

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN AN EMERGING DEMOCRACY: A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT AKUFO-ADDO'S 2021 INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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ABSTRACT

President Akufo-Addo's (Ghana) 2021 inaugural address is analysed from a framing perspective. A theory-guided approach anchored by framing as the conceptual framework and framing analysis as the methodological approach were employed. Five major frames were unearthed: (a) "The can-do spirit", (b) "Ghana beyond aid" (c) "maturing democracy", (d) "social and economic justice" and (e) "unity, confronting COVID-19 and seizing destiny". The Presidential inaugural address is the first and most significant speech the President will give after he is sworn in. This research offers insights

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into the underlying meanings that the president seeks to communicate to the nation beyond linguistic or rhetorical considerations. The research contributes to understanding as well as appreciating the role and nature of presidential communication in a contemporary and emerging democracy such as Ghana.

Keywords: Political Communication, Speeches, Ghana, Democracy, Inaugural Address

INTRODUCTION

Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo was sworn-in as president of Ghana for a second term on 7th January 2021. Despite a court petition (at the time) and a boycott by Members of Parliament of the opposition, National Democratic Congress (NDC), the ceremony went ahead. Like most inaugural ceremonies, the event was marked with pomp and pageantry. One of the most anticipated aspects of such nationally significant events is the inaugural address. It is the first and most significant speech the President will give after he is sworn-in.

Presidential inaugural addresses are important for several reasons. The address affords the President the opportunity to galvanize the nation, sell his vision, seek support, and unify the country after competitive elections. In this address the new President sets forth his aspirations, defines national problems and proffers general ideas regarding how to mitigate these problems. From a communication perspective, this affords him an early chance to begin framing and shaping his image, legacy or administration. In the address, citizens get a sneak peek into what the broad framework or tone of the administration will be. Although the address will not usually contain a laundry list of policies, Presidents poignantly articulate, usually in broad strokes, their most defining plans, views on the state or nature of society and democracy, ideologies and national values that will characterise their new term.

The enduring significance of inaugural addresses is laid forth by Yujie and Fengjie (2018:29) who posit that: "...the inaugural address is significant because it reflects...fundamental political values. The inaugural address usually plays an important role in teaching and encouraging citizens...the new president impresses the public through carefully weighing his words and polishing his address...".

Words, language and communication are important tools in the conduct of democracy. They are the central link between government and citizens. In addition, they serve as the conveyor belt for the transmission of policies, expression of positions and the fulcrum around which participatory and deliberative governance takes place. Communication scholars have, therefore, consistently been interested in systematically examining the use of language, including speeches, in many democracies.

The purpose of this paper is to critically analyse the use of language by President Akufo-Addo in his inaugural address. Studies on Presidential inaugural addresses have received much attention in Western democracies. However, this exercise remains comparatively limited in Ghana and generally across Africa (Ayeomoni & Akinkuolere, 2012; Kondowe, 2014; Owunye & Idowu, 2019). In Ghana for example, most of the existing studies have approached the speech from a linguistic perspective (Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016; Al-Faki, 2014) mostly applying transitivity or the taxonomy of speeches (Boakye, 2015), with few or no available studies approaching it from the framing dimension. This study hopes to fill this gaping gap in the available literature. The framing approach helps to decipher patterns, account for broader narratives, deconstruct the social and political context within which speech acts takes place, interrogate ideological underpinnings while expounding the symbolic environment governing language and communication. Taken together, it contributes to further understanding of the mediatory role of language, the political culture and communicative practices in one of Africa's exemplary democracies.

To be specific, the current research seeks to determine the major frames employed by the President, the major topical areas of discourse, the ideological positions taken by the President and the values he espouses. As stated by Yujie and Fengjie (2018:34), "political public speeches cause a large amount of attention, due to their political, economic and cultural influence". Analysing the inaugural address, the foremost speech of the President after he takes office, is significant because it contributes to unearthing the underlying meanings contained in the President's address, ideologies that inform his policies and could significantly affect the course of the nation and unpack the President's construction of social reality. The study investigates how framing devices can be used as communicative

tools to mediate public discourse and set the President's agenda. If politics is about the "authoritative allocation of values" as Easton (1956:96) asserts, then investigating text beyond the linguistic dimension will be useful in accounting for the values underlining the governance of the nation in the current era.

