case study is a multi-layered qualitative analysis of the Baltimore unrest media coverage, particularly in one article authored by a guest contributor in The New York Times. To identify how the case of the Baltimore unrest is rhetorically represented in media discourse, the study is premised on an eclectic approach drawing on Appraisal Theory, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and Systemic Functional Grammar. The paper aims to: first, pinpoint the inherent appraisal resources used by Connolly to frame his argument and dialogically position the intended audiences in (dis)alignment with his worldviews; second, showcase the metaphoric repertoire that serves his ideological stance; third, highlight the overall transitivity profile that frames his argument of the Baltimore unrest. Despite the fact that emotional, ethical, and logical appeals are invested on, the writer makes calculated choices, leaning the most on the last two to promote, persuade, and strengthen his arguments, on the one hand, and to align the intended readers with the ideologically laden messages therein, on the other.

Keywords: appraisal, conceptual metaphor, opposite-editorial, transitivity.

Introduction

"*Living in a society that constantly marginalizes you, invalidates your experiences and emotions, and fosters insecurity, it becomes an uphill battle to love yourself. Based on the messages that we receive from all corners of society (from politics to economics, from media to schools), we are taught to hate ourselves. To affirm, value, and validate yourself—to love yourself—amidst this daily onslaught of disparaging messages is not only political but also radical. It is radical because you're not supposed to survive*". (Pate, 2014)

High-profile police brutality is arguably the most divisive national issue and alarming flashpoint in race relations in the US (Klinger, 2012). Police excessive use of force continues to proliferate and is once again in the national and international spotlight in the wake of several recent controversial fatal shootings of citizens, notably in 2014. The US began to experience a crisis of police legitimacy as a natural consequence of these events (Cook, 2015; Mellman, 2015; Nix & Pickett, 2017; Wolfe & Nix, 2016). The acts of violence

---
[*] Head of Languages Department, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT), Egypt.

against black people have spurred nationwide furor over the implicit racial bias, prompting politicians, journalists, and scholars alike to question the nexus of race, criminal justice, and police militarization. A large body of literature sheds light on the causes of police killings and consistently demonstrates that the fatal brutality correlates with violent crime rates, income inequality, and racial heterogeneity (Bielejewski, 2016; Legewie & Fagan, 2016).

Minority communities are deeply affected by the publicized examples of police violence (Weitzer, 2015), not excluding Baltimore. Notorious for the high violent crime levels, Baltimore is the largest city in Maryland. Over the years, severe tension grew on account of the high levels of poverty, racial segregation, and zero-tolerance policies that prevailed the city, targeting African American civilians in epidemic proportions, who were, compared to other racial groups, systematically preyed upon. During the Baltimore unrest in 2014, the police were facing a challenging period of turmoil as incidents of police use of force against minorities continued to draw national attention. Anecdotally, sensational videos documenting some of these incidents have gone viral, generating significant media attention, fueling intense scrutiny and public discontent with the police (Weitzer, 2015). In doing so, police misconduct has experienced an unprecedented new visibility (Victor & McPhate, 2016).

One remarkable incident was on April 12, 2015 when the police arrested Freddie Gray, a young Black man, for allegedly possessing an illegal switchblade knife. Footage of the arrest showed Freddie Gray being dragged to a police van seeming limp and screaming in pain (Stolberg & Babcock, 2015). On April 18, protests broke out outside the Baltimore Police Department in the Western district as the young man remained in a coma. When Freddie Gray died on the following day, because of a spinal cord injury, the city seemed to reach a tipping point and outburst in civil unrest (Kindy, Lowery, Rich, Tate, & Jenkins, 2016). Protests galvanized throughout the city after Gray's death and peaked with riot and violence. Days of protests and rioting resulted in millions of dollars' worth of looting, property damage, and destruction within the city (Wegner, 2015). Mainstream media turned their lens to America's many disadvantaged minorities, largely due to the instigation of the massive coverage that sparked civil unrest in several American cities (Culhane, Boman, & Schweitzer, 2016; Pyrooz, Decker, Wolfe, & Shjarback, 2016; Williams, Bowman, & Jung, 2016).

More specifically, the killings of black citizens in Baltimore have garnered attention and massive coverage in the Opposite-Editorial article (henceforth Op-Ed) of *The New York Times*, particularly in 2015. The Op-Ed debuted in *The New York Times* on September 21, 1970, and since its inception, it is written by a diverse array of elite experts on the salient issues of the day with the purpose of prompting civic discourse and shaping public opinion (Golan, 2010, 2013). Strategically located in most daily newspapers in the time being, the Op-Ed is a rather short, in-depth reflection meant to bridge readership and feature several critical lenses on complex realities. Ideally speaking, it is a rich terrain consecrated to solicit a broad range of voices and accommodate opinions of those not affiliated to the newspapers on issues of public interest to enhance readers' ability of making informed decisions and opinions.

Over the past few decades, Op-Ed writing has taken on prominence and evolved into an art of its own; the Op-Ed pages of *The New York Times* are no exception. Op-Eds have become challenging, information rich, and persuasive media texts vested with worldviews, arguments, sarcasms, and biases, hence provide saliency cues regarding national pressing issues. It becomes, therefore, germane to critically examine the rhetorical strategies and ideologies infused within and unravel how Op-Ed authors provide readers with (un)balanced exposure of competing issue stands, with the ultimate aim of uncovering the larger ideologically (un)biased discourses therein. As van Dijk (1993, p. 241) posits, elite discourses (political, racial, educational, and academic) find expression through the mediating and reinforcing functions of the media, and, accordingly, provide the dominant worldview and control public opinion. Since language is instrumental to the institutionalization of (a)symmetries and dominance, it can also be used to subvert them. Van Dijk (1991, 2000, 2006, 2015) argues that the dominant textual representations in journalistic discourse have the potential to position readers and naturalize particular underlying ideologies by which social actors are judged. With this line of thought in mind, Op-Ed articles, being explicitly subjective, value laden, and evaluative, represent an important form of intellectual debate whereby readers are positioned to regard some of the social actors in a more positive light and others in a more negative light.

Literature Review

A substantial body of research on journalistic discourse, particularly editorials and opinion pieces, is discernible in the literature to date (see, for example, Ansary & Babaii, 2005; Bolivar, 1994; García Orosa, López García, & Gallur Santorum, 2013; Healy, 2011; Jegede, 2015; Lawal, 2015; Le, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010; Lee & Lin, 2006; van Dijk, 1992, 1998; Vestergaard, 2000a, 2000b; Wang, 2007; Zarza & Tan, 2016). Several models of analysis have been developed for the analysis of editorials, namely: Flower's (1991) that focuses attention on the discourse participants and the linguistic strategies of beliefs and values; van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive approach that places emphasis on the production and interpretation of texts; and Lihua's (2009) that incorporates evaluation in the analysis of the editorial discourse. A consistent pattern in terms of the rhetorical organization and stylistic strategies of these genres (to frame particular ideologies, advance specific propositions, and shape public opinions) is well documented in prior scholarship. Whereas some studies dwell upon the use of evaluative language in editorials (Blanco, 2011; Morley, 2009; Plungian, 2001), other studies are geared toward the use and form of storytelling techniques in news texts (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013a, 2013b; Van Krieken, Sanders, & Hoeken, 2016) and the effects of such techniques on the engagement levels with news texts (Shen, Ahern, & Baker, 2014; Van Krieken, Sanders, & Hoeken, 2015).

Seemingly sublimated to the editorial page, the Op-Ed dialogue is essentially one that is among readers, experts, and freelancers, unfettered by the newspaper's

official editorial positions (Salisbury, 1988, p. 317). Despite the importance of the Op-Ed genre as a journalistic forum that communicates views on issues of public policy, overtly evaluate events, and persuade readers, hence help shape public opinion, the extant scant research is geared solely toward Op-Ed's use of issue-framing (see, for example, Golan, 2010, 2013; Porpora & Nikolaev, 2008) and not from critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspectives. Van Dijk (1996, 2000) reiterates that newspaper opinion discourses, including commentaries, play an important role in the formation and shifting of public opinion, in setting the political agenda, and in influencing social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action. Therefore, when examining media discourse surrounding racial issues in Op-Eds, it is imperative to analyze media representations of police violence incidents from appraisal, cognitive, and systemic functional vantage points.

Objectivity in reporting incidents in newspapers is a long-standing myth (White, 2006) heavily invested on in studies premised on the various traditions of CDA (see, for example, Bendarek, 2006; Van Dijk, 1985, 1988, 2006, 2015; Fairclough, 2013). These scholars are highly influential in advancing the view that a dialectic relationship exists between the linguistic features of texts and the institutions, social practices, and social conditions in which the texts are embedded. The role of sources in the news has certainly received some attention in the linguistic journalistic literature (Sundar, 1998; Manning, 2001). However, little attention is paid to the evaluative role sources play in the content of the Op-Ed pages whereby external voices are allowed to speak their minds much more loudly than authors do. In view of the hermeneutic nature of discourse analysis (Macken-Horarik 2003; Wodak & Meyer 2001), it is acknowledged that in certain instances the same locutions can be interpreted differently depending on the reading position adopted (in support of, or as opposed to, the propositions made). Depending on the type and stance of the newspaper, these opinions may vary considerably in their ideological presuppositions. Do gatekeepers of newspapers select Op-Ed guest contributions that tacitly encode and reinforce the paper's worldview in alignment with its editorial orientation? Alternatively, do the Op-Eds of guest contributors act as a medium for the articulation of divergent opinions absent of institutional policy? This is an issue worthy of inspection from a CDA perspective, especially in argumentation primarily driven by evaluation in journalistic discourse.

On a different note, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) resolves the incongruities of linguistic metaphors by establishing a similarity between two apparently dissimilar entities (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). In (mediated) political media discourse, metaphor goes beyond being merely a cognitive phenomenon to being a strategic rhetorical resource for winning consensus and projecting certain truths and ideologies. In fact, metaphor has the power to transform complex political realities into more readily graspable concepts (Bougher, 2012); it may further be employed manipulatively to serve political agendas (e.g., arouse people's emotions, or privilege/rationalize particular accounts of social reality). Since CDA is geared towards the deconstruction of ideologically (un)biased discourses, metaphor appears to be among the covert linguistic tools

that may mask subtle (a)symmetries and repressions. In a similar vein, the representations of experiential meanings in Op-Eds are always social and cultural constructs realized by the grammatical system of transitivity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In the selective representation of states of being, actions, events, and situations, transitivity choices signal bias, manipulation, and ideology in media discourse. The choices a writer makes, accordingly, are ideologically significant. Van Dijk (2015) corroborates how possible manifest and latent meanings of individual texts relate to patterns of textual features and the socio-cultural and institutional context of their production and consumption.

In light of the aforementioned account, the current study aims to contribute to the Op-Ed scholarship by analyzing the source and content diversity strategies of an African American male guest contributor's Op-Ed article in *The New York Times.* This is in thorough examination of how evaluative stance and authorial/non-authorial voices are enacted in journalistic discourse from appraisal, cognitive and systemic functional vantage points.

Research Questions

The overarching research questions of the study are:

1. What are the inherent appraisal resources that shape the argument of Connolly's Op-Ed article in dialogic positioning of the intended audiences to be supportive of, or otherwise opposed to, the argument made?
2. What is the metaphoric repertoire that serves Connolly's ideological stance in the Op-Ed article under study?
3. What is transitivity profile of the Op-Ed article that helps galvanize Connolly's argument on the Baltimore unrest?

Case Study

A random selection of one Op-Ed article from the online version of *The New York Times* thematizing key controversial issues regarding the Baltimore unrest, and published on May 1, 2015, represents the case study for analysis. The research endeavor follows the case study method (Perry, 2011) for the information rich, in-depth analysis it affords. The article is entitled "*Black Culture Is Not the Problem*", retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com. It is written by the guest contributor Nathan Connolly, an associate professor of history in Johns Hopkins University, who writes about "racism, capitalism, politics, and people's overlapping understandings of property rights and civil rights in the US and the wider Americas" (https://history.jhu.edu/directory/nat han-connolly/). Among the highest average circulation rates of national newspapers (as cited on www.auditedmedia.com), *The New York Times* is favored in the current study for the quality of coverage and the political leaning and ideological affiliation it celebrates. More specifically, during the Baltimore unrest,

it has kept the audiences informed about the high-profile cases of unarmed African-American men allegedly killed by police officers, reporting the latest and most significant news about them.

Methodology

This case study is an exploratory, multi-layered qualitative analysis of how the nationwide case of police killings and the Baltimore unrest are covered in the media discourse of the Op-Ed article under study. The paper is premised on a hybridized approach that rests on a trio of analytical frameworks: Appraisal Theory, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and the transitivity system that falls under Systemic Functional Grammar.

Martin and White's (2007) appraisal theory provides a fine-grained taxonomy of lexical realizations for the analysis of evaluation in language. The system of *attitude* constitutes the main resource for evaluating, adopting stances, constructing textual personas, and managing interpersonal positionings and relationships whereas the other two systems, *graduation* and *engagement*, are attendant systems that contribute to attitude and function simultaneously. The *attitude* system enables the author to foreground his subjective presence through the construal of three main semantic domains, namely, *affect* (emotional states), *judgement* (evaluation of people and their social behaviors), and *appreciation* (evaluation of entities, processes, and phenomena) in either explicit or implicit manners, positive or negative ways.

The *engagement* system is concerned with the linguistic resources the writer uses to adopt a particular stance (interpersonal positioning) toward the propositions/values they advance as well as the intended audience they address. This is materialized by acknowledging their voice and/or other prior voices to either *expand* or *contract* the dialogic space, thereby creating possibilities for the reader to comply with or resist the position(s) constructed by the text. The *graduation* system operates across two axes of scalability: force and focus. Critically, choices in graduations of attitude and engagement affect strength of feeling and level of commitment to value positions (they either "*up-scale*" or "*down-scale*" evaluations).

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), developed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), argues that metaphor allows us to understand abstract areas of experience in terms of more concrete, embodied ones. In the simplest sense, within CMT metaphor is a cross-domain mapping between the *source* (abstract concept) and *target* (physical experience) domains. The concept that becomes understood is the TARGET domain. The other concept, which facilitates understanding or discussion of the target is the SOURCE domain. Conceptual Metaphors (CMs) are written in capital letters whereas the linguistic realizations of CMs are written in small letters.

Finally, *transitivity* is a choice between processes (realized by a verb), participants (nominal group of a clause, typically representing persons, things, or abstract entities), and attributes ascribed to them (which typically characterize,

identify, or locate the participants), against background details concerning time, place, manner, etc. (circumstances) attendant to the process itself. Six process types are distinguished in the *transitivity* system of English, which represent human experience in terms of physical and physiological actions (*material* and *behavioral*), thinking and speaking actions (*mental* and *verbal*) and actions that signal the existence of something/someone and their identifying features (*existential* and *relational*). Each different process in the transitivity system requires different kinds of participants. Circumstances represent in which manner and under what conditions the process is realized.

Analysis

Appraisal Analysis

In light of the appraisal taxonomy, attending as it does to the very parameters of evaluation variability, a thorough account is detailed in the sub-sections below dwelling upon all levels of refinement across the three systems of *attitude*, *engagement*, and *graduation.*

Attitude. In negotiation of solidarity, which is a complex process, Connolly turns his Op-Ed page into a mixing bowl of explicit authorial/non-authorial attitudinal inscriptions and attitudinal invocations. While the former are locutions with consistent attitudinal value communicated via evaluative lexical items, the latter are triggered (or *betokened*) by means of various mechanisms of association and implication. To elaborate, the author's overt sympathetic attitude, basically of judgement and appreciation with lower occurrences of affect, is expressed through a wide range of grammatical structures and lexis (i.e. attitudinally laden adjectives, nouns, and verbs) such as "***spurred on***", "***ostensibly***", "***stained***", "***apparent***", "***dispossessed***", "***empathy***", and "***assault***", which are ascribed to several appraisers (social actors, including himself). From a different angle, with the help of lexical metaphors like "***fighting a myth***" the writer tokenizes some extended and concerted action, even though he refrains from overtly describing the action in these terms. There are no explicitly negative (or positive) terms in this utterance, yet, via implicature, it has the potential to activate negative judgement values by apparently neutral, ideational meanings, which nevertheless, depending upon the reader's social, cultural, and ideological position, are meant to evoke judgement responses.

