

COMMUNICATION AND WORKPLACE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN SCHOOL LEADERS IN MIGORI COUNTY-KENYA

Introduction

Carolyn ADHIAMBO Kokeyo, Doctoral Candidate and Adjunct lecturer in the department of communication studies, Rongo University. Leadership communication Consultant and professional development Coach. adhiambokokeyo@gmail.com

Fredrick O. OGENGA, Ph.D, Head of Department, Communication, Journalism and Media Studies, Rongo University/Kenya ; Founding Director, Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security and President and CEO of the Peacemaker Corps Foundation Kenya. Member of the Board of Editors of *Congo-Afrique*. ogengafredrick@gmail.com

This paper is based on a study that explored *communication strategies in managing workplace conflicts* with a view to ascertaining the actual possibilities and challenges for women school leaders in Migori County, Kenya. The paper is organised into four sections touching on the key aspects that the study this paper is based on discussed such as gender, communication and conflict management, research design as well the research methodology giving justification for the research choices. The paper also discusses the main findings on the actual possibilities and challenges for women school leaders in Migori County and consequently, conclusions. The paper therefore begins by giving a geographical overview of the context of academic literature in relation to the object of study (women leaders in secondary schools) inviting problematic gender dimensions and the difficult location in which these dimensions interact with the local environment. This is done in a bid to locate the gender gaps and opportunities in leadership in relation to conflict resolution, to appraise unique conflict resolution and management styles explored by female leaders to argue for whether or not they are worth replicating. The general picture of the Kenyan context : *gender and leadership situation* regarding conflict management in the educational context is a problem that incited the study that this paper is based on. The paper argues that workplace conflicts, arising from interactions among people working in the same environment, have become a major challenge in most organizations and therefore an issue of policy concern. The paper focuses on secondary schools as institutions that are worst affected by workplace conflict in Kenya

and the central creative role made possible by the unique biological nature of women to solve them – can these strategies be appraised, mainstreamed and replicated ?

Workplace Conflict and Women Leadership : An Emerging Policy Issue

There is an emerging trend that begin to establish that most female educators dread conflict management and are afraid of dealing with men in conflicting situations, hence, reluctant and unenthusiastic to take up leadership roles¹, probably explaining why the 2/3rds gender rule has not been realised in most workplaces in Kenya. A good example is the legislative assembly both at the national and county levels, where, regardless of nomination slots and the women representatives' cadre being introduced, as a way of meeting this constitutional requirement, the 2/3rds gender rule is still a struggle. In most cases, gender Bills tabled for discussion in parliament have been occasioned by poor quorums to the extent that they have often failed to materialise.

It is therefore contended that by telling stories of the plight and experiences of women and their power position in the society like the women principals' in this paper through their own lenses, the success stories may influence those women who aspire to be leaders but are jittery a result of conflicts pointing out the lack of role models due to unclear policy direction and political will regarding the problem². Women for instance, do not undergo any form of mentorship by established women leaders, this is why some women in the popular culture like the famous *Akothee*³ have exploited this "role model gap," by default, to occupy a central role of youth mentorship, asserting herself in a male dominated public sphere that Kenya is eliciting multiple reactions from mainstream leadership and ordinary Kenyans via social media reminiscent of the propositions in Albert Bandura's 1960's social learning theory (learning through modelling).

What *Akothee's* spectacles point out is that, "until women themselves name, publicly exploit and share their experiences and the phenomena of the world, many of their experiences will remain invisible and thus difficult to think about, even for women"⁴, and change their plight. For example what this paper argues is that women, such as female principals, play a pivotal

1 Staffing Officer, Migori County, 2017.

2 MOREJELE, P., CHIKOKO P., & NGCOBO, N. (2013). Do women have to grow muscles in order to manage schools ? Evidence from some South African school principals. *The Anthropologist* 15 (2). Retrieved from : <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2013>.