The sections that follow will account for a review of existing literature on the communicative role of inaugural addresses and discuss the framing theory and its application to speech analysis. The methodological approach employed will be set forth followed by a synthesis and analysis of the data. Conclusions reached will then be summarized with linkages to the literature and opportunities for future research discussed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To understand the President's framing of his inaugural address, this study adopts framing as the theoretical framework. This theory stresses the power of speakers to make arguments, set forth idea narratives and stake out positions promoting certain issues while ignoring others sometimes through connections and symbolisms, idea narratives. (Entman, 2007; Sikanku, 2013; Tankard, 2001; Yousaf, 2015). The basic building blocks of frames include ideological positions, beliefs, values and worldviews. According to Russel, Lawrence, Cullerton and Baker (2020), frames are contained within larger contexts which include a set of principles, beliefs with political parties and policy making positions.

Framing theory provides the conceptual basis to investigate the President's communication, specifically, his inaugural speech since it has explanatory and interpretive power. The theory affords us to decipher key words, phrases, underlying beliefs and make meaning of what the President communicated to the nation. According to Reese (2001:11), frames work "symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world". This is why the theory is appropriate in our analysis of the President's message, his worldview and the elements he draws on to communicate with citizens. In doing this, the President taps into quotes, historical references, symbols, catch phrases, metaphors and other elements to build a substantive frame.

According to Entman (1993), frames are manifested "by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources

of information, and sentences which provide a thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements". For Gurevitch and Levy (1985:4), the concept refers to how "issues are defined, identities created and issue narratives are produced". This research will investigate the core frames of Nana Akufo-Addo's speech to the public after he was sworn-in for the second term. Framing research includes ascertaining "the persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion' (Gitlin, 1980). It requires determining the major things the President included in his address and what was excluded. According to Sikanku (2019) framing involves "analysing discursive constructions, issues of emphasis or inclusions and particular angles within which issues are portrayed." This view of framing will be useful here.

These explications on framing are all particularly relevant to the present study. The President is a major public figure and his words contribute, in a major way to shaping thoughts, perceptions and attitudes. Framing scholars agree that the theory is helpful in determining what a text is about by unearthing the patterns, major ideologies, keywords, quotes, historical references and context within which the text is communicated. Previous research has also found that by unearthing frames, we can make meaning by paying attention to the values, beliefs, cues and symbols that motivate particular policy positions or stance of the President. Democratic citizenship requires deeper understandings of representations and analysis of frames of communication in order to make complete sense of events. What makes framing such a useful approach is that it connects the use of words to broader events, accounts for context and the principles underlying the presentations of words. In other words, it gives an ideological framework for examining how text or speech producers give meaning to issues and structure the social and political world.

Most of the existing studies on Presidential inaugural addresses in Africa suffer from a common limitation; examination of the speeches from a linguistic and rhetorical perspective (Adekunle, 2011; Boakye, 2014; Owunye & Idowu, 2019), which does not make them relevant to this study. This is the case in studies conducted by Olaniyi (2010) who investigated the 2007 inaugural address by President Umaru Yar Adua of Nigeria. Adetiniji's (2006) examination of speech acts by President Obasanjo and President Bush in their second inaugural addresses and Johnson's (2012) study of the inaugural address of President Goodluck Jonathan are all examples. In Ghana, there are very few studies at all on the subject. Botchwey's (2015)

study was clearly from a linguistic perspective with emphasis paid to the use of grammatical constructions as well as linguistic choices. The study was lacking in terms of conveying broader contextual, ideological meanings.