Essentially, attitudinal evaluations and other potentially contentious meanings are largely confined to materials attributed to external voices. At the onset of his Op-Ed, Connolly lays out numerous affectual responses toward police brutality to express dissatisfaction, solicit sympathy, and share emotional responses to the Baltimore turmoil. The presence of negative evaluative polarities and semantic intensification related to gradable lexical items, articulated by multiple appraisers, is discernible in the article under study. The affects, of the realis type, infused in the article are fundamentally those of the reporter voice, primarily ascribed to the non-authorial voices embedded in the media text, to

negotiate solidarity and invite readers to sympathize and empathize. No traces of authorial affectual responses or references to his own mental state can be detected in the article, though. Example instantiations of affects to cite are italicized and bolded in the utterances below:

- "*Instead, we **lionize** [-affect: antipathy] people like Toya Graham*",
- "*A Department of Justice report **spurred on** [-affect: displeasure] explicitly racist policing…*",
- "*the mayor later **expressed regret** [-affect: unhappiness]*", and
- "*…most observers **did not see an understandable social response** [-affect: disinclination] to apparent state inaction*".

It is noteworthy in this regard that reports of affectual responses frequently act as tokens of other types of attitude, specifically to invoke judgements of human behavior, as indicated in the examples above. Connolly does not assign major importance to affect in the article, and proceeds with clear negative judgments of the social sanction type against a few social actors with references to prior statements, incidents, and positions. The author's attitude toward the racial disparities sweeping America is expressed mostly through inscribed, negative instantiations of judgments within the sub-category of propriety in disapproval of the current situation in black America. All forms of criticism Connolly provides are limited in terms of the moral or legal assessments, which encompass evaluative resources for assessing human behavior by reference to a society's system of moral and legal norms. Propriety is expressed in the italicized and bolded phrases in the utterances that follow:

- "*…they saw **thugs**…**criminal and thugs** [-judgement: social sanction: propriety]*",
- "*…they are also fighting myth about **degenerate** [-judgement: social sanction: propriety] black culture*",
- "*…Instead, we **lionize** [-judgement: social sanction: propriety] people like Toya Graham*",
- "*…a city and a country that still **segregates people** [-judgement: social sanction: propriety] along racial lines*", and
- "*…a political culture that has long **bound black bodies** [-judgement: social sanction: propriety] to questions of property*".

As indicated above, propriety values concern the social sphere of right-versus-wrong or good-versus-evil behaviors, which most societies penalize via law enforcements. Moreover, attitudinal judgments of the political actors frequently include comments on their moral character with respect to their truthfulness and ethical norms of behavior. The negatively assessed examples are indicative. For instance, how the observers or the mayor himself perceives those killed black people (as thugs and criminals) is out of a dominant ideology about the black culture at large, on the one hand, and out of a desire for social acceptance by the obsolete system that binds them, on the other.

The attitudinal arrangements in the Op-Ed under study further operate somewhat indirectly and potentially invoke negative judgements of those who might be deemed responsible for the killings of black people or their parlous circumstances. These negative judgements are in alignment with simultaneously validated and intensified sourcing of similar assessments (as eventually illustrated in the engagement section). The author shows readers that it is not about a white- or black-dominant city, it is a nationwide problem of police violations to constitutional rights, even in the black-dominant Baltimore. Police problems are merely a subset of a broader racist system and evidence of long-standing problems with police racism and excessive violence is emphasized.

Connolly further applies his perspective to a series of issues prevalent in black America as shown in the italicized and bolded instantiations of negative appreciation of the valuation type. In the context of this study, valuation concerns the non-aesthetic appraisal of the evaluated entities leaning the most on social worth, which are to some extent institutionalized. Example instantiations of valuation subsume:

- "*…Commentators noted* **the absence of black representatives [-appreciation: valuation: discredit/lack of recognition]** *among Ferguson's elected officials and its police leadership*",
- "*Ferguson's mostly white City Council and its courts* **spurred on explicitly racist policing** [-appreciation: valuation: harm] *in part to* **harvest fines** [-appreciation: valuation: harm] *from black residents*", and
- "*Yet the city still has* **one of the most stained records of police brutality** [-appreciation: valuation: harm] *in recent years*".

The examples above show that packaging events as entities and appreciating them in terms of valuation functions as a resource for contextualizing affect and judgement. Hence, readers are repositioned as the text unfolds to be more aligned, in terms of their moral and political response, to the rhetoric therein. Overall, the inscribed and invoked subjective attitudes co-articulate with the discursive construction of Connolly's ideological stance.

Engagement. Engagement characterizes how Connolly dialogically positions himself with respect to his audience and the propositions referenced in the article in alignment with the evaluative stance of the external voices. Assuming some readers may resist the positions advanced by the Op-Ed article, Connolly uses a dialogic weaving of different voices to naturalize a number of positions and negotiate solidarity with the readership in a time of social and civil unrest in the US. The point of departure here is the distinction between two dialogic orientations: *monogloss* (dialogic contraction) in the form of bare assertions and *heterogloss* (dialogic expansion) which signals an alternative position or source. More specifically, the author takes the liberty of alternating between two engagement choices; key to the choice is whether he construes the position of the text as given or at issue and up for debate. In analyzing engagement, the researcher is interested in the extent to which the author acknowledges these

alternative voices and, if he does, the different ways in which he interacts with them. Moreover, distinguishing voices is relevant to the current study since it helps illustrate the degree to which authorial subjectivity, or objectivity, is present in the article examined.

Connolly allows inter-subjective positioning as early as the first lines of his Op-Ed, skillfully manipulating instantiations of diaglossia to *expand*, thereby creating possibilities for the reader(s) to comply with (or otherwise resist) the positions constructed by the text. In effect, the *expansive* dialogic resources used by the author either *entertain* (i.e. the writer is represented as the *source* of the propositions or values, thereby making space for alternative viewpoints) or *attribute* (i.e. the author presents propositions and values as arising from some external sources). Both *entertaining* and *attributive* options are dialogically *expansive* as they ground the propositions in the subjectivity of an individual, thereby opening the space for dialogic alternatives.

When *attributing*, Connolly presents his proposition as one in a range of possible positions and abstains from explicitly interfering with the propositions made. This tendency makes it difficult to distinguish between authorial and non-authorial evaluative stance since voices are blurred. While some of the linguistic instantiations of the reported materials clearly stood out as outright forms of appraisal, others evaluated more moderately. Connolly deftly dissociates himself from the stances advanced, employing:

- verbal process reporting verbs with illocutionary force coupled with ostensibly unbiased sources. Examples are: "*commentators **noted** the absence of black representatives…*"; "*A Department of Justice report **highlighted** how Ferguson's mostly white City Council…*"; "*the footage **affirms** violence as the best way to get wayward black people under control*"; and "*the mayor **expressed regret***"),
- third-person mental process verbs as in "*Baltimore Police Commissioner **applauded**…*", "*Lester Freamon **understood** that following the money took our eyes off the street and up the chain of real political power*".

Fundamentally, attribution in *reporter voice* (rather than in *correspondent* and/or *commentator* voice) of the *acknowledge* type predominates as a form of impersonalization through which the authorial voice is backgrounded. No overt indication of where the authorial voice stands in relation to the attributed, unmarked, and neutral propositions can be detected. Despite variation in their evaluative intensity, almost all reported material are negatively evaluative, attributed to the external sources ofcommentators, experts, community leaders, eyewitnesses, among others. By virtue of cultural resonance, the intertextual positioning of these social actors and the exculpatory accounts of police violence recast police in antagonistic roles and resituate the civil unrest as foci of local political controversy.

The *attribute* choice, in heteroglossic terms, helps readers attend to the anticipatory aspects of the text, to the signals Connolly provides as to how he expects those he addresses to respond to the current propositions and the value

positions he advances. Martin and White (2007) argue that these reported selections seem to warrant objectivity and grant the paper protection from gross partiality. It is observable how the reporting verbs used at different junctures in the Op-Ed surface in tandem with *evidential standing* whereby the social standing or authority of the source acts as a sign (a token) that the associated value position is well-founded, reasonable or otherwise credible. Negative assessment is *evoked* through these purely experiential factual material which, as a result, has the potential to trigger a negative reaction in the reader's mind via processes of attitudinal inference. The reader is positioned to view the propositions made as highly warrantable and is aligned to certain truths of the matter. Connolly is describing a state of affairs based in facts but these facts, through appraisal, are furnished with subjective evaluations imbued with ideology.

An inquiry into the legitimizing function of intertextual positioning is worth dwelling upon. The interweaving of voices is part of the writer's effort to construct images, mobilize meanings, and further the argumentation to a climax to bring it to a closure, thus projecting a compliant reader aligned with the authorial/non-authorial voices. Legitimation is achieved through the cultivation of shared valuations of phenomena, incidents, and social actors. Because legitimatory force is contextually, culturally, and temporally bound, an element might be legitimating in one culture, but not in another; and the status of an element vis-à-vis legitimation will alter through time. It follows, alignment in this article does not necessarily mean real consensus; often it is a question of whose claims on the issues at hand are going to dominate. As a consequence, the boundary between knowledge and opinion in the description of social actors and actions is distorted. The critical question is then whether readers are able to separate facts from ideology in the course of the op-ed discourse or take these subjective colorations as simply objective descriptions of the way the world really is in the US.

The positioning of the reader to take a negative view of the police culture is further conditioned when the writer intervenes (i.e. when he *entertains*) in several intriguing ways by which authorial alignment with the reported value positions is signalled. In collegiality with the non-authorial voices infused in the media text, Connolly implicitly expresses the position he takes with regard to the attributed material through:

- *judgements* as in "**Baltimore Police Commissioner applauded her, pleading with parents to...**" whereby a positive judgement of the commissioner is invoked by reference to his actions;
- *modal adjuncts* as in "*the footage **certainly** affirms...*" whereby Connolly overtly declares his support of the reported proposition or point of view by passing positive judgement on the reliability of the source itself; and
- *intensifications* as in "**harvest fines**" and "**swift responses**" to amplify the focus of the utterances made.

These textual insertions show how the killings come amid public outrage over a series of deaths of unarmed black men at the hands of law enforcement

agents and highlight the brutality of the police culture. More vividly, there are utterances where the Op-Ed author issues directives that urge, command, or recommend actions with regard to the issue at hand, albeit less liberally, making them sound like a natural outcome emerging from the incidents and references he endorses early on in the article. The challenge Connolly faces is to shape an argument that would build shared values, yield immediate actions and, therefore, Connolly leans the most on:

- *bare assertions* as illustrated in "*The problem is not black culture. It is policy and politics, the very things that bind together the history of Ferguson and Baltimore and, for that matter, the rest of America*" to project representations of reported incidents or beliefs as categorical truths or facts; and
- *epistemic modal verbs* as shown in "*political leaders, black and otherwise, can help us all see…*" to express ability and reveal relations of authority and/or power.

In total, the interplay of authorial and non-authorial voices invites critical interpretations of the focal incidents that occur amid the controversy of police legitimacy. The different voices, along with the mental images they generate in the minds of readers, cultivate a civil right frame that, to Connolly, should attain prominence in the wider cultural space.

Graduation. Within attitude, the author manipulates graduation to amplify his negative feelings and assessments to scale up the strength of his utterances, hence serving the argument made. Implicitly, however, the vocabulary of focus often serves to index attitude, especially in cases where attitude is not inscribed in the amplified item. Particularly noteworthy is the use of deftly employed intensifiers, attitudinal lexis, and linguistic metaphors that augment the force or the intensity and degree of the realities the author is negotiating to maintain solidarity with the readers.

Intensifiers are visible in several instances, namely "*ostensibly*" and "*routinely*". Attitudinal lexis includes adjectives such as those in "*stained records*", "*degenerate black culture*", "*subsequent unrest*", "*unarmed African-Americans*", "*rioting son*", "*perceptible white power structure*", "*broad black inferiority*", "*bright spot*", "*preemptive riot*", "*swift responses*", "*all-too-familiar template*", and "*willful destruction*" and the reporting verbs used such as "*affirms*", "*highlighted*", and "*noted*". All linguistic metaphors function as a medium for arousing emotions as the basis of evaluation, thus persuasion. Several examples relating to various social actors and issues at stake are found, explicitly in "*in the wake of the shooting*", "*fighting myth*", "*harvest fines*", "*lionize people*", "*looting erupted*", "*on the heels of any ghetto economy*", and "*starved for income*" whereby Connolly is maximally committed to the value position being advanced.

Through force, evaluations are graded along a sliding scale of force or intensity in relation to intensification or quantification. When Connolly *upscales* the force of the meaning, it usually indicates that he is strongly

invested in the proposition whereas whenever it is *downscaled*, or the volume is turned down, it indicates he is less invested and is distancing himself from the proposition (the latter being seldom an option in the Op-Ed under study). Instances of softening are used as hedging, mitigating, or conciliatory devices in attempt to negotiate solidarity with the readers whom the author anticipates may not share his point of view. They express an explicit assessment of the degree of *intensity* (e.g., "*...and the **relative** confinement of black unrest to black communities during this week's riot...*") as well as *quantity* with respect to amount (e.g., "*Slavery was **not so much** a labor system as it was a property regime*") and *extent* (e.g., "*What we do not prosecute **nearly well enough**, however, is the daily assault on black people's lives*").

In sum, graduation resources elucidate the fact that many of Connolly's projections of alignment are not feigned. There are so many good reasons for locals to be outraged. The latest shootings in a string of highly publicized white-on-black police shootings in the US leave little room for debate; it has called into question police treatment of black America. Time has come for a national reckoning on race and policing in America.

Cognitive Analysis

In probing of how meanings are mobilized from a cognitive perspective, this analysis illuminates the metaphoric repertoire of Connolly's Op-Ed, which relates to his stance and ideology, showing how metaphorical framing has the potential to compromise the quality of argumentation. In their mediation of the racial issue under scrutiny, several linguistic metaphors reveal Connolly's apparently inadvertent ideological stance toward police brutality and violence. To create a persuasive emotional argument, the author makes use of a vast array of linguistic metaphors (as detailed earlier in the graduation section).

On a related note, the most dominant conceptual metaphor emerging in the Op-Ed discourse, inscribed in part by the nominal group, is "THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IS ONE FAMILY". Deploying a metaphor with high public resonance is a useful rhetorical tool to advance contentious claims. In terms of this conceptual metaphor, Connolly's argument is situated in a larger context, an "all-inclusive" America. This metaphor serves as a tool for prescribing solutions for the unfolding of the Baltimore killings. The metaphor is linguistically realized via Connolly's effective use of "*we*", its object variant "*us*", and the possessive adjective "*our*(s)", inducing the readership to conceptualize group identity, solidarity, and a national collective. More precisely, "*we*" is used anaphorically to render the conceptual metaphor, foregrounding responsibility and agency and assuming national singularity and homogeneity thus creating a discourse of sameness especially when decisions are controversial as illustrated in:

- "*Yet when black people of influence make these arguments, it prevents **us** from questioning Baltimore...*", "*Instead, **we** lionize people like the Baltimore mother who went upside the head of her rioting son*",

- "*We forget, for instance, about how officials, in their fear of black youth, issued what witnesses...*", and
- "*We have a right to expect that **our** administrators will use the bully pulpit to speak about the policies, systems and structures over which they preside*".

As shown in these utterances, "***we***" is significant; it puts all the social actors in the same boat (with the author included) in spite of the gross disparities that exist. "***We***" clearly presupposes the existence of a "***they***" and/or "***you***". Thus, by inclusion, it, at the same time, excludes and assumes a parallel "***other***" exists elsewhere. In Connolly's Op-Ed, "***we***" is brought to full political effects in several occurrences, simultaneously inclusive of solidarity and exclusive of rejection. There is a constant ambivalence and slippage between exclusive and inclusive "***we***", as a rhetorical device for both the formation of *in* and *out* groups and for making the border between the two less identifiable. The inclusive "***we***" involves the intended readers, which, in turn, helps the author emphasize particular linkages in the Baltimore unrest and mutes others, hence the metaphorical reasoning succeeds to advance dialogue with proponents (as well as opponents) and position readers to hold a similar view of the desired actions. All of these forces (guised by "***we***") once compounded, may increase young black civilians' capacity to trust police officers and optimize their ability to see themselves as fully respected and valued community citizens. To Connolly, despite the growing diversity of the US, "***we***" must find a way to live together as one human family.

In the Op-Ed examined, metaphors are strategically used to encode social meanings and cultural presuppositions, to assume consensus for the argument Connolly projects as truth. Not only do they complement the assertions made by the author but they help present a balanced content of the non-authorial voices integrated in the article as well.

Transitivity Analysis

Connolly's Op-Ed provides abundant examples of the ideological significance of transitivity. Transitivity choices unravel facets of the author's ideology and stance toward the prevalent situation in black America and foreground the measures that need to be taken for a better, shared world. The expression or obfuscation of agency is indicative of ideology, where participants who are agents in transitive constructions are afforded more power than participants who are agents of intransitive constructions. All citizens of America (signaled often times in the article through the inclusive "***we***") are agents of a greater number of transitive verbs. Although the different types of processes are selectively dealt with in this analysis, there seems to be a clear pattern that is worthy of inspection.