3 Akothee is a controversial female artist whose lyrical style and performance has offended Kenya's moral psyche especially the masculine macho man that still hold on to the traditional place of women in the society. She has often landed into trouble with the Kenya Film and Classification Board for her modus operandi attracting a huge following from female politicians and media personalities like Caroline Mutoko and Esther Passaris respectively in her defense

4 FOSS, K. A., FOSS, K. S., & GRIFFIN, C. L. (1999). *Feminist Rhetorical Theories*. Long Grove, Illinois : Waveland Press, Inc.

role in conflict management yet this role is taken for granted. This view is supported by the UN Security Council Resolution when they say that women have made and built peace in conflicting situations. However, the contributions made by women in conflict management have been largely overlooked and undervalued⁵. Furthermore, women have contributed to the equilibrium of the society owing to their caregiving roles. This explains the notion that gender influences conflict management dynamics both at societal and individual level⁶. More, to understand the role of gender in conflict and conflict management, there is need to analyze people's interactions at three levels : at individual level, between individuals and between groups of people.

Gender and conflict Management

Scholars have observed that there are two paradigms with regard to conflict management-essentialist and post-modern feminism paradigm. Essentialist paradigm's view is that because women's maternal abilities are aligned to their roles, their nature of being is predestined and different from men. In their view women are naturally cooperative, nurturing, peaceful, care givers and peace makers. Post-modern paradigm on the other hand underscores conflict management from the feminist conflict resolution theory. The explanation is that for a long time, segregation, subjugation and discrimination have contributed to women's perceptions on social issues which more observantly reveal the true structures and actors of the world than men. The relevance of feminist theory to the study and practice of conflict management is the contention that to reveal and change inter-group conflicts involving unequal power relations, it is important to look at the situation from the perspective of the subject and not the master⁷. Additionally, since roles are socially constructed (thus social learning) and that individuals, like *Akothee* mentioned earlier, have their own constitution regarding their roles through language, symbols, and discursive meanings, the way in which social power is exercised and the social relations of gender, class and race can be transformed and women should not only be in the lead in this transformation, but should also be supported by all means necessary especial through policy legislations. The idea that the parliament in Kenya repeatedly lacks quorum when it comes to discussing gender implementation should not be entertained.

This view is cognizant of women's experiences and rigid societal expectations. More, in a patriarchal society historic discrimination and subjugation are said to be reproduced in various institutions and organizations because biases are reproduced in norms and rules. Hence,

5 NTAHORI, and NDAYIZIGA, (2003) *Gender, Peace and Conflict*. London : SAGE Publication.

6 *Ibid*.

7 BRADLEY, H. (1999). *Gender and power in the workplace*. London : Macmillan.

organizational systems of oppression create and escalate other conflicts as people interact in the society. Gender issues reveal themselves when people interpret and assign meaning to conflicts during workplace interactions⁸. Furthermore, workplace conflicts originate from socially constructed workplace conditions especially in the way women articulate their grievances and the ways in which their supervisors translate them. Even though men and women experienced conflicts arising from interpersonal relations, most women's grievances arise from personality clash than men⁹. Further, women seem to experience stereotype conflicts and expectations which has nothing to do with their ability to perform their roles. Therefore, gender influence the way in which conflict is managed as well as the outcome.

Studies have shown that socialization is one of the factors that has influenced the ways in which women leaders communicate. Women leaders have to confront unconscious thoughts that leaders are male and arise against societal and structural discriminations¹⁰. Some women leaders tend to draw from their domestic experiences and roles as mothers while involving personal feelings to solve workplace disagreements¹¹ they may even view workplaces like school as their homes.

Women are often vulnerable in conflict situations with men than with other women because they fear aggression and violence that were likely to arise from men. Other than fear of aggression and violence during conflict, women also feel vulnerable because of lack of support, lack of trust as well as loss of identity and status. Moreover, women differed in the way they communicated during conflict management. For instance, research showed that in articulating their issues during conflict women were more lengthy and detailed especially in explaining the context of conflict and their relationship with the other conflicting party. Men on the other hand were more brief and with little details concerning context and did not refer to how conflict would impact on their relationship with the other party. Additionally, women were more concerned with the influence of conflict on relationships and used more strategies to manage conflicts than men. This paper therefore teases out how the different realities that characterize men and women may lead them to understand conflict in different fashions and so approach conflict management differently.

Women are often viewed as voluntary peacemakers in institutions as they offer to settle differences whenever they are approached by disputants in the workplace. Further, women are more sympathetic and feel obligated to provide care and support. For instance, women can provide a hearing for

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 NETSHITANGANI, T. (2014). Situated account : Qualitative interviews with women educational managers. *Journal of social anthropology*, 5(2), 235-24.