Ankrah, Dominic and Opoku (2018) engage in other existing study of inaugural addresses in Ghana. Though there is an attempt to pay attention to the value-laden underpinnings of the speeches, the study does not fully account for the use of frames or framing devices and strategies. There is some emphasis on discourse practices of texts rather than the unearthing of frames. In both Ghanaian scenarios, the research studies do not include the current speech under examination, President Akufo-Addo's 2021 inaugural address. This is therefore one of the earliest studies of Akufo-Addo's second term inaugural address. It also makes it one of the earliest if not the first study of Nana Akufo-Addo's inaugural address from a framing perspective. This study therefore fills an existing gap in research, the application of the framing approach to the study of Presidential speeches specifically an inaugural address in Ghana. It seeks to ascertain the major frames employed by the President in setting forth his ideas, values and mission for his second term.

METHODOLOGY

To determine the frames contained in the President's inaugural address, this paper employed framing analysis as the specific textual analytical approach. In order to ensure rigor, a theory guided approach was used. This theory guided approach is important because "most qualitative researchers also focus on the theoretical underpinnings of the text, because they see theory as a central to the process of interpretation" (Brennen, 2013:197). Such a method of qualitative framing analysis involves reading and re-readings of texts for meanings, accounting for contexts, historical permutations and any underlying interpretations as has been the case in previous research (Altheide, 1996; Eko, 2003; Moscato, 2016; Odebiyi, 2020; Perkins, 2005; Reese, 2001; Sikanku, 2019; Wu, 2006). Framing analysis is deemed an appropriate methodology for this research because it helps researchers to unearth various narratives, themes, patterns and outstanding devices used in the construction of communication messages. Reese (2007:10), asserts that:

“The qualitative approach to framing analysis helps resist the reductionistic urge to sort media texts and discourse into containers and count their size or frequency. Indeed, some define frames as an inherently qualitative construct. In this case, one must capture the meanings embedded in the internal relations within texts, which collapsing into reductive measures would obscure”.

Entman’s well cited definition of framing served as one of the major methodical foundations and guiding frameworks for this study. According to Entman (1993:2), frames are manifested “by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences which provide a thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements”. This indicates that framing analysis involves what is included or excluded as well as how speakers perceive and present issues to the public. Gamson and Modigliani (1987:143) explication of framing will also be useful as he delineates framing as granting “meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. the frame suggests what the controversy is, about the essence of the issue”.

Basically, the current speech was analyzed to unearth meanings the President ascribes to issues and event, the connections and the core “essence” of these issue. Frames involve the use of metaphors, arguments, assertions, phrases, quotes (used for textual detail and analysis), references to values, beliefs, ideologies, symbolisms, repetitions among others (Gamson & Lasch, 1983).

Reese’s (2001) assertion that framing researchers aim to “group, categorize and thematize texts in order to get to the heart of issues being discussed” will be applied as well. These postulations or perspectives of framing analysis will inform the ensuing analysis. This view of framing is further enhanced and applied by Sikanku (2020:21) who writes that, “since frames are embodied in key words and other symbolic devices through selection and reinforcing narratives, framing analysis helps to reveal how messages and information are constructed or represented in political discourse...”. These explications of framing analysis which have served as methodological guides to previous research will be adopted for this study.

DATA ANALYTIC APPROACH

The specific methodological and analytic in practical terms included are set forth below. The process started by constructing a theoretical framework to guide the analysis, data was collected by obtaining the original version of the speech, an initial reading of the text was done to familiarise with the speech and using theory as an entry point, a second reading was done to identify frames still using a theory guided approach, while omitting some unnecessary elements and taking note of any emerging ideas, frames or narratives.