The majority of the processes are ***material*** and ***relational*** in type. Material process verbs of the *transformative* type relate to the appraisers mentioned in the article (be it citizens in general, officials, political leaders, or commentators) in the participant role of *Actor* (or social actors, so to speak). They are construed as initiators of action and hence as participants who, at least potentially, are

responsible for the events that transpired. The *Goal* (i.e. actions) of officials, for example, imply that the US is not for black people. Examples to cite are italicized and bolded in "*people **routinely borrowed against** other human beings. They **took out mortgages** on them*". and "*Ferguson's mostly white City Council and its courts **spurred on explicitly racist policing**, in part to **harvest fines** from black residents*". The material process type is mandated to attract sympathy and foreground the fact that it is the very actions of the officials, leaders, and the public (of which they have full control) that shape the dominant ideology pertaining to black culture and would in turn help change that ideology for a better America.

The attitude expressed through negative judgements in the article can be related to the number of negative material processes infused in the media text. What is happening in Ferguson or Baltimore is about so many issues, namely the systemic racism and the militarization of police work. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel toward the end of the Op-Ed if officials change their course of actions as shown in "*political leaders, black and otherwise, **can help** us all…they **can better use** the power they have to…by **devising** a fairer tax structure, by **investing** in public space, community policing, tenants' rights and a government jobs program, our leaders **can find** a way forward*".

Relational processes of the *identifying* type, on the other hand, surface in different junctures in the media text either to describe the status of the black people in America as in "*Slavery **was** not so much a labor system as it **was** a property regime*" and "*The problem **is** not black culture. It **is** policy and politics*", or to pinpoint what Americans should do as one family for a better shared life as in "*We **have** a right to expect that our administrators will use the bully pulpit to speak about the policies, systems and structures over which they preside*". In effective operation of these relational process verbs of the intensive/possessive type, Connolly expresses appreciation with respect to the political situation at stake. Living in a society where different rules apply to different citizens can be maddening to those getting the shorter end of the stick. To Connolly, it is the brutality of the police culture and violation of civil rights not the black culture that is under question in the US.

Connolly further makes effective use of "*circumstantial adjuncts*" of different types: cause, time, contingency, location, place, manner, condition, as well as others falling into different places in the sentence (at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of clauses). Several adverbial and prepositional phrases illuminate the circumstances associated with the range of processes used and the diverse discourse markers used orchestrate quite well in weaving the text together, producing a well-developed and structured argument, as well as sequencing the transitivity choices embarked on. Examples to cite are italicized and bolded in the utterances below:

- "***By devising** a fairer tax structure, **by investing** in public space, community policing, tenants' rights and a government jobs program, our leaders can find a way forward*" (**Manner**); and

- "***Back in the day***, *people routinely borrowed against other human beings*" **(Time)**.

Indeed, the orchestration of these processes serves the author's stance and ideology. While using language as a tool for deconstructing hidden power relationships has real value when examining social problems, it is important to remember that there is a great deal of power in solidarity as well. When it comes to solving social problems, it is solidarity, or true alignment, that engenders the greatest and most enduring social change.

Conclusion

This case study examines how Connolly's appraisal, cognitive, and transitivity choices frame the Baltimore unrest in line with the values, concerns, and fears of readership in his article in *The New York Times*. The researcher provides a socio-critical interpretation of how the Op-Ed argument contributes to inflame racial passions, and, by funneling audience attention toward certain topics and/or by influencing public perceptions of the national issue, highlights new social dynamics. Connolly's ideologically charged journalistic contribution reveals his primary agenda of calling attention to the racial disparities that have been a part of the criminal justice system for decades in the US. The Op-Ed may be read as impartial while at the same time it may advance a particular (axiological) value position. To Connolly, when it comes to the perceptions of how race impacts policing, it is almost as if black and white Americans live in two different worlds. Ending police brutality will require a reconstruction of the American social system so that it can provide affirmative action and reparations for African Americans.

Aligned with prior studies on editorials and opinion articles, a consistent pattern of representation for rhetorical appeal, namely the effective employment of a source and content diversity strategy, is detected to provide readers with a balanced exposure and a forum for debate on the national issue. The author and other social actors involved in the media text are strikingly similar in the evaluative position they advance with respect to police brutality; they strongly position the reader to take a negative view of the police and to sympathize with the black citizens. Despite the fact that emotional, ethical, and logical appeals are invested on, the writer makes calculated choices, leaning the most on the last two to promote, persuade, and strengthen his arguments, on the one hand, and to align readers with the ideologically laden messages therein, on the other.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research

This research endeavour is not without limitations. The first limitation is the nature of the paper being a case study. Caution should be exercised since the findings cannot be generalized beyond the randomly selected article until further research is carried out on a more representative sample. Op-Ed writers

may show divergent or convergent patterns of ideological stance across diverse corpora of newspapers, in dis(alignment) with their respective editorial policies and orientations. Future research projects can examine a diversity of Op-Eds from local and national newspapers written by a wider pool of male/female, black/white Americans of different academic/professional backgrounds of different political leanings.

The second limitation is the selection of *The New York Times*, a more liberal leaning newspaper, placing a great value on reports of social justice. The editorial policy or orientation of a news organization is an important filter through which the organization presents news reality. This filter is reinforced when ideologically sensitive issues are involved. The titles, affiliations, and contributions of syndicated columnists and freelancers may affect the manner in which issues of national concern are discussed and so are worthy of investigation on a more representative sample in future scholarship.

References

Ansary, H., & Babaii, E. (2005). The Generic Integrity of Newspaper Editorials: A Systemic Functional Perspective. *RELC Journal*, *36*, 271-295.

Bednarek, M. (2006). *Evaluation in Media Discourse: Analysis of Newspaper Corpus*. London and New York: Continuum.

Bielejewski, A. (2016). Gangbusters, mavericks, and the cop next door: dominant models of American policing in popular culture. *Kriminologisches Journal*, *48*(2), 106-127.

Blanco, M. P. (2011). The language of evaluation in English and Spanish editorials: A corpus-based study. In S. Goźdź-Roszkowski (Eds.), Explorations across languages and corpora, pp. 207-225. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Bolivar, A. (1994). The structure of newspaper editorials. In M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Advances in written text analysis*, pp. 276–294. London: Routledge.

Bougher, L. D. (2012). The case for metaphor in political reasoning and cognition. *Political Psychology*, *33*(1), 145-163.

Cook, P. J. (2015). Will the current crisis in police legitimacy increase crime? Research offers a way forward. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *16*(3), 71-74.

Culhane, S. E., Boman, J. H., & Schweitzer, K. (2016). Public perceptions of the justifiability of police shootings: The role of body cameras in a pre- and post-Ferguson experiment. *Police Quarterly*, *19*(3), 251-274.

Fairclough, N. (2013). C*ritical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Routledge.

Flower, R. (1991). *Language in the news*. London: Routledge.

García Orosa, B., López García, X., & Gallur Santorum, S. (2013). Analysis of the adaptation of the editorials of five newspapers from different European countries to the online environment. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, *68*, 485-500.

Golan, G. J. (2010). Editorials, Op-ed Columns Frame Medical Marijuana Debate. *Newspaper Research Journal*, *31*(3), 50-61.

Golan, G. J. (2013). The Gates of Op-Ed Diplomacy: Newspaper Framing the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. *International Communication Gazette*, *75*(4), 359-373.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.

Healy, D. (2011). *Ideologies and us versus them: A comparative study using systemic functional grammar of Irish and British editorials related to the ending of the IRA's armed campaign*. PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, Birmingham.

Jegede, O. O. (2015). Language and ideology in the media: A study of Nigerian newspaper editorials. *International Journal of English, Literature and Culture*, *3*(3), 76-84.

Kindy, K., Lowery, W., Rich, S., Tate, J., & Jenkins, J. (2016). Fatal shootings by police are up in the first six months of 2016. Post analysis finds. *The Washington Post*.

Klinger, D. (2012). On the problems and promise of research on lethal police violence: A research note. *Homicide Studies*, *16*(1), 78-96.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lawal, O. A. (2015). Pragmatics of truth and modality in newspaper editorials: An example of the Punch and the Tribune. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *5*(4), 688-693.

Le, E. (2002a). Themes and Hierarchical Structure of Written Texts. In M. Louwerse, W. van Peer (Eds.), *Thematics: Interdisciplinary Studies*, pp. 171-187. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Le, E. (2002b). The concept of Europe in *Le Monde*'s editorials: Tensions in the construction of a European identity. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *1*(2), 279-325.

Le, E. (2002c). Human rights discourse and international relations: *Le Monde's* editorials on Russia. *Discourse & Society*, *13*(3), 373-408.

Le, E. (2003). Information sources as a persuasive strategy in editorials: *Le Monde* and *The New York Times*. *Written Communication*, *20*(4), 478-510.

Le, E. (2004). Active participation within written argumentation: metadiscourse and editorialist's authority. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *36*(4), 687-714.

Le, E. (2006). *The Spiral of "Anti-Other Rhetoric" - Discourses of Identity and the International Media Echo*. Series: Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Le, E. (2007). Elites Dailies and Projections of Cultural Identities: A Comparison of *Le Monde* and *The New York Times*. In J. M. Bernardo Paniagua, G. Lopez Garcia, P. Sancho Cremades, E. Serra Alegre (Eds.), *Critical Discourse Analysis of Media Texts*, pp. 195-208. Valencia: Universitat de Valencia.

Le, E. (2010). *Editorials and the power of media: Interweaving of socio-cultural identities*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Lee, F. L. F., & Lin, A. M. Y. (2006). Newspaper editorial discourse and the politics of self-censorship in Hong Kong. *Discourse and Society*, *17*(2), 331-358.

Legewie, J., & Fagan, J. (2016). *Group threat, police officer diversity, and the deadly use of police force*. Columbia Public Law Research Paper No. 14-512.

Lihua, L. (2009). Discourse construction of social power: Interpersonal rhetoric in editorials of the China Daily. *Discourse Studies*, *11*(1), 59-78.

Macken-Horarik, M. (2003). Envoi: Intractable Issues in Appraisal Analysis? *Text*, *23*(2), 313-319.

Manning, P. (2001). *News and News Sources: A Critical Introduction*. London: SAGE Publications.

Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2007). *Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mellman, M. (2015). The crisis of police legitimacy. *The Hill*. May 5.

Morley, J. (2009). Lexical cohesion and rhetorical structure. In J. Flowerdew, M. Mahlberg (Eds.), *Lexical cohesion and corpus linguistics*, pp. 5-22. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Nix, J., & Pickett, G. T. (2017). Third-person perceptions, hostile media effects, and policing: Developing a theoretical framework for assessing the Ferguson effect. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *51*, 24-33.

Pate, S. (2014). The radical politics of self-love and self-care. *The feminist wire.*

Perry, F. L. (2011). *Research in Applied Linguistics: Becoming a Discerning Consumer* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge Press.

Plungian, V. (2001). The place of evidentiality within the universal grammatical space. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *33*, 349-357.

Porpora, D. V., & Nikolaev, A. (2008). Moral Muting in US Newspaper Op-eds Debating the Attack on Iraq. *Discourse and Communication*, *2*(2), 165-84.

Pyrooz, D. C., Decker, S. H., Wolfe, S. E., & Shjarback, J. A. (2016). Was there a Ferguson Effect on crime rates in large US cities? *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *46*, 1-8.

Salisbury, H. (1988). *A Time of Change: A Reporter's Tale of Our Time*. New York: Harper & Row.

Shen, F., Ahern, L., & Baker, M. (2014). Stories that count: Influence of news narratives on issue attitudes. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *91*(1), 98-117.

Stolberg, S. G., & Babcock, S. (2015). Scenes of chaos in Baltimore as thousands protest Freddie Gray's Death. *The New York Times*. April 25.

Sundar, S. (1998). Effect of source attribution on perception of online news stories. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *75*(1), 55-68.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1985). Structure of news in the press. In T. A. Van Dijk (Eds.) Discourse and Communication: New Approaches to the Analysis of Mass Media Discourse and Communication, pp. 69-93. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1988). *News as Discourse*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1991). *Racism in the press*. London: Routledge.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1992). Racism and argumentation: "Race riot" rhetoric in tabloid editorials. In F. H.van Eemeren (Eds.), *Argumentation illuminated*, pp. 242-259. Dordrecht: Foris.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). *Elite Discourse and Racism*. London: SAGE Publications.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1996). Opinions and ideologies in editorials Paper presented at the 4th International Symposium of Critical Discourse Analysis, Language, Social Life and Critical Thought (14-16 December, 1995), Athens.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). Opinions and ideologies in the press. In A. Bell, P. Garrett (Eds.), *Approaches to Media Discourse*, pp. 21-63. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2000). New(s) racism: A discourse analytical approach. In S. Cottle (Eds.), *Ethnic minorities and the media*, pp. 33-49. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *11*(2), 115-140.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Tannen, H. Hamilton, D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, pp. 466-485. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Son.

Van Krieken, K, Sanders, J., & Hoeken, H. (2015). Viewpoint representation in journalistic crime narratives: An analysis of grammatical roles and referential expressions. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *88*, 220-30.

Van Krieken, K., Sanders, J., & Hoeken, H. (2016). Blended viewpoints, mediated witnesses: A cognitive linguistic approach to news narratives. In B. Dancygier, W-L. Lu, A. Verhagen (Eds.). *Viewpoint and the Fabric of Meaning: Form and Use of Viewpoint Tools across Languages and Modalities*, pp. 145-168. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Vestergaard, T. (2000a). From genre to sentence: The leading article and its linguistic realization. In F. Ungerer (Eds.), *English media texts: Past and present*, pp. 151-175. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Vestergaard, T. (2000b). That's not news: Persuasive and expository genres in the press. In A. Trosberg (Eds.), *Analyzing professional genres*, pp. 97-113. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Victor, D., & Mcphate, M. (2016). Critics of law enforcement embrace Facebook Live and other video tools. *The New York Times*.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2013a). Subjectivity and story-telling in journalism. *Journalism Studies*, *14*(3), 305-320.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2013b). The strategic ritual of emotionality: A case study of Pulitzer Prize-winning articles. *Journalism*, *14*(1), 129-145.

Wang, W. (2007). The notions of genre and micro-genre in contrastive rhetoric research: Newspaper commentaries on the events of September 11th. *University of Sydney papers in TESOL*, pp. 83-117.

Wegner, Y. (2015). Unrest will cost city $20 million, officials estimate. *The Baltimore Sun*. May 26.

Weitzer, R. (2015). American policing under fire: Misconduct and reform. *Society*, *52*(5), 475-480.

White, P. R. (2006). Evaluative semantics and ideological positioning in journalistic discourse: A new framework for analysis. In I. Lassen, J. Strunek, T. Vestergaard (Eds.). *Mediating Ideology in Text and Image: Ten Critical Studies*, pp. 37-67. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Williams, H. E., Bowman, S. W., & Jung, J. T. (2016). The limitations of government databases for analyzing fatal officer-involved shootings in the United States. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 1-22.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2001). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications.

Wolfe, S. E., & Nix, J. (2016). The alleged "Ferguson Effect" and police willingness to engage in community partnership. *Law and Human Behavior*, *40*(1), 1-10.

Zarza, S., & Tan, H. (2016). Patterns of schematic structure and strategic features in newspaper editorials: A comparative study of American and Malaysian editorials. *Discourse and Communication*, *10*(6), 635-657.

Managing Ethical Dilemmas under Stressful Economic Circumstances among Journalists in Northern Ghana

By Amin Alhassan[†] & Muhammed Abdulai[‡]

This article explores the management of ethical dilemmas in stressful economic circumstances among journalists in the three Northern Regions of Ghana. It analyses the experiences of journalists during difficult ethical moments. In-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 30 working journalists, drawing 10 from each of the three northern regions. These are the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions. The study revealed that in practice, rather than working with the normative ethical framework defined by the codes of ethics of the Ghana Journalists Association, journalists are influenced by context-based pragmatism and their conduct is very much influenced by economic realities of satisfying basic needs. Again, the study revealed that most Ghanaian journalists understand the idealism of ethical norms and are very much aware of the GJA code of ethics, but see the practicability of the code as problematic. We recommend that the GJA increases its advocacy role on improving the working conditions of its members. It should also facilitate continuous professional development programs on media ethics in the changing media landscape. Improved working conditions and continuous professional development programs can assist its members in managing ethical dilemmas in stressful economic and social circumstances.

Keywords: ethical dilemmas, ethics, Ghana, journalism, stressful economic circumstances.