11 *Ibid.*

people to tell their stories, reframe peoples understandings of the situation, translate people's perceptions of each other, they can orchestrate occasions for private conflicts to be made public. This paper however, points out the uncertainty about the role and skills of women as peacemakers as they are neither understood nor appreciated. Gender therefore has an influencing power on leaders' negotiation behaviors in conflict management. Perceived gender differences during negotiations is synonymous to status and power differences existent in men and women during conflict management¹². Power revealed itself in feelings, behavior and conflict resolution outcomes than in gender.

Furthermore in the study that this paper is based on, women neither felt more cooperative nor less competitive than men. However, women were less subordinate and more dictatorial. Further, participants in high power roles regardless of their gender felt more competitive before the negotiation, expected greater cooperation from those opposing them, felt more powerful, more in control, and felt more satisfied with the decision than those that occupied low power. Managerial women felt significantly less confident about negotiating than managerial men and women were particularly uncomfortable when negotiating with fellow women. Further, women did not enjoy the role-play and were very uncomfortable with whatever role that was assigned to them. More, women also underrated their performance compared to men. This paper illuminates the role of gender in conflict management with minimal yet convincing conclusion on the role of gender in influencing the way in which conflict is handled. Upon this backdrop, the paper demonstrates how women holding top managerial positions in schools responds to conflict in a more or less similar fashion. However, in addition to reflecting on the influences of gender, the paper discusses ways in which conflict is perceived, felt and understood by individuals and groups as well as the ways in which women principals uniquely communicate conflict management

Challenges Facing Women Leadership Globally

Leadership involves persuasion of followers to act towards achieving goals that represent the values, motivations, wants, needs and the aspirations of an organisation. In most workplaces like the teaching fraternity, women have contributed greatly through their commitment and expertise in teaching as well as leadership positions to achieve organisational goals. However, women continue to face challenges that in a way frustrate their efforts to provide for successful educational leadership and so remain a minority. Globally, studies have shown that women are

12 WAMOCHA L. M., NASONGO, J. M., INJENDI, J., (2012) Intervention measures in conflict management in boarding secondary schools in western Kenya. *Journal of current research of social sciences* 4(2), 103-108.

majorly underrepresented in education management with a ratio of five to one compared to their male counterparts at middle management level¹³

Even though women have limited ambitions and may lack confidence in themselves, women leaders just like any other leader have the drive to lead but are chocked by many challenges among them being societal expectations and inadequate skills to perform their roles. It seems women are usually appointed to management positions without really being prepared to conduct their roles. This poses challenges on educational leadership preparation. Women's experience and challenges in leadership are uniquely different when compared to that of men hence the need for women school leaders to acquire a wide range of attributes and skills in dealing with challenges. The major challenge experienced by women principals in Migori is that they are most times posted in disadvantaged schools with limited infrastructure as well as finances considering that many schools in Migori County are rural and have limited resources.

In addition, women principals experience stereotype view that women do not make good leaders because they are weak, submissive and emotional. Hence, for women leaders to be accepted by most stakeholders – especially where there are deep seated cultural beliefs – most women principals are forced to act like men by being authoritarian and dictatorial. Women leaders are faced with other challenges such as juggling between domestic roles and leadership roles. However, as home makers and caregivers, women pose such attributes like nurturing, caring, being sensitive, empathetic, counsellors and cooperative. This makes women effective transformational leaders.

It is from the foregoing, that this paper argues for the need for women principals to desist from copying male dictatorship and continue with positive attributes of being collaborative, understanding and emotionally connected in order to achieve organizational goals, guided by the feminine nurturing instincts. Furthermore, women should embrace the view that men and women possess unique communication styles especially when faced with difficult conversations and tensions. Women tend to explore out of the box conflict resolution communication strategies like persuasion and divine intervention (getting services of a priest) unlike men who stick to the laid down disciplinary procedures that may lead to suspension or transfer of offenders. The feminine nurturing nature of women allow them to be more understanding and caring in their approach. This appears to be an unexploited unique strategy used by women for conflict resolution that is yet to be well exploited and appraised in secondary education in Kenya, given that it has been over the past couple of years riddled with strikes, school fires and conflict.