Key words, underlying messages, quotes, ideologies, values and other framing techniques are noted as is usually required of the theory guided approach. The next process involved further immersive reading where the theory guided framework is still applied in order to firm up and concertize frames. At this point, the interpretive process takes place where the close readings enabled the analysis of the frames in an in-depth manner, considering context while offering deeper meanings for “one frame of meaning to the other” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002:232). The last stage involves summing up and drawing conclusions from the frames ascertained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Can-do Spirit

One of the clearest and visible themes in the address is that of self-reliance. The President relies on the phrase “can-do spirit” to signify not just self-reliance but his belief in the abilities of the people of Ghana. In fact, this phrase has been a common refrain in his public discourse and a carry-over from his first term. From a framing perspective it signifies not just the importance of such a value or ideology but serves as a link or continuity from the first term. For a second term, there will be expectations of some form of linkage or at least relationship to the first term. This theme accomplishes this task. More significant though is the substance of the frame. It demonstrates the President’s ideological value in self-reliance, and an attempt by the new president to instil a sense of belief and self-conviction in his citizens. The expression of this frame is seen in the quote below:

“The sheer can-do-spirit of the Ghanaian, which I have witnessed all my life, is the bedrock on which we can build the Ghana of our dreams. Indeed, four years ago, at my first inauguration, I urged all Ghanaians to be, and I quote, “citizens and not spectators”. I appealed to you to be active participants in the effort to help build the Ghana we want... the Black Star of Africa”.

The President recalls this theme from his first term as a bridge to the next. He utilizes a phrase that had become symptomatic of his administration’s strain of democracy, “citizens and not spectators”, enjoining Ghanaians to be active citizens of nation building. This is interwoven with references to the metaphor often linked to Ghana’s position on the African continent, “Black Star of Africa”, as a way to inspire and ginger the audience into action. The idea of an active citizenry is so integral to the President’s beliefs that it has become a carry-over from the first term into the next. The President uses the inaugural address to charge the citizens to be engaged rather than disengaged with the affairs of the state. Further evidence from the speech supports this frame:

“In my first term as President, I was able to count on the contribution of all citizens in attempting to create this Ghana. What I have seen these last four years is further evidence, if any were needed, that the Ghanaian will no longer accept poverty and deprivation as his or her portion, but is rather determined to work to chart a path of growth and development for himself or herself”.

It is, of course, expected that a President would express self-belief in his citizens. However, it is not often the case, particularly in Africa, that leaders would see citizens as major players in governance or aggressively demand their citizens to be active in governance which would include critiquing the President and other measures of accountability. Power is often seen as concentrated in the hands of authorities rather than shared with citizens. In his analysis of inaugural speeches of the President of Malawi, Kondowe (2014), finds that the President foregrounded himself as the sole source of democratic power. What seems clear here is that Nana Akufo-Addo openly sees the expression and adjudication of power as lying not solely with the President but with the citizens. His call for the audience not to be spectators and his belief in a development paradigm which is internally inspired, all see

people as the centre of power and governance. In an interpretive sense, this “can-do spirit” frame can thus be said to be empowering.

Ghana Beyond Aid

Scholars (Reese, 2001; Tankard, 2001) posit that the words contained in a speech conveys a speaker’s underlying beliefs, values and predispositions. The analysis indicates that at the heart of the Akufo-Addo doctrine is the belief that Ghana must operate as a country no more relying on aid or handouts from Western governments. To frame this belief and communicate it to the public, the President relies on the catchphrase *Ghana Beyond Aid*. This catchphrase became synonymous with the President’s political agenda during his first term both locally and internationally. It is, therefore, not surprising that the President emphasizes this frame in his inaugural address. It shows continuity and consistency in his governance outlook. However, beyond that, the emphasis demonstrates a deep-seated doctrine— the doctrine of self-reliance. This is palpably linked with the initial frame of “can-do spirit”; promoting a doctrine of disassociation with the dependency culture that has characterised most African governments. This frame thus affords us the opportunity to appreciate the President’s world view. The quote below serves as an example:

“So, when there was a shortage in the supply of personal protective equipment, at a time when they were being sold at extortionist prices on the world market, the enterprise of the Ghanaian shone through. We produced, right here in Ghana, our own sanitisers, face masks, medical scrubs, gowns, liquid soap amongst others. We can, indeed, build a Ghana Beyond Aid...”.