Introducing the Problem

In recent times, the Ghanaian media landscape has witnessed some dramatic news of job cuts, and voluntary retrenchment of media workers. Media General, owners of the *TV3 Network*, has between August and October 2018 reduced its staff by about 125, notably affecting its *Onua FM* and *3FM units*. *GN Media* and *TV Africa* have all, in recent times, reduced their workforce for the poor performance of their media industries and this has attracted the attention of the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) ("GIBA to meet labour unions," 2018). This national trend is in keeping with international trends. What makes the Ghanaian experience remarkable is that the global trend is just beginning to affect the local media industry. In the wake of these developments, job insecurity in an already precarious media labour market is likely to affect the quality of professionalism among journalists in Ghana, with dire consequences in northern Ghana, where the media economy is in a distressed state due to low advertising market (Alhassan, Odartey-Wellington, & Amadu, 2018). It is against this backdrop that we undertook a study on how journalists manage ethical dilemmas under stressful economic circumstances.

[†]Associate Professor of Communication, University for Development Studies, Tamale, Ghana.
[‡]PhD Candidate, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia and Lecturer, University for Development Studies, Tamale, Ghana.

Media and communication ethics are important in promoting transparent and accountable governance in modern democratic societies. The media and journalists in any country are believed to be a strong ally in shaping and forming the opinion of the population. In light of this, ethical questions are therefore tied to the core practices of journalism, and journalists are required to make sound moral decisions and judgements in their daily journalistic practices. However, quite often, journalists are confronted with dilemmas out of which they have to make decisions.

Professional associations with defined codes of ethics are self-regulatory mechanisms aimed at disciplining members to act within the law and moral norms of a given society. As Andrew Puddephatt puts it: "Self-regulation preserves independence of the media and protects it from partisan government interference" (Puddephat, 2011, p. 12). It is in this regard that the GJA has been active in reminding its members of the ethical boundaries of their practices. In a recent rare case where a member was proven to have used blackmail to extort five million Ghana cedis from the head of a utility service provider in Ghana in a bid to kill a story, the President of GJA took the initiative to report the matter to the Ghana Police for further investigation ("Journalist who demanded GHC5m," 2018). The vigilance of the GJA on matters of ethics speaks to an increasing national and public attention on moral governance of media practice.

Among researchers, increasing attention has been drawn on the issue of ethical dilemmas in journalism and the corrupting influence of inducements. In the context of Africa, previous studies on media and communication ethics have focused on newsroom practices, journalism ethics, "soli" (brown envelop) among others (Alhassan & Abdulai, 2019; Karikari, 1996; Hasty, 1999; Hasty, 2001; Kasoma, 2009; Chari, 2007; Frère, 2001; Berkeman & Shumovary, 2003; Skjerdal, 2010; MFWA, 2014). Again, a lot of these studies have been devoted to the potential negative effects of unprofessional journalistic practices and how it threatens development reporting (Kasoma, 2009; Diedong, 2008). For instance, through case study, historical summaries and illustrations, Berkeman and Shumovary (2003) discussed ethical dilemmas and challenges on online media practices such as: sourcing, intellectual property rights and conflict of interest in Zimbabwe. The study by Berkeman & Shumovary, highlighted ethical dilemmas faced by media professional who were engaged in online media practices in Zimbabwe. Again, Lohner, Banjc, and Neverla (2016) revealed that in Kenya, environmental journalists and editors are often faced with the dilemma of whether to pursue a story which they know is of public interest, but critical to an influential source and therefore risk being fired, or ignore the story and negate their professional obligation.

In Ghana, following the liberalization of the media landscape, the media are now quite diverse and pluralistic (Alhassan, 1998). As a result, the growing public perception is that journalistic conducts are often unethical and unprofessional. This has resulted in a growing body of empirical and critical studies on journalism and ethics in the media (Agbemenu & Tandoh, 2015; Diedong, 2006). For instance, in his study of the "Impact of Brown Envelop Journalism on Journalistic Practice in Zambia and Ghana," Kasoma (2009) applied both surveys and in-depth interviews

and analyzed the rampancy of the phenomenon in the two countries, and how journalists perceived the practice. The study revealed that brown envelope journalism was pervasive in both Ghana and Zambia.

While these bodies of research (Berkeman & Shumovary, 2003; Lohner et al., 2016; Kasoma, 2009) presented an excellent overview of the negative effects of unprofessional media practices, there is paucity of study on the ethical dilemmas journalists are faced with on their quest for making sound moral decisions in stressful economic circumstances in Africa. We define "stressful economic circumstances" as moments where an individual is faced with a spectre of want as he or she is challenged with meeting the basic requirements or basic needs of life for himself or herself and dependents.

For instance, a journalist with a monthly salary of about two thousand cedis (about 450 US dollars) undertakes an investigation of a banking fraud leading to a big story in which some senior bankers are involved. When a senior banker discovers that the publication of the story could end his career, he makes an inducement offer of fifty thousand cedis which is 25 times the journalist's monthly salary to kill the story. He or she turns down the offer, saying it is unethical and a corrupt practice. On reaching home, the journalist is confronted with disturbing news that his or her daughter has been admitted at the hospital and needs an emergency surgery to save her life. The hospital is demanding a five thousand cedis down payment before the surgery. The journalist is unable to take a loan from the bank and has no health insurance that covers the treatment. Under these circumstances, should the journalist revert to the offer from the banker to kill the story and be paid an amount which is ten times what is required to save the daughter's life? This illustration of "stressful economic circumstances" is a real-life story of a Ghanaian journalist. Facing a "limit situation," in a Freirean sense (Freire, 2005) as illustrated is not an uncommon experience for journalists working for low remunerations in northern Ghana. The question of whether to take the inducement or not, plays out daily in the lives of journalists and other media practitioners in northern Ghana. The figure of 2000 Ghana cedis monthly salary is national case scenario. Journalists working with private sector media in the northern part of the country earn an average of about 500 Ghana cedis, yet, it is commonly known that it is highly insufficient to cater for the basic needs of a nuclear family.

The main purpose of this study is specifically to seek an answer to the question: How do journalists rationalize how they make sound moral decisions under stressful economic circumstances in Northern Ghana? This study will contribute to the existing literature on media ethics and moral philosophy. This area of study is important because, on a daily basis, journalists are faced with decision making problems between two possible moral imperatives, deontological or situational, either of which may have their justification.

Conceptualizing Ethics and Ethical Dilemmas in stressful Economic Circumstances

Many attempts have been made to define ethics (Bentham, 2009; Fletcher, 1966; Karashani & Rioba, 2002). However, it can sometimes appear as nebulous and controversial as morality itself. To this end, Sanders (2003), defines ethics as the study of the grounds and principles for right and wrong human behavior. This implies a critical reflection and self-confrontation with the moral choices or actions that individuals make in their everyday activities. For instance, making a value judgment about the circumstances under which to accept a bribe and kill a story, and save a daughter's life because one is in a financially stressful situation, or turning down an offer, saying it is unethical and a corrupt practice because one wants to be objective and truthful in the discharge of his or her duty as a journalist.

Again, ethics deals with the problem of choosing between different domains of life and assumes there is a real choice between different kinds (Karashani & Rioba, 2002). This means that the study of ethics is not only limited to what constitutes good or bad actions, but making value judgments about individual actions. In addition, Frost (2015) asserts that ethics is a method of examining morality that permits decisions to be made when individuals are confronted with particular issues bordering on moral dilemmas. As mentioned early, journalism practice involves daily encounters with a range of issues that present ethical dilemmas for journalists who have to make sound ethical decisions. In connection with this, Merrill (2004) defines an ethical dilemma to mean a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two actions which present transgressing moral principles, either of which is acceptable. Again, Karashani & Rioba (2002) observed that journalists have contractual duties as employees; professional duties as journalists; duties of responsibility to source, and the public. In all these contractual duties, the journalist's obligation to choose how he/she performs his/her duties may depend on the interest of the journalist or whom he/she feels most loyal towards. Similarly, Hulteng (1976) noted that journalists are serving multiple interests, thus, the public interest, the journalist's self-interest and the interest of the public and these multiple services inevitably lead to conflict of interest. This is partly because human beings by nature are selfish and egoistic. In this context, the egoistic agenda of some journalists tend to override their professional responsibility to offer honest and dedicated service to the public on whose behalf they enjoy the privileges of the fourth estate of the realm.

Moreover, Owusu (2012) concludes that journalists have professional responsibility to stick to the truth and bound by the professional codes that are formed to uphold the truth. In this regard, journalists are supposed to adhere to the highest ethical standards in carrying out their professional duties. In addition, Retief (2002) noted that most societies trust that journalists would not betray the professional codes that are formed to uphold the truth. However, being human, these professional codes of conducts are sometimes betrayed by some journalists. In connection with this, Nasidi (2016) revealed that journalists in Nigeria sometimes behaved contrary to the professional duty to uphold the truth. The study attributed this to the complexities of Nigeria as a country, with its multiplicity of

ethnic groups, culture and religions, which turn to make journalists from opposite sides of these divides, oppose each other in their practice and generating conflicting journalistic values and ethical judgements.

In the context of Ghana, article 10 of the GJA code of ethics asserts that "no journalist shall solicit or accept bribes or any form of inducement to influence his/her professional duties" (GJA Code, 2017, article 10). This implies that the GJA codes prohibit either accepting or demanding bribes to kill a story, no matter the circumstance. However, low salaries for media staff are likely to breed corruption in the Ghanaian media. In a situation where journalists have low salaries and fear losing their jobs, being ethical in reporting can be perceived as a lesser priority than making money and complying with what is expected from them by their superiors.

Instructively, ethical theories are to be the foundation upon which ethical solutions are harnessed to the overriding difficulties that are encountered by individuals, journalists and other professional groups. These theories have been the theoretical underpinnings which provide guidelines concerning how to live and act in an ethical manner. For instance, Nasidi (2016) enumerated some factors which are accountable for unethical journalistic practices which included: poor pay, technical knowledge, conflict of interests, and ownership pattern among others. These highlighted factors arguably are pervasive, particularly in many third world countries, leading to circumstances under which the professionalism of journalists might be compromised.

Furthermore, counter to both individual and institutional influences are the influence emanating from cultures and values. It can be fathomed that journalists are part and parcels of a context under which they live and work which is submerged under distinct cultures which turn to resonate and reflect their view point. This is discernible in the differences between journalists from democratic jurisdictions and those from authoritarian states. They both wear different ethical compasses and what is regarded as ethically approved way of conduct may appear in a different light in another context.

Ethical Theories and Their Applications in Ethical Dilemmas in Stressful Economic Circumstances

Theoretically, different scholars have classified ethics differently. The most common classifications are: deontological ethics, teleological/ consequential ethics and individualistic or subjective ethics (Sanders, 2003; Barcalow, 1994; Merrill, 2004). In this study, we are going to focus on normative ethical theories and their applications in the context of ethical dilemmas in stressful economic circumstances in journalistic practices in Northern Ghana. Some of the ethical theories discussed in this study are: teleological/consequential ethical principles (situational and utilitarian ethical principles), where an action is judged based on its consequences, and the deontological ethical principle (categorical imperative), where the emphasis is placed on the notion of duty (Brown, 2011; Sanders, 2003).

To start with, one consequential ethical theory is situational ethics. Situational ethics has been extensively discussed in Joseph Fletcher (1966) book, *Situational ethics: the new morality*. The theory holds that an action is considered ethical if it creates the greatest amount of love at the end of the action (Fletcher, 1966). Situational ethics is against absolutism (Titus, Smith, & Nola, 1995; Fletcher, 1966). Thus, the application of codes of ethics, rules, and adherence to general standards with few exceptions. In this context, situational ethics does not have absolute norms or standards, but a non-legalistic flexible application of the standards to each individual situation (Titus et al., 1995). Relating this philosophy to the study, the ethical value of reverting to the offer from the banker to kill the story in order to pay for an emergency surgery to save the journalist daughter's life, and rejecting the offer from the banker to kill the story because it is considered unethical and a corrupt practice would be determined based on the situation, but not on the legalistic application of ethical standards or norms that are logically consistent with ethical codes, rules and regulations. Similarly, Fletcher (1966) further noted that an action is good so long as it brings love to the actors, or the end must bring loving results to the actors. In this regard, when measuring an ethical decision or situation, one must consider the desired end, the means available, the motive for acting and the foreseeable consequences (Fletcher, 1966). For instance, if reverting to the offer from the banker to kill the story in order to pay for an emergency surgery to save the life of the journalist's daughter will bring love to the journalist, the banker and the society, then accepting the bribe or inducement under the circumstances could be considered a good ethical decision. On the other hand, if rejecting the offer from the banker to kill the story and allowing his/her daughter to suffer from the sickness would bring love to the journalist, the banker and the society, then rejecting the offer would be considered a good ethical decision or judgement.

We find the principles of utilitarianism relevant to this study. The utilitarianism theory considers ethics as that which is designed to create the greatest good for the maximum number of people (Bentham, 2009; Rosen, 2003; Moore, 1903). Jeremy Bentham sets out "*the principle that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the measure of right and wrong*" (Sanders, 2003, p. 32). Similarly, J. S. Mill is also credited for the principle of utility and the greatest happiness (Barcalow, 1994). Mill shared the view that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the determining principles of human action. In this context, an action is considered right if it promises the most happiness to the greatest number of people (Barcalow, 1994). In connection with the case under investigation, on the one hand, if reverting to the offer from the banker to kill the story in order to pay for an emergency surgery to save the life of the journalist's son would promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people, accepting the bribe under the circumstances could be considered a good ethical decision or judgement. On the other hand, if rejecting the offer from the banker to kill the story and allowing his/her son to suffer from the sickness would not promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people, rejecting the offer could be considered a bad ethical decision or judgement.

Furthermore, another consequential ethical principle is ethical egoism. According to the principle of egoism, "*human beings are motivated purely by self interest in all their actions*" (Barcalow, 1994, p. 54). This implies that what is considered a good ethical judgment ultimately rests on self-interest. The principle of egoism is opposed to ethical altruism. For the ethical altruists, the principle is that human beings should not be selfish towards the welfare of others (Barcalow, 1994). In relation to the ethical egoism principles, if reverting to the offer from the banker to kill the story in order to pay for an emergency surgery to save the life of the journalist's son will promote the self- interest of the journalist against the interest of the society, accepting the bride under the circumstances could be considered a good ethical decision to the journalist. Again, if rejecting the offer from the banker to kill the story and allowing his son to suffer from the sickness would not promote his/her self-interest, rejecting the offer would be considered a bad ethical decision.

Deontological ethics is opposed to the teleological/consequential approach to ethics. The deontologists disagree that results or consequences should be the only measure of whether an act is ethical or unethical (Rosen, 2003; Sanders, 2003; Barcalow, 1994). In this regard, deontologists believe in rules or principles based on reason, which provide stability in the moral order (Sanders, 2003). To this end, the German Enlightenment philosopher Emmanuel Kant developed his theory of the categorical imperative which is ascribed to the deontological ethical philosophy (Sanders, 2003; Barcalow, 1994). The principle of categorical imperative holds that: act only according to the maxim by which you can, and at the same time will that it should become a universal law for all rational beings (Sanders, 2003. p. 31). This implies that human beings should act on the premises that the choices one makes for oneself could become universal law for all rational beings. In view of this, the moral law should come from the individual and the will to act should be consistent until it becomes a universal law. In other words, the action of the individual should be based on the will of the individual to act good no matter the circumstances and consequences. Applying this theory to this study, it will imply that, if reverting to the offer from the banker to kill the story in order to pay for an emergency surgery to save the life of the journalist's daughter would be considered by the journalist as a good moral conducted, and would promote that principle as a universal maxim, it would be considered an ethical decision. Again, if rejecting the offer from the banker to kill the story and allowing his son to suffer from the sickness would not be promoted as universal principle, then it would not be considered as a good ethical decision.

In addition, the principle of categorical imperative asserts that "a person must always be treated as an end and not merely as a means" (Sanders, 2003, p. 31). This implies that all humanity is to be treated with due respect and dignity because human beings are rational beings, with the ability to think, autonomous and are their own ends. In other words, human beings should be treated as an end in themselves, but not as a means to an end, because human beings exist in themselves. Relating this to the study, it implies that, if reverting to the offer from the banker to kill the story in order to pay for an emergency surgery to save the life

of the journalist's daughter is considered as an end, then accepting the offer from the banker and killing the story could be considered a good ethical decision.

Research Design: Selection of Interviewees

Ghana has ten administrative regions, three of which are located in the Northern Savannah Ecological Zone. These three regions are Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions. They are also noted as the economically depressed regions of Ghana. We adopted purposive sampling technique in selecting our interviewees. According to Yin (2003), purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. In view of this, all the participants were purposively selected for the study. In terms of inclusion and exclusion criteria, we included journalists who were willing to provide information by virtue of their knowledge or experience on the topic. Again, we excluded journalists who were not experienced enough in the practices of journalism, and were not willing to take part in the study.