13 UNESCO (1995). Agenda for Gender Equality. In UNESCO (1995). *Women's Contribution to a Culture of Peace*, France : The women and a Culture of Peace Programme UNESCO.

The Gender Question in School leadership in the Kenyan Context

In the Kenyan context, just like other patriarchal societies, “leadership is associated with masculinity and rationality¹⁴.” The reason being that, it is rare to find a female head managing an urban mixed school and if it so happens, this is considered as a privilege rather than a usual practice. Mostly, male teachers tend to rise to dominant management positions based on societal expectations that men are “natural leaders”. Other scholars have also found that some male teachers consider certain aspects of their teaching careers, such as leadership and management, to be compatible with “proper masculinity”. “Male leadership is validated at all levels as the only legitimate leadership.” Hence, the un-validated assumption that due to constant conflict in educational institutions, certain levels of management would only be effective if headed by men¹⁵. Male principals are believed to work better with boys [fellow men], education boards and political influence.

This stereotype is perpetuated further by male dominance in the political world and so, Board of Management [BoM] and Parents Teachers Associations [PTA] is male dominated. Hence the conclusion that hiring of women in some organisations is a set up in the male-dominated environment. This explains why being a woman principal is considered as a rare post in most parts of the world, Kenya included. The stereotype arises from cultural perceptions about gender roles, which favour the male principals, especially with regard to matters concerning conflict management. This is evident, more especially, at higher institutions of learning, such as universities where, in Kenya, it is a rare case to find a female chancellor in public universities. A statistical report by Herriot et al (2002)¹⁶ indicates that by 2002, 93% of all primary schools were headed by male head teachers. Still, by 2000 women constituted 7.7% of top level management positions (job group P-T) in the ministry of education, 15.8% as middle level managers (Job group J-L) and 42.9% of the female teachers occupied lower level job groups. Furthermore, a recent study¹⁷ on women’s decision making in leadership in Kenya has shown that 80% of women live in rural areas and play invisible leadership and social roles while their male counterparts still dominate critical leadership decision-making at all levels. Yet, little is known about women who occupy managerial positions and their experiences in utilizing communication strategies to manage

14 RARIEYA J. F., (2011). Becoming women school leaders in Kenya : Challenges and possibilities. *JENda Journal of Culture and African Studies*, 19, 25-43 : 10.

15 KARIUKI, W. (2006). ‘She is a woman after all’: Patriarchy and Female Educational Leadership in Kenya, *Postamble*, 2(2), pp. 65-75.

16 HERRIOT, A., CROSSLEY M., JUMA M., WAUDO J., MWIROTSI M., & KAMAU A. (2002). The Development and Operation of Headteacher Support Groups in Kenya : A Mechanism to create pockets of excellence, Improve the provision of Quality Education and Target Positive changes in the Community, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22(4), pp. 509-526.

17 GICHUCHI, W., & NJERI, C. (2016). Devolution and women decision making in Leadership in Kenya : Policy Brief. Nairobi : University of Nairobi Press.

workplace conflicts in Kenyan schools. Hence, the need to explore women principals' actual practices and the challenges they experience. The ensuing section will underscore the gender gap in Migori County.

Gender and School Leadership in Migori County

Although gender equality in the workplace was to be realized by 2005, in Kenya, so far, this notion has remained a mirage, particularly, in educational leadership and management. The situation is worsened by the introduction of free tuition in day secondary schools in which mixed schools headed by male principals have proliferated. In Migori County, where the study that this paper is based on is situated for instance, there are about 185 public secondary schools with 26.6% of female principals against 73.4% of male principals. Furthermore, most women principals in urban areas head girls' schools while those that head co-educational schools are mostly found in the rural and un-established schools. In the 6 mixed secondary schools located in the urban areas of Migori County, there is only one female principal heading this kind of school. It therefore follows that women lag behind in educational management. The recent 2014 recruitment of secondary school principals indicate that out of 103 applicants only 22 were women. Additionally of the 44 applicants for deputy principals, only 5 were women. In primary schools, application for deputy head teachers indicates that of the 29 applicants who lined up for the position of deputyship in Migori County, only two were women¹⁸.