The president grounds his *Ghana Beyond Aid* frame in the belief of a domesticated society capable of doing things without external dependence. The factors that feed into the President’s belief include the country’s ability to produce protective equipment in the middle of a global pandemic without relying on donor support. So essentially, the new Akufo-Addo administration wants to shift Ghana away from the Western or Eurocentric framework that has underpinned most of Ghana’s development paradigm. Such postulations are significant and deserve a separate frame because over the past decades, one of the major conversations regarding Africa’s development

paradigm is the narrative on dominance and dependency. This refers to the "...asymmetrical economic relationship between the underdeveloped and developed economies which resulted in dependency in Africa... (Amadi, 2012:193). This is the kind of relationship that Nana Akufo-Addo refers to when he talks about the "extremist prices" on the world market. To counteract this, the President proposes a new doctrine or paradigm of *Ghana Beyond Aid*. Any investigation of the Akufo- Addo address cannot miss such a shift in tone and substance. To anchor this frame, the President sees the youth as principal agents to bring the paradigm of *Ghana Beyond Aid* into fruition. He states that *Ghana Beyond Aid* will be achieved through this means:

"...if we make full use, as we must, of the enterprise and ingenuity of our people, especially our young people. The prominent role being played by young people in the digitisation journey of our nation is strong proof of the feasibility of this objective, and Ghana is set to become one of the most digitised economies in Africa in the next few years".

The youth are seen as protagonists in the effort to move *Ghana Beyond Aid*. The President is, therefore, calling on Ghanaian youth to challenge the prevailing view of looking to the west for solutions. The President sees young people as instruments in bringing about the new era of not just non-dependency but to move into a digitised economic realm. From a democratic perspective, and similar to other frames, the President does not see himself as the source perpetrator or protagonist in the *Ghana Beyond Aid* agenda but shares this power or at least enjoins Ghanaian youth to join in the new turn for the nation. There is additional data to support this frame including the president's touting of Ghana's local alcoholic product to the outside world:

"I doubt that anyone would, ordinarily, mention *akpeteshie*, the local gin, as a possible item on the world market. I cannot vouch for its taste or potency, since I gave up alcohol many years ago, but I can say that the Made in Ghana and beautifully packaged "Apio", I have recently seen, can compete in the most sophisticated markets in the world".

Alcohol was not the only local "beverage" that made it into the President's address. The production of a fruit juice brand in Ghana was touted as an example of local initiative:

“Ekumfi juice, one of the results of Government’s “One-District-One-Factory” flagship policy, to replace rapidly the imported fruit juices on the shelves of our supermarkets, not because anyone will so decree, but because the quality of the locally produced one is as good, if not superior”.

The president then cites Ghana’s privilege of hosting the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as further affirmation of his enduring belief that Africa must begin looking inward rather than to the West for trade and development saying:

“The AfCFTA provides us, Africans, with a great opportunity to exploit and develop our resources for the benefit of our own people and end the centuries-old exploitation of our continent’s vast wealth for the benefit of others”.

Clearly the frame of Ghana and Africa moving beyond dependency; the frame of self-innovation, self-reliance and local production is one that the President consciously weaves into his speeches hoping to use this frame to attune or shape the mindset of citizens.

Maturing Democracy

Analysing frames involves understanding how speakers make sense of the world and a multitude of issues. The President, through his address, offered his view of democratic practice in Ghana. It offers an opportunity to account for how the president makes sense of democracy and his democratic ideals. This would be quite important as he sets the tone and direction for a new term.