In all, we interviewed 30 journalists in the three regional capitals of Northern Ghana (Tamale, Bolgatanga and Wa). In each region, ten journalists were interviewed. Besides, the participants included nineteen (19) males and eleven (11) females, between 25-55 years of age at the time of the interviews. The journalists who were interviewed were given copies of the interview-guide (see Appendix) to go through the questions before the start of the interviews. We asked questions based on the topics in the interview-guide, while research-participants responded accordingly. The researchers were not obliged to follow the interview-guide strictly; they could sway from one topic to another, but always returned to follow the trajectory. Every interview session took between 45 minutes to one hour. All the he interviews were conducted in June 2018 and were audiotaped. Below is a diagrammatical representation of the study participants (Table 1).

In any research, concerns about guaranteeing confidentiality, anonymity, non-identifiability and non-traceability of the participants are paramount to ensuring the validity and quality of the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In light of this, the purpose of the study was explained to all the participants. The estimated duration of the interview was indicated to each of the participants, and each one was also reminded that participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any stage, should they so wished. Similarly, raw data in the form of conversation transcripts were treated in a way that protected the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Where a participant discontinued the interview, a replacement was found to make up the ten respondents per region.

Table 1. Diagrammatical Representation of the Study Participants

Code for study Participants	Sex	Years of Experience	Ownership of the Media Institution	Education/ Training
JB	M	6	Public	Journalism
JC	M	5	Private	Media Management
RC	M	12	Public	Communication Studies
RB	F	5	Public	Media Management
SC	M	2	Private	Communication Studies
SU	F	7	Public	Journalism
SB	M	8	Public	Journalism
SK	F	10	Public	Journalism
BB	M	3	Public	Communication Studies
CD	F	6	Private	Journalism
JU	M	4	Private	Journalism
SL	M	7	Public	Journalism
HJ	F	4	Public	Media Management
JJ	M	7	Public	Journalism
SP	M	5	Private	Journalism
KL	F	8	Public	Communication Studies
LL	F	4	Private	Journalism
AB	M	10	Public	Media Management
IK	M	8	Public	Journalism
BA	F	4	Public	Journalism
MN	F	12	Public	Media Management
NM	M	3	Private	Public Relations
VW	M	5	Public	Journalism
GD	M	2	Private	Communication Studies
WV	F	10	Public	Communication Studies
RY	M	6	Public	Media Management
ZB	M	4	Public	Journalism
YZ	M	3	Private	Journalism
ZY	F	2	Private	Media Management
VB	M	6	Public	Journalism

Semi-structured face-to-face interview format was used. The interview method enables gathering of narratives and reflections of the journalists concerning the ethical dilemmas in stressful economic circumstances in their daily journalistic practices (Van Manen, 2018).

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, noting pauses, emphases, hesitations, and gestures, such as laughter. After the transcription, the data was coded through a process of open coding (Strauss, 1990). By this method, the authors read through the entire set of data several times and chunk the data into smaller meaningful parts, and label each chunk with a code. Again, the codes were used and compared with each new chuck of data with previous codes, so previous chunk data were labeled with the same descriptive codes. After all, the data were coded, the codes were selected and grouped by themes. After the themes were identified, classical content analysis technique was used to

identify the most important themes (Bryman, 2004). The number of times each descriptive code occurred was ranked and the most important concepts were identified as the themes. The most important themes identified are:

1. Making sound ethical decisions under stressful economic circumstances in journalistic practice.
2. Situating Objectivity and truthful reportage in stressful economic circumstances.

Findings and Discussion

Our analysis identified situations where journalists were faced with ethical paradoxes in decision-making between two courses of action under stressful economic circumstances, and variations in the application of the set of agreed ethical principles under different situations and contexts. We present these findings below:

Theme One: Making Sound Ethical Decisions under Stressful Economic Circumstances in Journalistic Practice

Journalistic practice involves daily encounters with range of issues which might present ethical paradoxes, and could call for a quick, sound and rationalized ethical decision to be made by a journalist. To this end, the research participants were asked to share their experience concerning problematic situations which confronted them in the course of their professional practices. It turned out that most of the interviewees were quick to narrate their heroic moments of refusing an inducement and publishing the story. Here is a typical sample of such responses.

> I have had an experience where I discovered a rot somewhere in Ghana. Ee… eeh… I was offered an opportunity to take a huge sum of money to kill a story. I was not working in isolation; I was working with the editorial team. So, when such things happened, you can't make a decision on your own, you need to talk to your editor, you need to talk to your immediate boss about what is going on. Eee,.. In my case, I discussed the issue with my colleague to seek his opinion on the matter. After the discussion… he said to me... my brother, if you think the offer is good, why not take it? I was confused. It was against my ethics. However, I thought of my survival and financial problems. Eeeh, again, I weighed the magnitude of the crime against tarnishing the image of the person involved. Hmm... I thought of that, but I also thought of the ethical aspect of the case and the welfare of society. Eee...eeh for me to kill such a story, I damned my financial predicaments and published the story.

JB's response has highlighted a decision-making problem between two courses of action. That is, either to report the true story and remains in financial difficulty, or abrogates the professional code of journalism, kills the story for the entire society to suffer the consequences. In this regard, by adhering to the professional standards and rejecting the offer of money to kill the story implies that the decision of the respondent was informed by deontological ethical

considerations. In this case, rejecting the offer of money to kill the story was meant to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people in the society, but not based on his own egoist or selfish interest. Similarly, another scenario was presented to the journalists to assess their level of commitment to truth and fairness. The story was presented this way, "…you went home from work and realised that your ward has been taken to the hospital for medical emergency. The doctors are demanding a GHS 5000.00 down payment before an emergency surgery can be done to save your ward from death. You simply do not have the money requested, but you still have the option of going back to accept the GHS 50,000.00 cedis from the banker to kill the story, will you take the offer?" In response, an interviewee, RB, expressed:

> I have stated many times that based on the emergency nature of the case, I will take the money for the emergency surgery, but my story will never be different, the story will never be killed, it will be reported to reflect the reality.

The views expressed by interviewee RB do not only shed light on how situational factors can influence ethical decisions, but it has clarified how situational ethical values do not necessarily determine the legalistic application of ethical standards that are logically consistent with normative ethical principles such as truthfulness, fairness, objectivity among others. This understanding is in line with Fletcher's (1966) situational ethical principle, where an action is considered ethical if it creates the greatest amount of love at the end of the action. In this regard, by accepting to revert to take the offer from the banker in order to pay for an emergency surgery to save the journalist daughter's life could be based on the circumstances, and the greatest amount of love it could create to save his daughter's life. Contrary, the submission of the research participant is not in keeping with Kant`s ethical principle of categorical imperative. This ethical principle holds that individuals should "act only according to the maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law for all rational beings" (Sanders, 2003, p. 31). In this case, the decision by the research participant to take the money for the emergency surgery was not based on his own will to act well irrespective of the consequences of his decision on the survival of his daughter. In connection with the same question, interviewee SU narrated:

> Normally, as a journalist you are supposed to provide voice for the voiceless and protect the interest of the society. So, why should I allow myself for an individual person to influence my passion with a gift? So, the issue of dropping the story and going back for the GHS 50,000.00 to save my ward from death is something I will not consider.

It can be inferred from the views expressed by the respondent that journalists are supposed to give voice to the voiceless, and their reportage should be linked to commitment to truth, fairness, objectivity and protection of the interests of the society. This understanding is congruent with the Golden Rule

principle which stipulates that you should do to others as you will have them do to you (Sanders, 2003). Therefore, the decision of the study subject to reject the monetary offer and report the true story reflects the logical preposition that human beings are more likely to enjoy life if they contribute good deeds to protect the general interest of society rather than contributing negatively to society. In addition, by giving voice to the voiceless and protecting the general interests of the society, implies that the study subject might get the social and psychological comfort of having done something good for the society.

Furthermore, the study participants were asked to share their experiences about some of the bad ethical decisions they had made in the course of their journalistic practices. In relation to this, interviewee IK revealed:

> Eehh… as a journalist, in the course of exercising your duty, there will be a point you will go out of line... eeh... I hope you understand? Ehh… in most cases, when you are invited for a programme… eeh... at the end of the day, you are offered a gift. But as a journalist you are not supposed to take bribe, you are not supposed to take gifts from event organizers. But..., you see…, very often we take gifts from event organisers. That is what we call soli or solidarity. I hope you understand. Just to show appreciation maybe for your T&T. Ethically, we are not supposed to take soli.

It is noted from the above that some of the research subjects take gifts or bribes from event organizers, which conflicts with their professional journalistic principles to always respect and follow the code of ethics of the profession. In addition, it has also illuminated the culture of gift-taking, which is built and institutionalized into the economy of media coverage in Ghana. This practice is not in keeping with article 10 of the Ghana Journalist Association code of ethics (GJA), which stipulates that: "no journalist shall solicit or accept bribes or any form of inducement to influence his/her professional duties" (GJA Code, 2017, article 10). In light of this, the GJA code of ethics does not only prohibit the solicitation and acceptance of gifts from event organizers, but prohibits any conduct of journalists which are against the set of agreed principles that guide the conduct of journalism in Ghana.

In another development, a question was asked to ascertain how self-interest could influence rational ethical decision-making under stressful economic circumstances, and interviewee GD explained.

> Well... eeh… Self-interest is excessive greed. Do you get it? Everyone has interest, there is no human being in this world without an interest, but you see, your interest should not eat into your duties. In as much as you have interests, your interests should not override the interests of the general public. Eeh... Self-interest can influence ethical decisions because we belong to associations, ethnicity, we have friends, families, and religion. Sometimes you are tempted to play down these things to be as fair as possible, but in most cases, you are consumed by these things.

The above narration does not only cast light on the selfish nature of human beings, but it has also clarified how our membership to professional bodies,

ethical ideals, values, families, friends, ethnicity and religion could influence our ethical judgements under problematic situations. In view of this, the inability of the research participant to act professionally in some cases could mean that the research participant does not recognize that balanced and truth reportage are preeminent values in journalistic practices. In addition, by acting unprofessionally in some cases due to the personal biases of the research participant (ethnic, religion, nationality and race) are not in tandem with the assumption of the deontological ethical principle of Kant which posits that "…*a person must always be treated as an end and not merely as a means*" (Sanders, 2003, p. 31). This implies that, no matter the circumstances, all humanity is to be treated with due respect and dignity, because human beings are rational beings and are their own ends.

Situating Objectivity and Truthful Reportage in Stressful Social and Economic Circumstances

This part of the analysis is concerned with how the respondents position their decisions pertaining to upholding objectivity and truthfulness when confronted with ethical decision making under stressful economic circumstances. A dominant perspective from the empirical data is the fact that some of the journalists consider society as their initial reference point in taking such decisions under such trying situations. The justification of this assertion is grounded in the expressed statement of interviewee JU.

> Basically, journalism is about the interest of society, and so, whatever decision you want to make in the performance of your duty, you must consider the society first. It is the interest of the society (public interest) that is what often informed my decisions as to what to do.

Extracts from the interview data above seeks to drive home the fact that when confronted with difficult ethical judgements, some journalists take into consideration the implication of their decisions on the society defined as public interest. This is to be anticipated because it smacks of a dimension of collectivism, to which Africans are mostly classified into. In the northern part of Ghana, the views of the general society weigh too much on the conduct of an individual, on the grounds that individuals feel themselves part and parcel of the larger society. They reside and work in societies and the cultural worldview of their societies is what they reflect. Under the circumstances, an individual journalist will forgo his or her selfish interest, to serve the interest of the public. After all, the number one obligation of a journalist is to report the truth with an overriding loyalty to professional values, the public, and virtue, which prefer social improvement to personal interest (Nasidi, 2016). It can also be seen in the light of Fletchers' (1966) assertion that decisions and actions are good so long as their outcome engenders love and happiness to the actors. As

such, the decisions of journalists that bring them happiness are those that represent the interest of the public.

In addition, our interview data has also highlighted elements of friends, relations and other actors within the society who try to exert some amount of influence under difficult ethical decision-making, to influence objective, accurate and truthful reportage. In connection with this, interviewee SP narrated:

> My experience about ethical dilemmas… eeeh… eeh… You see this is a very difficult question. In most cases, you try to be objective and sincere to your work, but you are confronted with the powers within the society. People try to influence or stop you from reporting the true story. Friends, political figures, and even family members may try to influence you not to report the true story.

The above statement further demonstrated the fact that ethical practice is a complex process that is concerned with moral uprightness/fitness in a defined context. This assertion implies that the exercise of ethics borders on moral philosophies which are context-specific, because morality is many times subjective and depends on the situation and contexts. Ideally, practitioners must be independent in the exercise of their personal conscience and ethical inclinations, but, here, we are with influential elements within the social context trying to sway journalists off their ethical obligations.

Moreover, when the study participants were asked to share their views about situations where ethical values were violated, in response, interviewee SK stated:

> Even though there are ethics, in practice we sometimes abuse these ethics, we go against these ethics to solve problems, you can't just say that because ethically, you are supposed to do this and there is something spoiling somewhere… eeh... and you will say, no, I won't do this because of ethics. Eeh... ethically, when you don't do it, you are not praised for that, ethics are not bidden by law, they are just supposed to guide you, but at any given time in practice, one will stray into some controversies, because if you don't break those ethics, you will not be able to get a good job done.

The submission of this interview participant revealed that ethics are not guaranteed unbreakable, though there may be cut and dried stipulations to guide the conduct of journalists. In this regard, at any point in time, ethics can be set aside in the interest of the public. This understanding is in keeping with the pragmatic ethical principle, which is concerned with the ultimate success, and with little concerned on the means to the success because the end justifies the means (Sanders, 2003). Even though researchers such as Merrill (2004) regarded this approach as Machiavellian, the fundamental responsibility is to provide truthful reportage as far as possible; how to achieve this, would be less important. The research participant demonstrated that you have to trespass upon the ethics, sometimes, in order to get a good job done. Here, the act of

trespassing on the ethical guidelines becomes less important and achieving the ultimate goal (success) is of paramount importance to the journalist.

Similarly, in responding to the question on factors that can influence a journalist to make a bad ethical decision, an interviewee, SL, had this to say:

> One of it is… eehh…, one of the key factors will be economical, yes, when your economic situation is so bad, it is very easy to make unethical decisions, if your professional knowledge is not that deep, you may be doing unethical things, but you wouldn't even know. So, ignorance is one, economic condition is two.

The statement above casts light on the economic factors and poor professional knowledge that could influence journalists to make bad ethical decisions. These economic factors and poor professional knowledge are to be expected, because it is argued that the growing economic pressures of today are generating precarious situations where only few journalists are up to the task of what is perceived to be their responsibilities (Merrill, 2004). In light of this, overriding profit motives are seen to be driving the course of editorial decisions and impeding the processes of quality, truthful and rightful ethical decisions. Also, poor technical knowledge will certainly be a recipe for unethical conduct, in that there will be lack of appreciation for the values and principles of the profession, leading to poor application of professional expertise, morals and values.

Intrinsic to taking ethical decisions under exacting circumstances are the integrity and personality journalists work to protect. This is where working journalists try to be honest and upright by holding on to what is right and truthful in the face of challenging situations. The foregoing has been expressed in the statement of interviewee AB:

> What matters most in every job is integrity. In a case like this, I would consider it as a fraud. In journalism, you need to look at the number of people who will be affected by the activities of this particular bank. Do you get it? So, the picture has to go beyond you and don't forget that, as a journalist, the principle for your job is public interest. We are working in the interest of the general public, not in our interest. So, if you decide to take the 50,000.00 cedis and then let the story go, you are putting the lives and investments of over 100,000 people in danger, your story will stop a lot of harm or damage than is going to cause people investments.

Here, the study participant has considered his/her integrity, and as well as the expectations of a practicing journalist by the public. The evaluation led him to arrive at the conclusion that taking the 50,000 cedis and killing the story will be detrimental with far-reaching consequences to the public interests than an individual becoming complicit to the offer of inducement. This understanding resonates with the consequential ethical philosophy, which holds that the "consequences of an action are the key to assessing whether the action is ethical or unethical" (Sanders, 2003, p. 32). Therefore, upholding to the professional principle of objectivity, truthfulness, and balance reportage and rejecting the financial inducement because it is considered as a fraud and might

have negative consequences on the society, sought to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people in the society.

Conclusion

The paper explores ethical dilemmas and management in stressful economic circumstances among journalists in the three administrative regions of northern Ghana. Our analysis of the perspectives and opinions of 30 journalists across the three regions on ethical dilemmas and how ethical decisions are taken under stressful economic circumstances evidences the need to move beyond the holistic application of the western normative ethical principles in different circumstances and contexts. In light of this, we call for the application of contextual-based ethical principles by journalists in dealing with ethical dilemmas under stressful economic circumstances in Ghana.

Again, while journalists highlight their watchdog role over society and provide voice for the voiceless, the study revealed situations where journalists' personal interests and biases (ethnicity, religion, nationality, and professional associations) override the public interests in making ethical decisions under stressful economic circumstances. Based on this, the study concludes that there should be clear demarcations between personal interests and public interests, and comprehensive rules should be put in place to ensure that the public interests are always promoted by the journalists.