This implies that women are reluctant to apply for managerial positions. The reason, according to the Staffing Officer Migori, is that women shy off from handling conflicts. It is argued that the women's reluctance is attributed to, among others, various managerial issues such as : overburdened roles, insufficient preparation and inadequate 'emotional support' to perform their roles. Hence, the conclusion that when women believe they are disadvantaged they tend to shy off from applying for vacant top managerial positions than their male counterparts. The need to explore the women leaders' experiences in Migori County in order to understand the possibilities as well as their challenges of managing workplace conflicts forms the crust of the study that this paper is based on.

Methodological Approach

Philosophical Paradigm

This study was guided by a relativist-interpretivist paradigm which is consistent with the qualitative approach and case study method. This paradigm was deemed suitable for this study because the researchers

18 Staffing Officer, Migori County.

needed to explore the actual possibilities and challenges of communication strategies in managing workplace conflicts from the participants' own points of view. To do this, the researchers interviewed the participants and also analysed documents in order to obtain multiple realities¹⁹. Further, being a qualitative study physically visited the selected secondary schools headed by women principals in Migori County. The purpose was to talk to and listen to the participants as they recounted of the possibilities and challenges from their own points of view thereby gaining an in-depth understanding²⁰. Further, the study adopted a case-study method. The purpose for choice of method was that case study provided information about 'how' and 'why' women principals utilised communication strategies in managing workplace conflicts the way they did in real life contexts²¹. The study was conducted in Migori County for the convenience of the researchers. The study adopted purposive sampling in which four schools were selected for the study with forty research participants. The forty research participants included 4 women principals, 4 deputy principals, 4 Heads of Department (HoD's) guidance and counselling, 4 the senior teachers as well as 6 prefects from each study school-giving a total of 24 prefects who were all selected purposively. Semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions and document analysis were used to generate data which were then analysed thematically. All relevant ethical issues were considered.

Communication and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools

Findings in the study that this paper draws from revealed that although the challenges faced by women principals were of various forms depending on context, most of the challenges bore similarities especially with regard to women in leadership and conflict management as discussed in the ensuing sub-sections.

Inadequate skills in Communicating Conflict Management

The interviews and focus group discussions conducted in the four schools were corroborated with the documents that the women school leaders used to communicate conflict management. Findings revealed that the major challenge that the women principals faced was largely based on inadequate skills in communicating conflict management. This was based on the query as to whether the women principals had received training in which the women principals' responded that they had not received any training on communication and conflict management. Further, the four women principals and their deputies responded that they had attended

19 MASON, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching* (2nd Ed.). Oxford : SAGE.

20 CRESWELL, J. W. (2014). *Research design : Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (4th Ed.). Los Angeles : SAGE.

21 YIN, R. K. (2009). *Case study research design and methods : Applied social research methods* (4th Ed.). London : SAGE Publications.

refresher courses on conflict management offered at Kenya Educational Management Institute (KEMI). However, the participants felt that they had not gained enough skills from KEMI that would help them to manage conflicts. Jessica remarked, *"I cannot say that the skills one learns at KEMI will help you, what you need is experience."* Nicole concurred adding that, *"KEMI courses are not thoroughly conducted it is usually for a short period of time and when we go there all we do is write notes rarely do we find time to share best practices."* Additionally Naomi said that, *"what we learn at KEMI is very minimal."* These sentiments were congruent with Jackline who further mentioned that some management courses were irrelevant and inadequate to real school situations. Based on the foregoing it was evident that even though the school leaders attended courses at KEMI they still felt unprepared to deal with conflicts. This is in agreement with other studies which have indicated that despite their critical roles, most school principals lack the necessary communication and conflict resolution skills and are therefore ill prepared to manage workplace conflicts. Further, this paper contend that even though the principals and their deputies attend refresher courses, the actual practice indicate inadequate skills in conflict management. Furthermore, the paper points out that even though proper training in conflict resolution seems to be important, senior teachers, the Heads of department like guidance and counselling have not received any training on conflict and conflict management since only principals and their deputies have only attended KEMI courses.