In Ghana, there has never been the scenario where the incumbent President and Speaker of Parliament are from different political parties. For the first time ever, the Speaker of Parliament was from the National Democratic Congress while the President was from the New Patriotic Party. This was “a first” in our democracy and the President made sure to acknowledge this fully:

“I must, at the outset, express my warm congratulations to my good friend and colleague of many years in this House, the Rt. Hon. Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, on his assumption of

office as the Speaker of the Eighth Parliament of the 4th Republic. Nearly three decades of devoted service to Parliament by you has culminated in this moment, which has seen your elevation to the third great office of state of our nation. Together, you and I will be chartering new territory in the governance and politics of the 4th Republic, for this is the first time in the life of this Republic that a President from one party will be obliged, by the exigencies of the moment and the will of the people, to work, in all sincerity and co-operation, with a Speaker of Parliament from another party”.

The President frames this with the key phrase “new territory” indicating the uniqueness of it. After his salutation and welcome remarks, this was the first substantive issue the President delved into. The fact that the President prioritizes this early in his speech indicates his readiness to work within the new framework. A major point of note is that he affords the opposition major recognition. This is significantly different from earlier research on inaugural addresses in Ghana where President Kufuor, also of the NPP is seen to have accorded the opposition less recognition (Ankrah, Frimpong & Opoku, 2018). It is not often the case in Ghanaian and African democracies for people of different political stripes to be that emphatic in their recognition of an opponent. The President’s gesture is worth noting especially on a continent where democracy is fragile and in a country which is still consolidating its democracy.

The President grounds his idea of democracy within the concept or idea of the common good. Taking cue from the success of an opposition party as Speaker of Parliament, he speaks of the need to work in the national rather than partisan interest and uses this exemplar to signify the supremacy of the state rather than personhood. Indeed, partisanship has been a gigantic problem in most democracies in Africa and anywhere in the world. The President recognizes the importance of not just the dominance of a personality, sectarian interest but the need to put nation first by virtue of the outcome of the bi-partisan nature of the head of the Legislature and Executive:

“I am confident that both of us will be guided in our relationship by the supreme interest of our people in ensuring good governance in the ordering of the affairs of state. I want to assure you of my wholehearted determination to work with you to advance the

peace, progress and prosperity of the Ghanaian people. Once again, many congratulations to you and the re-elected and new Members of Parliament”.

From a framing perspective, the framing device or rhetorical tool used here is an alliteration, “peace, progress and prosperity”, used to drive home to point about working together for a new dawn in Ghana. According to Eko (2007:235), “African politics, since independence, has been dominated by authoritarian leaders”. From a democratic standpoint, the President believes that Ghana’s already hailed democratic record is maturing even further. He sees developments in the country as symptomatic of not retrogression of democracy but the advancement of democracy. Drawing on notions of bi-partisanship and citizen participation, the president considers these elements as contributing significantly to democratic growth or “maturity” as he calls it:

“The accomplishment of this mandate is going to take place within the context of Ghana’s maturing democracy. The Ghanaian people have manifested, time and again, in these twenty-eight (28) years of the 4th Republic, their determination to build a free, democratic, peaceful nation, which is respectful of individual liberties and human rights, the rule of law, and the principles of democratic accountability. A governance structure built on the separation of powers provides the best vehicle for the protection of these values, with a well-resourced Judiciary and Parliament as the principal accountability organs of the State. This has been the main thrust of public policy in these past four years, and will continue to be so in the next. The unity and stability of our country are the welcome outcomes of such a development”.

The discourse here is centred on the importance of the various arms and institutions of governance. They may be generally known and assumed but the President’s re-stating of it reinforces the significance and rededication to democracy as a governance ideal. He further uses a quote from one of the forbearers of the nation and the major founding figure of the NPP tradition, Joseph Boakye Danquah: “a system of government under which those who are in control of government are under the control of those who are governed”. It is clear that the president is a democrat who espouses

the ideals of participation and people-centredness as opposed to many African governance regimes which happen to be heavily focused on personalities and “big-manism”. The President gives further impetus to his belief in democracy and grounds it in the idea of citizens being at the center of democratic governance. This was a central enduring theme or thread that was woven through the speech.