Finally, whiles the GJA code of ethics prohibits the solicitation and acceptance of inducements and bribes, the study revealed that a good number of Ghanaian journalists are not able to adhere to the GJA code of ethics. Therefore, the paper recommends that the GJA should organize regular training on media ethics and short professional courses for its members to improve upon their professional knowledge and skills on how to manage ethical dilemmas in stressful economic and social circumstances.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research Directions

The study has one major limitation. It did not cover the entire regions in Ghana, and that forms a major limitation of the study. Journalists, specifically, media practitioners and all those who work in the media industry in one way or the other, can be confronted with ethical paradoxes, for which making choices will be very eminent. We encourage researchers in the field of media and journalism to consider exploring the ethical dilemmas within the political systems and decisions concerning public welfare and parties' interests. Finally, another limitation associated with this study is courtesy bias, that is, the tendency of some of the interviewees to tell the interviewer what they think the interviewer might like to hear, or being afraid to admit to unethical behavior in a face-to-face interview.

Bibliography

Agbemenu, S. K., & Tandoh, J. (2015). The effect of "soli" on News Reportage in Ghana. *International Conferences on Management, Communication and Technology (ICMCT)*, *3*(1), 2026–6839.

Alhassan, A. (1998). Reception Analysis of Development News: Towards Evolving Appropriate News Genre. *Journal of Development Communication*, *9*(10), 31–45.

Alhassan, A, Odartey-Wellington, F., & Amadu, F. (2018). Commodification of development programming on radio in Northern Ghana. *African Journalism Studies*, *39*(2). Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2UYhjSA.

Alhassan, A., & Abdulai, M. (2019). Cultural and Moral Implications of Soli and Its Effects on Journalism in Northern Ghana. *Journal of Media Ethics*. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2H2AWVU.

Barcalow, E. (1994). *Moral philosophy. Theories and issues*. New York, NY: ITP Publishing.

Bentham, J. (2009). *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Dover Philosophical Classics). Dover Publications Inc.

Berkeman, R. I., & Shumovary, C. (2003) *Digital dilemmas: Ethical issues for online media professionals*. London: Blackwell Publishing.

Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods*. New York, NY: Oxford.

Brown, F. (2011). *Journalism ethics: A casebook of professional conduct for new media* (4th ed.). US: Marion street press.

Chari, T. (2007). Rethinking ethical issues in Africa Media. *Africa Identities*, *5*(1), 39–60.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Diedong, A. L. (2006, July 23-28). *Practicing journalism in a neo-liberated democratic culture: case study Ghana*. Paper presented at IAMCR conference, Cairo, Egypt.

Diedong, L. A. (2008). Establishing journalistic standards in the Ghanaian Press. *African Communication Research Journal*, *1*(2), 207–231.

Fletcher, J. (1966). *Situation ethics: The new morality*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London and New York: Continuum.

Frère, M. S. (2001). Professional Ethics taken hostage by the political debate. In C. Ukpabi (Ed.), *Handbook on Journalism Ethics. African case studies* (pp. 49–64). Windhoek: The Media Institute for Southern Africa.

Frost, C. (2015). *Journalism ethics and regulation* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.

"GIBA to meet labour unions over mass layoffs at media institutions." (2018, September 4). *MyJoyOnline*. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2SE63xB.

GJA Code (2017). *The GJA code of ethics*. Accra: Ghana Journalists Association. https://bit.ly/2PN89HC.

Hasty, J. (1999). *Big Language and Brown Envelops: The Press and Political Culture in Ghana* (Doctoral Dissertation). Duke University, Durham, NC.

Hasty, J. (2001). From Culture of silence to culture of contest: Hegemony, Legitimacy and the Press in Ghana. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, *3*(2), 348–359.

Hulteng, J. N. (1976). *The messenger's motives: Ethical problem of the news media*. University of Oregon. New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Journalist who demanded GHC5m from ECG boss to 'kill a story' faces prosecution (2018, November 15), *Ghanaweb*. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2JeCn58.

Karashani, F., & Rioba, A. (2002). *To Write or Not to Write: Ethical Concerns in Journalism*. Dar es Salaam: Media Council of Tanzania.

Karikari, K. (1996). *Ethics in Journalism: Case studies of practice in West Africa*. Paris: Institut Panos.

Kasoma, T. (2009). Development reporting as a crumbling tower? Impact of brown envelope Journalism on journalistic practice in Zambia and Ghana. *Global media journal – African Edition*, *3*(1).

Lohner, J., Banjc, S., & Neverla, I. (2016). *Journalistic Practices, Role Perception and Ethics in Democratisation Conflicts: Empirical Findings from Interviews with Journalists in Kenya, Egypt, Serbia and South Africa- Media Conflict and Democratisation*. Working Paper. MeCoDEM. (Unpublished).

Merrill, J. C. (2004). *Journalism Ethics: philosophical foundations for news media*. USA: Pearson.

MFWA - Media Foundation for West Africa (2014). *Media ethics monitoring final report 2014*. Accra, Ghana. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2GY7yib.

Moore, G. E. (1903). *Principia Ethica*. UK: Prometheus Books.

Nasidi, Q. Y. (2016). Media and ethics: Journalism ethics in Nigerian news media. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *21*(12), Ver. 3, 1–6.

Owusu, W. Y. (2012). The Ghanaian media landscape: How unethical practices of journalists undermine progress. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2PKTAEm.

Puddephatt, A. (2011). *The importance of self-regulation of the media in upholding freedom of expression*. UNESCO CI Series, CI debates: communication and information, No. 9. Brasilia, Brasil.

Retief, J. (2002). *Media Ethics: An Introduction to Responsible Journalism*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

Rosen, F. (2003). *Classical Utilitarianism from Hume to Mill*. London: Routledge.

Sanders, K. (2003). *Ethics and journalism*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Skjerdal, T. S. (2010). Research on brown envelope journalism in the African media. *African Communication Research*, *3*, 367–406.

Strauss, J. C. (1990). Grounded theory research: procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 3-19.

Titus, H., Smith, M., & Nola, R. (1995). *Living Issues in Philosophy* (9th ed.). London: Oxford University Press.

Van Manen, M. (2018). *Researching lived experience: Human science for action sensitive pedagogy*. London: Routledge.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3rd ed.). California: Sage Publications.

Appendix: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Ethical Dilemmas in Stressful Economic Circumstance among Journalists in Northern Ghana

Section A: Cases in Ethical Dilemmas
1. How would you describe an ethical dilemma in journalism?
2. Tell me about your experience about ethical dilemmas in journalism.
3. What ethical challenges have you encountered as a journalist?
4. You are a journalist with a monthly salary of about two thousand cedis (GHS 2,000.00). Your investigations of a banking fraud led you to a big story in which some senior bankers are involved. When a senior banker discovers that you have an explosive story that could end his career, he makes you an offer of fifty thousand cedis (GHS 50,000.00), which is 25 times your monthly salary to kill the story. How will you manage the case as a journalist?
5. Alright, for those who rejected the offer of inducement to kill the story, what about this second part of the issue: You go home and realise that you ward has been taken to the hospital for medical emergency. The doctors are demanding a GHS 5,000.00 down payment before an emergency surgery can be done to save your ward from death. You simply do not have the money requested, but you still have the option of going back to accept the GHS 50,000.00 cedis from the banker to kill the story, will you take the offer?
6. How would you describe a good ethical decision in journalism?
7. Tell me about unethical decisions in journalism.
8. What factors can influence a journalist to take a good ethical decision?
9. What factors can influence a journalist to take unethical decision?
10. In your opinion, in what way/ways can ethical dilemmas in journalism be resolved?
11. How can self-interest influence ethical decisions?

Section B: Values and Principles of Journalism
1. Who is a professional journalist?
2. What are some of the traits of a good journalist?
3. What are the ethical codes which guide the conduct of journalism in Ghana?
4. What are some of the professional principles of journalism?
5. How are the professional principles of journalism enforced in Ghana?
6. If there is one thing that you could change in journalistic practice in Ghana, what would it be? How would it make you feel?
7. Have you ever done undercover journalism?
8. What do you think are the ethical boundaries of undercover journalism?
9. Do you approve of the undercover journalistic style of Anas Aremeyaw Anas?

In and Out of the Mist: An Artistic Investigation of Borderland and Community

By Yoong Wah Alex Wong [*]

The main concern of this research is to initiate a new artistic approach, with photography as a medium and an artistic form of investigation, into the borderland and community that exists from Western China to the Himalayan Region, in order to distinguish it from documentary photography. The borderland exists as an ambiguous territory between governance structures, and the movements of the borderland community often seek to surpass the command of the states. The ideas of inclusion and exclusion, identity within one's community, and the relationship on the borderlands are hard to clearly define. This research develops the hypothesis that borderless borderland is possible with the intervention of fog and mist.

Keywords: borderlands, borderless, identity, intervention, mist, photography.

Introduction

"*It is through living that we discover ourselves, at the same time as we discover the world around us*" Henri Cartier-Bresson (Goodreads, n.d).

From Western China to the Himalayan Region (Figure 1) there is a historically contingent society, developing both within the context of internal evolution and with the external effects of world history. The border takes on essential importance for China and the neighbouring countries since it serves as the fundamental attribute for literal, symbolic, historical and psychological justifications of identity. Due to the different historical and geographical experiences, the condition and relationship of borders vary regionally. Nevertheless, I do not endeavour to delve into the area of conflict resolution, political science or borderland interrogation analysis. My main intention is to use photography to explore, investigate and analyse the aesthetic of the borderlands that stretch from Western China to the Himalayan Region.

Every border area is different from each bordering country, and every border area is unique. The research focussed on investigating and exploring Western China to the Himalayan Region because Western China and the neighbouring Post-Soviet countries are rich in cultures. These interesting cultures differ in terms of art and traditional practice of daily life. Furthermore, as the roof of the world, the Himalayan region sets a challenge for me to explore its rare and unique landscape which separates the plains of the Tibetan Plateau from the Indian and Nepalese subcontinent. The Himalayas also shaped the cultures of South Asia where many of the Himalayan peaks are considered holy sanctuaries to Buddhism and Hinduism. Photography enabled me to both capture and spend time understanding the different ethnic groups of people,

---

[*] Faculty Member, Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey.

religions, festivals and traditional customs. Aim of this research is to document the cultures, humans and nature, along these vast borderlands and to make a synthesis of the sense of fact and personal truth in producing creative artistic photographic works. The resultant photographic works are not the utmost important goal; rather, the process of discovery and reflection of the discovery are more crucial to this research. I intend to explore and capture the moment of borderlands encounters in an ambiguous and irresistible way for the viewer to ponder, which no other photographers have yet done in borderland photography. This research would envision compositions that would open up new boundaries and expression in photography. The process of discovering a new way to interpret the borderland is of the utmost importance in this research.

Figure 1. Photographing the Area from Western China to the Himalayan Region (In red line)

Source: China, 1996.

In stage 1, the objective is to uncover the lifestyles, festivals and cultural activities like most of the documentary photographers who photographed the borderlands, in order to analyse their approaches better and review different possibility of image making.

In stage 2, to further explore and to visualise the borderlands in this region from an aerial point of view, to find out the amalgamated landscape and nature formation in this complicated borders region that connects different neighbouring countries.

In stage 3, to investigate the physical borders and connections (roads) that connects different neighbouring countries. This investigation could provide a better picture of the relationship between borderlanders (human), man-made structures and nature in this region.

In stage 4, the final intended artistic study and findings are to achieve associated photography characteristic between documentary and contemporary

conceptual photography. Utilising photography as the main medium in this investigation can shed some light on the past and current documentary photography agenda, to urge a new artistic intervention and create visual representation beyond documentation. This research will continue to uncover the magical and mysterious effects of fog and mist, bringing a whole new sense to documentary photography and contemporary photography.

The discovery of such magical transformation from a realistic visual to an art form through fog and mist intervention would creatively define photography as more than a medium of documentary where fog and mist could transform a real-life moment to an imaginative surrealistic space, at the same time challenging the notion of "border", where borderless borderland is possible.

Methodology

Photographers are usually attracted to and inspired by the freshness of a subject. Fredric Jameson described and suggested that there are more than enough similar images out there without needing a photographer to make new ones. When stylistic innovation is no longer possible in the world, what remains is an imitation of dead styles (Jameson, n.d.). Contemporary or postmodern art constantly requires the inevitable collapse of art and creativity. *The Cruel Radiance* by Susie Linfield noted the contemporary artist Richard Prince stated, "The only method to make it new, is to repeat and do it again" (Linfield, 2012).

The same book by Susie Linfield mentioned that Victor Burgin stated "Our conviction that we are free to choose what we make of a photograph hides the complicity to which we are recruited in the very act of looking" (Linfield, 2012). He commented that Sophie Calle's "voyeurism" and "prejudiced perception" could only lead to a miserable self-satisfaction.

High-modernist critics like the American photographer John Szarkowski received substantial criticism from the postmoderns, claiming that he had confined photography from political and social purposes. Nevertheless, documentary photography and photojournalism, grounded in the political and social, are equally opposed by modernist photographers and critics. They mock socially-conscious photojournalists who embrace outdated ideas on development and their views on reality as a necessity. Sometimes, documentary photography can be similar (war documentary) to watching a horror movie, putting on a scary mask to ignite fear, converting violence into fiction.

I see that while looking at a photograph, contemporary critics suggest that it is difficult for the viewer to find a moment of extraordinariness and originality as the photographer is unable to provide it. It is a false hallucination and a lost hope to entrust photography with a meaning. Meanwhile, some contemporary photography critics have refused the fundamental ideology of post-modernism. For example, Max Kozloff and Geoff Dyer, Rebecca Solnit and David Levi Strauss have replied to postmodern criticism without surrendering to it. In time, postmodern sarcasm may seem no longer in vogue.

The depiction of weak, defenseless people, as seen in many photographs, is a fake fantasy that many photographers deliberately create to gain recognition and fame. Carol Squiers depicted photojournalism as nothing more than representation of suffering and intense desperation. At the same time, Martha Rosler (Pachmanova, 2006, p. 109) went on to express her opinions on contemporary photojournalism as a fragmented, provoking, cunningly immoral, lip-smacking appreciation of unfamiliar vitality. Some documentary photographic works definitely match this definition. Peculiarly, Martha Rosler and her colleagues would reject provocative photography such as the works of American documentary photographer Eugene Richards and South African photographer David Goldblatt.

Figure 2. The Gray Drape by Martha Rosler

Source: Rosler, 2008.

Martha Rosler (Pachmanova, 2006, p. 109), however, mentioned in her writing, when she addressed the problem in the Vietnam War and Cold War during the 1950s, that war is the ultimate form of discrimination. Her artworks (Figure 2) often depicted the reality of urban glamour and modern life contrasted to the war scene in the background where she deliberately suggests that the USA's rhetoric of war is total paranoia, lasting even till today. I realize below provocative and imbalance visual continue to hits our current living conditions right on. One corner of the world is still experiencing an unpleasant threat of human aggression, yet other corner is enjoying to the fullest in an abundance of luxurious extravaganza, a reality in contrast. To me, it is somehow teasing the world and war documentary photography works, which mostly based on innocent and human conflict imagery.

The inconvenient truth is that documentary photography was first used to document historical wars, from landscape to city life. Fortunately, the use of documentary photography continues to enlighten viewers regarding many historical events, to diversify and extend storytelling as the archive of time. Unfortunately, the use of documentary photography in wars and storytelling of violence in the city is not advanced by many current photographers, who continue to chase and capture the sensational truths only. I strongly believe that
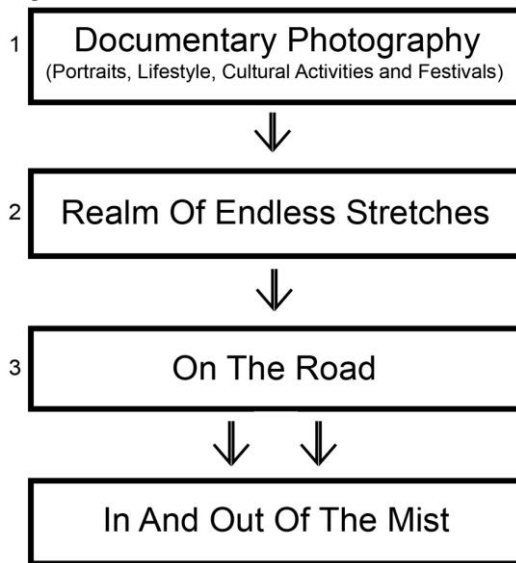
documentary photography does not attract by provocative and unnerving images only, but gutsy photographers are very much addicted to capturing such defiant and electrifying images. In order to unveil the brutal fact, some photographers think violence and war images are highly anticipated because viewers are shocked by their unbearable moment of inhuman truth, whilst photographers continue to risk their lives for such horrific moments. How can such an immoral and cruel reality continue to happen, spreading like a virus in different corners of the world? Please make no mistake between "anticipation" and "appreciation". Both terms can be mixed up, resulting in mixed feelings when viewers look at these provocative war images. No doubt the good intention of photographers is to capture and transmit the truth, reminding us of what violence and war can cause and how. Yet, when we look at the current media, we find ourselves surrounded by such unpleasant news.