Insufficient Leadership Preparation

While in a discussion with the school leaders, it emerged that none of the school leaders received any professional development course or induction before assuming their roles as principals, deputies, heads of departments or guidance and counseling teachers. Instead, as one participant puts it, *"you are told to go there and see what you can do."* Following this sentiment the researcher sought further clarity on what "see what you can do meant" pointing out how they use their own discretion : *"use your intuition to solve disagreements and manage the school."* In another discussion with Jackline, one of the respondents, her comment was *"we don't receive any preparation to be the principal or deputy or senior teacher or any of those what is there is that you learn as you work... learn through experience."*

Perceptions on Women leadership and Lack of Women Role Models

The researcher sought audience through interviews with women school leaders who participated in the study that this paper is based on to understand some of the challenges that they experienced as female school leaders. Findings revealed that women leaders still deal with societal perceptions as stated in the following excerpt :

...challenges are many especially being a woman. You stand being looked down upon like someone who cannot make wise judgment like a male leader would do and especially financial decisions... sometimes you also feel that people do not listen to you not because you are wrong but because you are a woman and not your decisions or the manner in which you say things but because you are simply a woman. (Principal, school C)

Jackline's experience as a woman leader could explain why Naomi (another leader) had to behave like a man when she landed in a co-educational school. According to Naomi :

There is this conflict that emerges because many of us in the community look at gender as a difference. So there are issues which emerge because people are looking at us as women... and there is nothing you can do... So you find the male teachers are looking at that woman, they feel the woman cannot do much, in the community they do the same. We have some people still who (sic) have that mentality. So me I told them I stopped being a woman a long time ago I am a man (Principal, school B).

In another discussion with one of the participants it became apparent that :

...the major challenge for women is that we are just too emotional. You know ...we are not able to separate our emotions and problems from our roles so we end up mixing issues so people don't take us seriously (Principal School A)

For another participant's exposed the patriarchal pressure women face in a male dominated society :

another thing women face is wanting to behave like men so command respect so they become dictatorial which for me does not work in this era where people know their rights...they will tell you even if you are the principal (SNR4, school D).

What these responses point out is that women in managerial positions should use their feminine characteristics to excellently perform their roles as public relations practitioners without having to act or behave like men²² like done in school D in order to break down the gender barriers. Further, the paper argues, that even though men who possess feminine characteristics rarely ascend to managerial positions in order to practice the two-way Grunig's model of being cooperative and nurturing. Women, because of their biological nature, should develop ways of overcoming societal discrimination and subjugation that bar them from ascending to managerial posts in an organization and practice those feminine characteristics that they intrinsically possess.

22 GRUNIG, J. E., & GRUNIG, L. A. (1992). Models of public relations and communication. Hillsdale, New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Lacking policies on Conflict and Conflict Management

Based on discussions with school leaders, it emerged that apart from the code of conduct and Ethics for teachers and the Basic Education Act, there are no policy guidelines on communication, conflict and conflict management in schools. This is because in the four schools visited and with all the 40 research participants, findings indicated that there are no clear guidelines or government policies in schools on how to communicate conflict management in schools. This calls for proper policy formulation and implementation.

Lack of trust and openness

Based on discussions held with participants, it became apparent that lack of trust and openness was among the challenges of communication in conflict and management. For instance, one participant mentioned that, *"Sometimes when you try to reach out to people but they don't trust you so never open up or they want it solved according their own understanding."* Another participant added that *"when you don't understand one another, managing conflicts becomes a challenge."* In negotiating conflict, scholars have identified openness, trust and understanding as important symmetrical assumptions that increase credibility in which those in conflict negotiate in good faith while listening to the other person. However, trust can be problematic where people have mixed motives and so do not communicate their intentions openly. The implication is that problem solving is a skill that can be learnt. Thus, what is important in a working relationship is that people are willing to listen and understand one another even when they do not agree with them.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that women leaders are faced with various challenges of inadequate skills in communicating conflict management because of inadequate training and insufficient policies guidelines on conflict and conflict management. Therefore, the study highlights the need for effective communication strategies in communicating conflict management. Hence, the recommendation for women school leaders to be equipped with the necessary skills to acquire competencies in managing workplace conflicts. In addition, the study concludes that women really need to exploit their biological nurturing nature, as some of them are already doing as revealed by the study in which this paper is based on, to solve conflicts creatively and this should not only be appraised in scholarship but also supported in the policy environment and implemented. ■