Social and Economic Justice

Because economic, or bread and butter issues are a mainstay of national economies, a major part of the speech was dedicated to economic and social affairs. The President framed the economy as “resilient”. This key word in his discourse showed that despite the Coronavirus pandemic, the economy was on course:

“Today, our economy, even in the face of the global pandemic of COVID-19, continues to show resilience and a much faster rate of recovery than originally envisaged, and was, indeed, one of the fastest growing economies in the world in 2020”.

The other factors that contributed to this frame was a reference to the structure of the economy and the flow of foreign direct investment. Still on the framing approach, the President uses pledges or promise to bolster his economic frame stating that the second term will consist of “value added activities” and a focus on jobs. The President was, however, evasive when he used vague or general platitudes to talk about improvement in living standards in very brush, bland or broad strokes.

The social justice frame went along with the economic frame. This is not surprising for a developing country where basic services such as education, electricity supply, health amenities and infrastructure are still lacking. The President used the opportunity to talk about one of his signature policies; free senior high school education and again uses pledges as a framing technique to speak about universal health care.

“...we are ensuring that the basic tenets of social justice are met...Because of the implementation of the Free Senior High School policy, once willing and able, senior high school education is the minimum education to be received by every Ghanaian child...our aim is to reach Universal Health Coverage as soon as possible”.

Taken from an interpretive perspective, the President's belief in social justice shows that though his party is often seen as capitalistic inclined, he has embraced social safety nets, rights and human justice as major pillars of his governance strategy. The President has thus staked out the economy, the maintenance of universal education and universal health care as key areas or priority. The economic and social justice frames map out the NPP and the President not just as disciples of laissez faire capitalistic or property-owning democrats as they are often known but also as sympathizers of socialism.

Unity, Confronting COVID-19 and Seizing Destiny

Framing recognises the power of the spoken word to shape attitudes, beliefs and values. One of the essential framing narratives within the President's speech was an appeal to unity, a recognition of the challenging times of a global pandemic and then a segue into inspiring or at least galvanising the nation to come together.

“There are endless opportunities, if we remain united. What our forebears dreamed of, we will achieve! If we inherited dreams and visions from our founding fathers, we should leave legacies of achievements and realities to our children and their children. For, I believe in the limitless prospects of Ghana and of us, her people. So, let us be up and doing, and, with faith in the Almighty, seize our destiny”.

Calls to unity are essential staples in inaugural addresses. Here, the President does so through a signifier or exemplar such as references to forebearers or founding fathers in the hope of inspiring a sense of common purpose among Ghanaians. The President emphasizes the unity theme when he speaks about “unity and stability” of the nation as important factors for national development. Frames are also rooted in the prevailing context dominating society at various points in time. Frames are rooted in deep-seated beliefs about the way society should be and what should be the most significant social shaping forces of the nation, in this case. From the President's discourse on the COVID-19 pandemic which is one of the dominant issues of the era, he stakes out education as his “fundamental conviction” about what is critical to national development. Viewed within a larger context, this is not surprising as the President made education (specifically free secondary education) the prime theme of his campaign. Through his discussion on

COVID-19, the president expresses his conviction on education as the organizing framework for his administration's social reality.

“We have taken the bold step of re-opening all our schools again, because of our fundamental conviction that education is the key to our future. We will do everything possible to ensure not only the safety of the children, but of teachers and non-teaching staff as well”.

The President in essence is calling on Ghanaians to face the reality of continuing education even in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. Amidst debates about whether to close down schools, go fully online or resume normal physical schooling, the President is highly confident that resumption of schools in the normal mode is the way to go. The President adopts an uplifting, confident and reassuring tone to communicate this message as far as his choice of words is concerned. In addition, the President uses a stock quote from an exemplar of Ghana's independence era, the founding father Dr Kwame Nkrumah to convey his message of unity:

“In the words of the historic first leader of our nation, the celebrated Kwame Nkrumah, “it is clear that we must find an African solution to our problems, and that this can only be found in African unity. Divided we are weak; united, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world”.