There are need for creative and innovative representation of documentary photography beyond the mode of direct point and shoot, slapping us with repulsive images. High-calibre photographers should push and advance their intellectual knowledge, rather than chasing potentially shocking images that would provide them with assured fame. A photographer should learn to exercise beyond his or her impulsive instinct and intuition. Finding subtle elements, unconventional representations and unusual metaphors to further elaborate what is already out in reality remains challenging, but necessary. Otherwise, without self-reflection and self-realisation, photographers can be ignorant or caught in the loop of a vicious circle, continuing to capture images that have been done for over a century. This realisation is an inspiration for change, and a motivation to work relentlessly towards betterment: betterment of visual representation, metaphorical meaning and the sense of morality behind the captured images (Verve, n.d.). It is especially poignant when whittled down to the core: a photographer who is willing to try to push beyond the boundary of conflictual images may find a universally identifiable sentiment to visualise, and may photograph the borderlands afresh. Clarity in photography is always good, but overclarity kills art. Therefore, I always prefer to photograph my subject in a way that would create an ambiguity and freedom of expression, arousing the viewers' attention and leading them to puzzle over it in terms of their own experiences and interpretations.

By understanding and being aware of the remarks from various photography critics and practical photographers from different backgrounds and ideologies, I begin to find my own way and stay truthful to my own photography perception. At the early stage, I tried direct documentary works by photographing the borderland in an obvious, sincere and truthful approach. Most of these early borderlands documentary works from Western China to the Himalayan Region are based on lifestyle, portraits, cultural activities and festivals (Figure 3).

The development of three photographic stages and associated visual strategies leading toward the discovery of the final *In and Out of the Mist* series - A resolution of the metaphorical significance of mist as a temporal suspension in this conflicted region.

Figure 3. Procedure: Borderlands Photography

```
1  ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │           Documentary Photography             │
   │ (Portraits, Lifestyle, Cultural Activities and Festivals) │
   └─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        ⇓
2  ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │          Realm Of Endless Stretches          │
   └─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        ⇓
3  ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │                 On The Road                   │
   └─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ⇓      ⇓
   ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │           In And Out Of The Mist             │
   └─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Source: Author's personal file.

Procedure: Borderlands Photography

Stage 1: Documentary

The best way to witness visual differences is to see, observe and analyse them. I would like to mention a few prominent documentary photographers, like Patrick Sutherland, Ami Vitale and Carolyn Drake, who work extensively in these borderland regions (Western China to the Himalayan Region).

Patrick Sutherland is a highly esteemed Professor working in the field of documentary photography and photojournalism, ethnographic recordings of the culture and the communities of Northern India and Western Tibet. His extensive research and photographing in Spiti for about two decades are noteworthy. I find Sutherland's and Tsering's essay regarding the little known sacred ritual of Tibetan Buddhism particularly noteworthy. I am saying this because I witnessed many events organised mainly for tourism purposes regarding Tibetan cultural and heritage tradition. These are easily accessible, colourful and spectacular events. As much as I have witnessed crazy saints at play in different local rituals and festivals in Tibet, the collection of different styles of costumes of the crazy saint by Sutherland amazed me. Tibetan Buchen performances combine the spiritual, the religious, social, sexual, and comedic overlapping human experience with Tibetan Buddhism's mythical story and religious practice. Nowadays the performances are very much contradictory between the Tibetan Buchen "crazy saint" and the audiences, especially the younger generation who received modern and scientific education. The religious practitioners often felt threatened by the enlightened, educated and urbane community (Sutherland & Tsering, 2011, p. 22). From one point of view, Tibetan Buchen performance represents the embattled lineage of tradition that is struggling to survive in the modern world; on the other hand, it is hard to gain respect from people of other communities, as the performers are

treated wrongly for distorting the facts rather than profound performance and entertainment. Oftentimes, they are mistaken for beggars on the streets rather than religious specialists.

Sutherland's photographs of Buchen performances are contemporary images potraying current living people. It is hard to categorise these images as portraiture and historical documents as they have been taken in recent years and photographed in an informal way (Sutherland & Tsering, 2011, p. 20), where Buchen are requested to pose for him instead of captured in a live performance. According to Sutherland, Tibetans and Buchen think only colour images of them (Figure 4a), taken full-body and well-dressed, would be considered "well" photographed portraits, yet Sutherland's black and white portraits of Buchen (Figure 4b), taken in unguarded moments, would be considered by them (Tibetans and Buchen) as "poor" images.

I find the way we perceive and comprehend images closely related to our background, knowledge, belief, intention and experience. I am saying this because I find Sutherland's spontaneous images much more interesting and rewarding because they serve visual documentation appropriately and reveal truthful moments. However, I notice there are significant differences between my documentary images and Sutherland's documentary images (Figures 4a and 4b). All of my documentary images are captured in colour mode rather than black and white tone. I have no intention to show Tibetans' culture in a nostalgic mode as they are still living and surviving in the contemporary world. I think there is no need to exaggerate the feeling and moment of lost culture in the olden days (black and white) since the purpose is not historical documentation. Sutherland's works are presented to us as an archive of collaboration between Buchen themselves, inserting their own points of views of what could be an ideal visual record of their ritual performance, their theatre and their role. Therefore I see no point in repeating and photographing similar subjects that are profoundly researched by esteemed photographers like Sutherland, but inspired by his works and continue to push the boundary in order to discover creative visual representation that is uniquely distinguishable. As a result, I carry on looking at different documentary photographers' works related to the Western China to Himalayan region, in order to understand their approach and research motivation better.

Figure 4a. Disciples of a Crazy Saint

Source: Sutherland & Tsering, 2011.

Figure 4b. Disciples of a Crazy Saint

Source: Sutherland & Tsering, 2011.

I find Arora's article "Framing the image of Sikkim" (Arora, 2009, p. 54-64) insightful because I witnessed Sikkim as being heavily promoted as a sanctuary for Tibetan Buddhism; yet, over the years, the demographics of the population and settlers seem to have changed if we look at the current residents of Sikkim. Border crossing is inevitable due to rivalry, economics and safety. Arora's article depicted Sikkim as highly framed as the Buddhist region in Northeast India, although Sikkim consists of twenty two Indo-Tibetan and Indo-Aryan ethnic groups. Sikkim's indigenous Buddhist visual images, such as postcards, tourist brochures and campaigns are disseminated locally and internationally, regardless of how those visual representations might have projected a biased image, without justification in terms of the contemporary ethnographic and socio-demographic group. In the past Sikkim was a Buddhist Kingdom and ruled by the Namgyal dynasty (1641-1975), however the current Nepali and Hindu residents and immigrants to Sikkim comprise around three-quarters, leaving only twenty percent or so of the population being Buddhist and considered indigenous.

Photographs do in a sense contain and constrain - frame, exclude and include according to photographer's perception and imagination. Photographs absolutely contain the power to convey and to deceive at the same time. Sometimes, the captured image and the conveyed message do not seem to go along well due to the internal and external distinction between the imagined, original content and context, and reproduction purposes. This happens when an image is being used as an advertisement, as a promotional picture such as postcards and posters the main purpose of which is to promote and seduce tourists - cultural tourism. I would not say cultural tourism is a bad idea, but updated visual representation is needed to portray current cultural transitions in order to distribute the reality, the correct image and facts of today's borderlands. Otherwise, we would be misled into looking at stereotyped and historically old images that are discordant with today's cultures and practices on the borderlands.

Ami Vitale is a photojournalist who has travelled to more than 85 countries, having spent plenty of time in Kashmir, India, where she anticipated and witnessed much dreadful violence, poverty, catastrophe, civil conflict and tension. Vitale believes in multiple viewpoints and that no single "truth" exists. When she is covering a story and assignment, she has always injected her own perspective to interpret the unveiled meaningful fact. In her Kashmir coverage (Figure 5), she

intended to show the unseen side of the war. She witnessed the faces of war and people who often get caught in between.

My early phases of documentary and practical photographic works with documentary approaches (Figure 7) are rather similar to Ami Vitale's ideas of covering the borderlands. We do not seek the sensational and stereotyping war conflict visual. Both history and cultural background contributed a large context behind the content, where we spend a long period of time or frequently revisit, to understand the phenomenal and the ordinary in the same place.

Figure 5. Photography by Ami Vitale - Kashmir, India

Source: Vitale, 2009.

Andy Grundberg explained that artists using other's images believe that there are still untapped images in the woods. The fact is that we go into the forest as hostages of a prejudiced image of the forest; what we grasp may have been done by other artists before (Grundberg, 1990, p. 172). Documentary photography has been utilised by photographers for over one hundred and fifty years for its ability to capture the exterior world and give witness to real physical events. The act of making photographs as evidence of acts, memorabilia, history and reflecting contemporary culture has been a powerful dimension of the world's culture since photography was invented. I find Ami Vitale's work remarkably classical, rooted and settled in the strictest sense of documentary command, where compelling and truthful visual is inevitable. I see many prominent documentary photographers are unable to break the documentary mold, where they continue to chase story after story without even attempting to switch direction and to see the subject afresh. Some photographers would rather resume their culmination drama over and over by bringing back similar images, but from different regions.

As I research further, I gain new perspective and interest by looking at different and unconventional documentary works. I find emerging documentary photographers like Carolyn Drake's works very promising and innovative. She too has extensively photographed the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, China. Although she utilised a photojournalism style in documenting the borderlands, in my opinion she has made more versatile progress by turning some of her photographs into fine art pieces (Figure 6). Drake would ask people to describe

their own dreams in Islamic belief, and then ask people to leave messages in the journal and, finally, have people draw and sketch on her own printed photographic works. This would allow her to have less control over the imagery and mix it with someone else's narrative.

Figure 6. Documentary Photography by Carolyn Drake - Uyghur Autonomous Region, China

Source: Drake, n.d.

Drake's approach led me to experiment and relook at the borderlands subject anew. However, when photographic works leap into another genre, the definition is uncertain because the purpose, content and context are different. I found that Drake's works contained too much mixed information when she asked people to sketch on her own photographic prints. Would words and drawings provide us too much information and too many clues? Does photography need that many texts and scribbles of visuals to further describe it? In order to do so, I have departed from a documentary approach which primarily focuses on lifestyle and human conditions. I intend to seek a different and new borderlands representation in a subtle way.

Figure 7. Documentary Photography (Portraits, lifestyle, cultural activities and festivals)
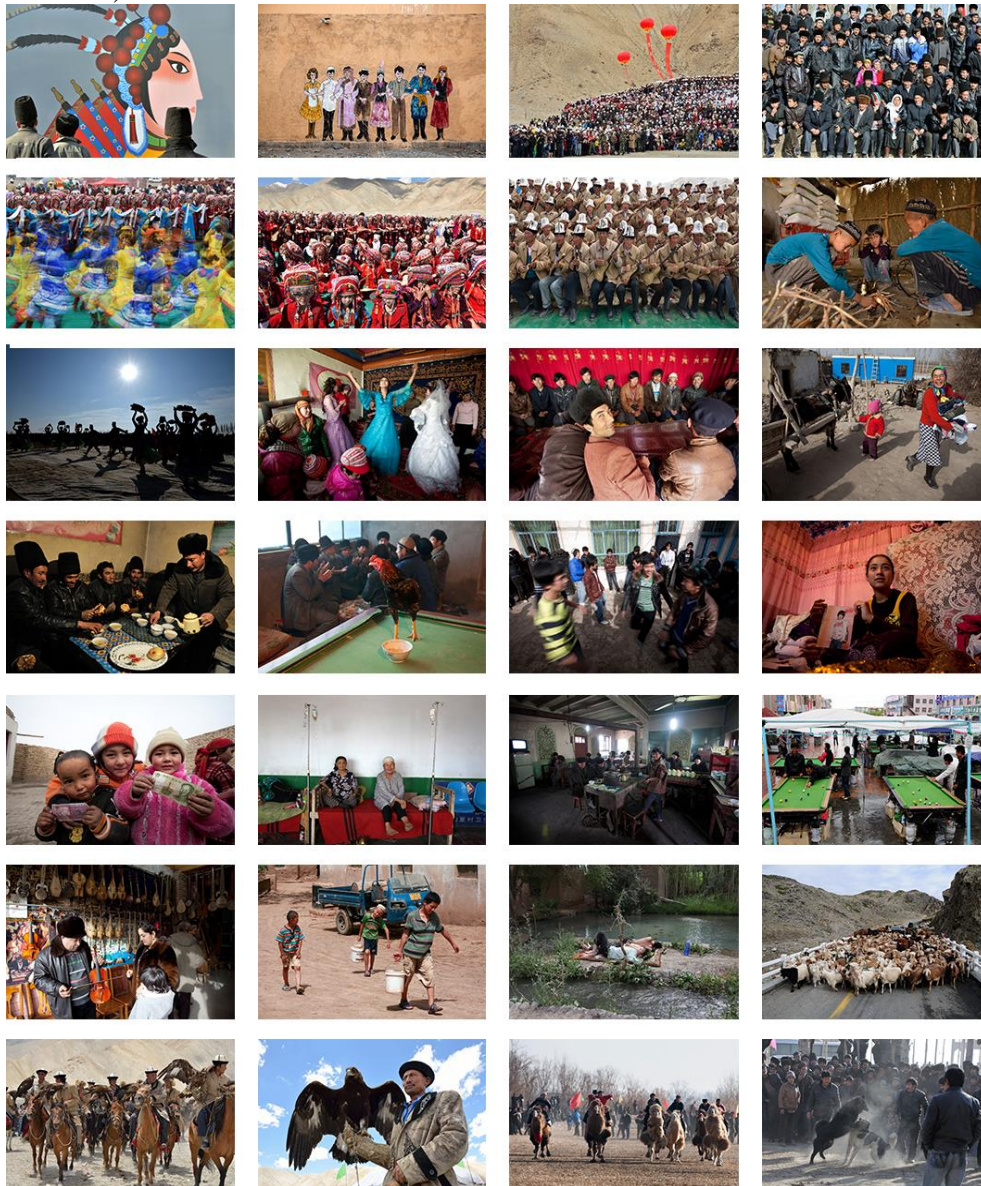
Source: Author's personal file.

Stage 2: Realm of Endless Stretches

Before embarking on the journey to photograph the *Realm of Endless Stretches* series, and after reviewing my documentary works over and over again, I find my documentary photography approach and colour photography straightforward: simply too real, too direct and too beautiful. On the other hand, I started to realise that I should further explore the borderlands passage in the restricted zones, rather than continue to photograph lifestyle, people, portraits and cultural activities (Figure 7).

Therefore, I attempted to take a much higher ground view by plane and helicopter, photographing the *Realm of Endless Stretches* (Figure 10). It is because I realised that photography is oftentimes not only to attain reflective vista, instead to transcend facts of existence by composing original essence and composition of what remain before or ahead of us. It stretches the meaning of words, and extends thoughts and imagination. I find the blending landscape of borderlands fascinating. This is mainly because the aerial view of borderlands, from Western China to the Himalayan Region, is simply breathtaking and unique: the blending of massive landscape with seemingly endless stretches of grass land, dry land, crop fields and deltas looking like "earth veins", are connected to each other. It is difficult to tell the separating point of each country's borderland. The wide horizon at the borderlands can generate ambiguities of distance and position. Some of these areas are still considered undefined conflict zones. There is no clearly agreed map in these disputed areas. From far off, everything seems to blend very well together, resulting in a marvelous aesthetic of forms, colours and textures in fusion. Not only that, but also the forms of space (nature), time, and human action influence the various stages of borderland in the making. The stretches of endless landscape are going through a similar experience, either through the "Earth Changes" through a series of natural catastrophes or through human activity. Layers of memory (culture and history) are being stored and accumulated on this very ground (borderlands) that stretches beyond our prediction.

Many people see themselves as distinctive because of their capability of generating new ideas, amending and modifying old ones, and striving to fulfill their own goals. This sort of perception, motivation and aim puts humanity on the higher ground of reasoning, that a human is not merely an animal. On these borderlands, there are endless lessons and trials that teach us to generate new thoughts, analyse and realise them, and make decisive choices before acting upon them based on principles that are true to our beliefs, where we share and embrace each other (human and nature) positively. Most unfortunately, the results of unity are taken in the opposite direction by different central governments, unable to negotiate and see the benefits of a transnational perspective.

Photographing the borderlands landscape with an aerial view allowed the images to leap into another genre and convey the storytelling differently. To me, the *Realm of Endless Stretches* (Figure 10) would seem by far more like fine art and water colour painting than documentary photography. I thought it would serve as the philosophical representation of borderlands, because it encompassed all the elements and dilemmas that are very difficult to solve and explain at once, such as borderlanders' community interaction and communication, inseparable lands and resource-sharing, language, lifestyle and religion, borderlands security and governance, trade and businesses and many other similar and dissimilar issues. From a great distance, everything on the borderlands is amalgamated.

Having said that, I am well familiar with Andreas Gursky's large format architecture and landscape colour photographs. He often employs a high vantage point to capture his subject in a dense and well composed composition (Figures 8 and 9). During his study at Kunstakademie Dusseldolf, Germany,

Gursky received effective training and influence from Hilla and Bernd Becher. He displayed a similar approach in his own large format documentation. There is a strong research pattern and systematic visual language in Gursky's photographic series. In his early photographic encounters he was inspired by John Davies, who photographed a lot of black and white street images and open spaces of urban landscape. Although I admired and appreciated the consistency of the powerful, condensed and detailed images of Gursky, I never had a second doubt that my images would be similar to his works until I displayed them individually on the gallery wall.

Figure 8. Bahrain I

*Source*: Gursky, 2005.

Figure 9. James Bond Island II

Source: Gursky, 2007.

I realised the *Realm of Endless Stretches* series could be the underdog in the long *run*, if I were to compare them with Gursky's aerial works, since his images have been displayed in major museums and galleries around the globe. Obviously I need to further experiment and capture distinctive images that are uniquely mine.

Furthermore, it would be complicated and time consuming if I were to explain each issue in detail from different sides of the borderlands. After several reasonable analyses and judgments, I decided that the *Realm of Endless Stretches* series was very broad and abstract in content, especially when I displayed them together (Figure 10). These images almost seem like they are taken from Google maps and satellite. In a sense, I thought the repetition of the blended borderlands landscape texture may serve better as an abstract art installation than as a photography series. This is because when the *Realm of Endless Stretches* is presented, these images do not reveal any appreciable information and recognisable locations without provided content and details.

Figure 10. Realm of Endless Stretches
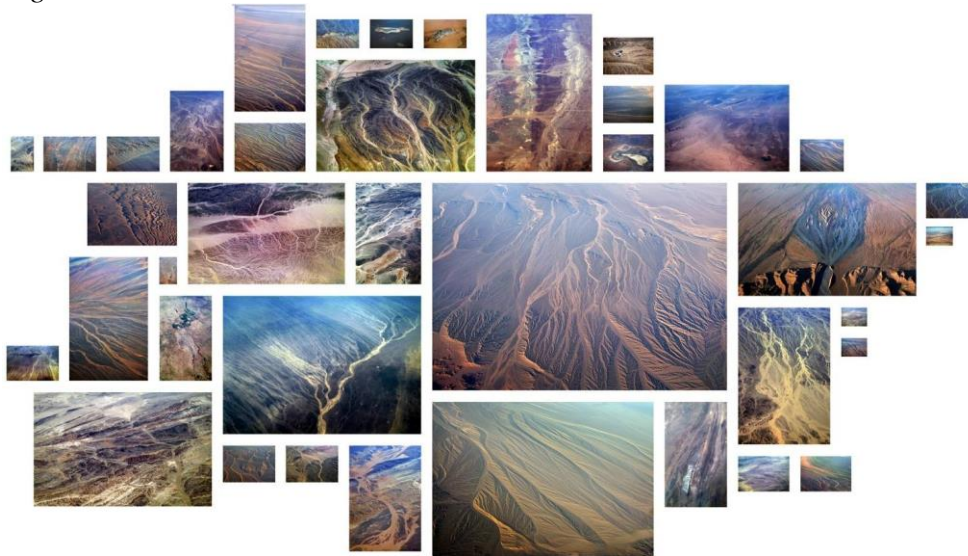
Source: Author's personal file.

Stage 3: On the Road

After confronting gravity, I am back to the ground of reality. I have decided to continue my discovery on the road of the borderlands passage. To me, life is like a road trip. Besides living with my own stories, it is interesting to listen and try to understand the stories of other individuals who have chosen to live their lives based on what they are passionate about. Hopefully, from these journeys, we can find stories that inspire and enlighten us. Therefore, I started my quest "On the Road", where I encountered the beauty and mystery of fog and mist later on.

Sometimes we are on the road trip of discovery because we are travelling somewhere in the hope of achieving a specific goal. As we experience our different journeys, they take us into a new body and we shed our old skin. We obtain a new soul and a new way of looking at life. I realise that it is the journey that makes me a man, not the goal. Perhaps the goal is important, not because of what it can give us when we attain it, but because of the life it forces us to live as we approach it.

I tried to photograph the roads that led me to the discovery of borderlands from Western China to the Himalayan Region. Of course, not all remote areas contain well-constructed roads and pathways. This is what makes freshly built tar roads connecting different borders in this region valuable to me. My approach to photographing the *On the Road* (Figure 13) series is to capture the "road" in various perspectives or display the composition within a large scale of borderland environment. It is like we - humans - have put a little scar on the landscape. Vibrant colour is important to me because it signals the vivid yet harsh living conditions on the borders. I try to photograph the road without humans: prioritizing the time and space relations from one end to another must be subjected to "Before" and "After"; we may gain insights and self-awareness

when we are on a journey, unfolding our perception of life in a different perspective. Martin Lister (1995, p. 11) explained that instead of focusing attention upon a photograph as a final product, we need to consider its semiotics and social hybridity. Its meanings and power are not a singular, essential and inherent quality. I can see and come to understand what he means when I am "On the Road".

These roads serve the purpose by connecting borderland residents and activities. It is an unbelievably long journey! I must say that I admired and appreciated the road construction workers who strenuously built the roads at the borderlands in every weather condition I came to witness. Without these roads, journey in this vast borderland region would be harsh and unthinkable!

Figure 11. Sebastiao Salgado, Region of Lake Faguibine


Source: Salgado, 1985.

I think photographers should carry out some responsibility and awareness toward their captured images. *Sahel, The End of The Road*, by documentary photographer Sebastiao Salgado, evoked a very dramatic, painful and sad human experience (Figure 11 and Figure 12). It is a total silent drama of photography which I felt and confronted as hopeless tragedy when our earth has so much to offer, yet humanity is lost and neglected in different continents of the world. Salgado's compelling and dramatic black and white images bring us to witness the world's unimagined and astounding reality. On the contrary, my *On the Road* series (Figure 13) depicted a silent, calm, colourful, inviting yet puzzling direction toward the frontier, when the road leads to uncertainty at the conflicted zones. I come to realise that I need to capture the subtle and mysterious ambience of the disputed borderlands that contain realistic qualities to display the resonance and meanings that are timeless, rather than moments that provide a historical and direct cultural message.

Figure 12. Sebastiao Salgado, Lake Faguibine Dried up with the Drought and Invasion of the Desert, Mali

Source: Salgado, 1985.

Figure 13. On the Road
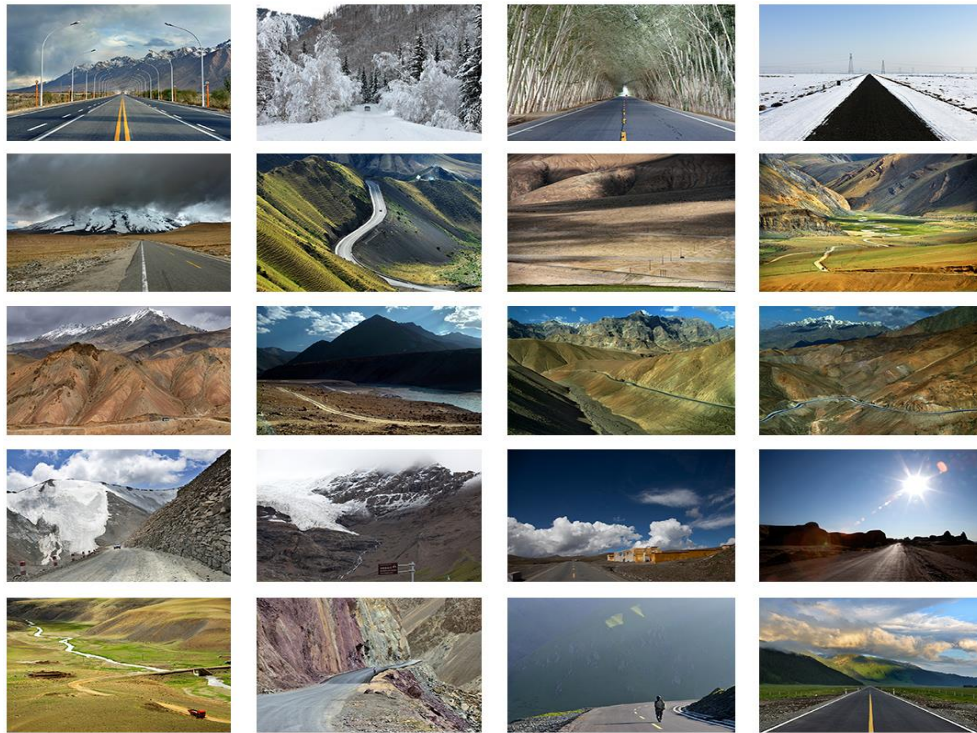
Source: Author's personal file.

Stage 4: In and Out of the Mist

By researching differently, more deeply, and revisiting the same subjects, the *On the Road* photography series led me to *In and Out of the Mist*. Like a butterfly out of a cocoon, the *In and Out of the Mist* photography series could be contemporary art that has references to twenty first century culture and visual landscape. By pushing further away from the reality of space and time, I

discovered fog and mist mysteriously provided me the perfect surreal visual appearance that I had long been waiting for. Photography is more than cameras and lens; it is a magical time machine. The timing could not have been better, especially when I encountered the fog and mist conditions on the borderlands passage while I was photographing the roads that connect different borders in this region. I realised that fog and mist are the perfect synthesis of colour and black and white photography, where fog and mist transform colour photography into a neutral grey tone, but still in colour. I try to capture my photographic works differently by attempting to inject a distinctive suspension to the viewer for a mysterious yet truthful borderlands journey, through landscapes that are shrouded in mist and fog.

After my long search and research, I found many individual and singular fog and mist photographs and artworks regarding landscape, architecture and urban subjects. Nonetheless, there are yet photographers who see and use fog and mist as their metaphor and fundamental concept to photograph the borderlands. I am finally convinced that the *In and Out of the Mist* series could be avant-garde and exceptional. These fog and mist images captured in the conflicted borderlands could be fresh and contemporary because they encompass an imminent dilemma happening in the current borderlands from Western China to the Himalayan Region, yet the anxious condition is soothing, peaceful and problem-free through the ephemeral fog and mist appearance.

Due to my background in animation and video, the cinematic influence can be observed in most of the *In and Out of the Mist* photographs, where they do seem like stills from an epic journey. Some of these works look like they are from an extended narrative, as if they are single arrested moments from a larger visual experience. Each work (Figure 14) draws the viewer in to consider broader issues beyond the immediate connection of visual facts. When we are confronted by a lack of details, such as our experiences of a feeble dawn light or a total white-out in fog, we can have a reaction of anxiety. While looking at the works, one may imagine oneself in the foggy scene, not knowing where and what to expect next. Not only that, but some of the works from the unfamiliar borderlands may present an apocalyptic atmosphere. I strive to show the ordinary and unfamiliar in the most compelling dimension of surrealism. At the same time, all the works appeared in soft tones of grey, but actually they present soft tonal gradations of blue, green, brown and purple. By closely searching through the works in detail, the viewer would be rewarded with details of intense colour.

In and Out of the Mist also reveals other issues, such as global warming, isolation of peoples, humanity's relationship with architecture, and cultural connections. Of course, the most significant would be the reflection of humankind's influence on the natural landscape at the borderlands, and the drama that unfolds when fog and mist invade the borderlands.

The definite location is no longer important in the strictest sense of documenting the vast borderlands from Western China to The Himalayan Region. When one encounters fog and mist that are out of one's regular routine and rhythm, *In and Out of the Mist* can result in sudden poetic and romantic

visual appearances that allude to the vast variety of landscapes around the borderlands (Figure 14). My main intention was not to specify or reveal the borderland location in the strictest sense, because I see that humanity, human-made and natural relationships are inseparable. The separation and discrimination of "who is who" and "who is what" may not be that important at the borderland, since borderlanders who live there all depend on the Himalayan Plateau's natural resources. After all, the temporary fog and mist effects are soothing in some highly-armed and ongoing disputed zones.

Figure 14. In and Out of the Mist (Borderlands)

Source: Author's personal file.

Conclusion

The use of photography as a medium to document the borderland is not new. However, after an extensive period of research in this region, the discovery of the fog and mist intervention in photography could push documentary photography away from its original and classical context. It is no longer straightforward recording, because there is a need for creative recognition of man-made and natural elements in fusion, to generate a surrealistic scene in a realistic atmosphere. Practical research towards *In and Out of the Mist: An Artistic Investigation of Borderland and Community (From Western China to the Himalayan Region)* prove that photography is more than a medium of documentation. With the right moment while photographing the borderlands, under fog and mist intervention, a realistic and familiar atmosphere may suddenly turn into a surrealistic, magical and strangely familiar stage. Most of the time, the appearance and disappearance of fog and mist happens rapidly. Under such circumstances, photography is still the best medium to instantly capture these mysterious moments.

Documentary photographers' concepts and approaches which have been applied to photographing the borderland are predominantly based on the historical background and cultural context in their photographs' content. Everything that is photographed is clearly depicted in the documented photographs' content. The clear and obvious information is inevitable. All of the documentary photographers who photographed the borderland reject unclear and puzzling visuality. They seem prejudiced against the sending of an unclear message to the viewer. On the other hand, *In and Out of the Mist* broke the mould of borderland documentary photography by capturing the poignant, saturated moments and puzzling relationships of human, man-made structures and nature in the borderland. Photographing in fog and mist conditions is not an easy task. In order to express the ambiguous aesthetic of borderlands that I desired, different representations such as *Realm of Endless Stretches* and *On the Road* series have been used to envision the borderless borderland possibility. *In and Out of the Mist*, demonstrated a different artistic quality compared to any documentary photography on borderlands. This unique approach serves as the best natural, local and external medium that neutralises the borderlands' complexity and tension in any conflict areas. Under such *In and Out of the Mist* circumstances, the third space forms silently - a universal border culture. Fog and mist represent my visual and theoretical metaphor, as well as serving as a medium to meditate on the on-going conflicts on borderlands in a silent and mysterious mode.

The fact that there is a shared understanding of what it means to live in the borderlands indicates to us that differences remain the main concern in the twenty-first century. This research, *In and Out of the Mist: An Artistic Investigation of Borderland and Community*, will serve as a metaphoric and artistic study to reject violence, racial discrimination and status differences targeted against borderlanders. The borderlands of this region are a wide open space. The borderlands should be embraced and turned into safe, accessible and familiar transnational space.

References

Arora, V. (2009). Framing the image of Sikkim. *Visual Studies*, *24*(1), 54-64.

China. (1996). *Special Economic Zones*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/5hUMz3. [Accessed 30 Jan 2010].

Drake, C. (n.d.). *Becoming Chinese*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/2ECqUH. [Accessed 31 Dec 2012].

Goodreads. (n.d.). *Henri Cartier-Bresson Quotes*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/XpYIkV. [Accessed 17 June 2011].

Grundberg, A. (1990). *Crisis of the Real*. New York: Aperture.

Gursky, A. (2005). *Bahrain, I*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/bTFvm9. [Accessed 10 August 2015].

Gursky, A. (2007). *James bond Island II*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/GynHda. [Accessed 10 August 2015].

Jameson, F. (n.d.). *Postmodernism and Consumer Society*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/Jk6S1Z. [Accessed 20 March 2015].

Linfield, S. (2012). *Cruel Radiance*. University of Chicago Press. Retrieved from https://ces.to/Ser7df. [Accessed 28 September 2013].

Lister, M. (1995). *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture*. London: Routledge.

Pachmanova, M. (2006). *Mobile Fidelities: Conversations on Feminism, History and Visuality*. KT Press. Retrieved from https://ces.to/gVQBYi. [Accessed 23 June 2015].

Rosler, M. (2008). *The Gray Drape*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/6KD1jX. [Accessed 24 June 2015].

Salgado, S. (1985). *SAHEL - Region of Lake Faguibine, Mali*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/xOzsv5. [Accessed 11 August 2015].

Sutherland, P. & Tsering, T. (2011). *Disciples of a Crazy Saint: The Buchen of Spiti*. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK.

Verve, P. (n.d.). *The New Breed of Documentary Photographers*. Retrieved from http://vervephoto.wordpress.com/ [Accessed 15 June 2011].

Vitale, A. (2009). *Kashmir*. Retrieved from https://ces.to/iIdtob. [Accessed 24 Dec 2012].