Considered within the internal political dynamic of Ghana, Nkrumah belongs to a different ideological persuasion from Nana Akufo-Addo. While Nkrumah was a socialist at heart Nana Addo subscribes to the other school of Ghana politics—the Danquah Busia tradition which believes in capitalistic, laissez faire and a market-oriented society. For Nana Addo to quote Nkrumah is quite worth noting. Nkrumah is a notable historical figure in Africa but taken within the Ghanaian political scene this reference to Nkrumah is significant.

The framing approach herein and of itself—quoting someone of a different political persuasion practically demonstrates or at the very least, is symbolic of the frame of unity. The substance of the quote appeals to notions of togetherness and collectivism. President Akufo-Addo uses key phrases, quotes and homage to founding fathers as a strategy to bring the nation

together as he does in this quote: "...the democratic, free, prosperous and united Ghana envisioned by our founding fathers...".

Ultimately the President for the most part, is determined to forge a sense of unity, particularly after a very closely fought election, thus offering narratives and words centered on unity and togetherness. From an interpretive perspective, the analysis shows the President was afrocentric in his approach since he was concerned with harmony, unity, collectivism or communalism. According to White (2006:34), "An Afrocentric mind is highly communal rather than individualistic". This is seen as necessary for progress. It also has a sense of people empowerment, something that can be linked to the previous frame of the "can-do spirit" which the President espouses.

CONCLUSION

Five major frames were unearthed in the current analysis: (a) "The can-do spirit", (b) "Ghana beyond aid" (c) "maturing democracy", (d) "social and economic justice" and (e) "unity, confronting COVID-19 and seizing destiny". The first frame - "Can-do spirit" is concerned with the belief in self-reliance and the ability of Ghanaians. The President uses this catch phrase as a framing device or strategy to make his message persuasive to Ghanaians. The President also relies on the metaphor of the Black star of Africa to achieve this. The theme of Ghana Beyond Aid is one that has to do with the nation's relations to the Western world. The President attempts to move the ideological underpinnings of Ghana's relations with the West from the paradigm of dependency. This is a catch phrase that has become hugely popular in Ghana and has served as a defining point of the President's agenda. The components of this frame include domestication and industrialization of the local scene.

The next frame centered on bi-partisanship, national interest and the "new territory" of inter-party relations with a Speaker of Parliament from the opposition NDC and the President from the incumbent NPP. The President framed this in a nationalistic way asking political officeholders to work in the "supreme interest" of the nation. The economic and social justice frames were centered on stock phrases such as building a "resilient economy" in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and value addition to various sectors of the

economy. The social justice frame was centered on government's support for amenities such as electricity, universal education and universal health care. Social interventions therefore remained at the core of the President's agenda, something worth noting since his party has not been generally known to be a socially democratic inclined one in terms of political ideology.

The last frame was on "unity, confronting COVID-19 and seizing destiny". The frame was about collectivism, working together, making progress on the educational front despite COVID-19 and aspiring to the dreams of the founding fathers. The President used a stock quote from Kwame Nkrumah to buttress his frame. In effect the President was afrocentric in outlook since he framed his narrative around harmony, unity and collectivism or communal ideals. In all, the President sought to put people at the centre of governance, he sounded empowering and he staked out visions of collectivism, social and economic justice, self-reliance and democratic maturity.

In other words, the pillars of his second term address centered on communalism/collectivism rather than individualism, self-reliance rather than dependency, democratic maturity/newness rather than democratic normalcy/oldness, social and economic justice rather than whole-sale market-oriented capitalism and people-centeredness rather than officialdom-centered.

In this regard this research contributes significantly to unearthing the dominant frames, worldview and basic elements of the Akufo-Addo second-term address as well as the principles, themes, narratives, ideas, ideologies and values that underpin his governance style. It serves as building blocks to future research on the Akufo-Addo administration or larger governance and communication style, strategies or approach. This research also contributes to studies in democracy, speech analysis and the presidential communication in emerging democracies, a much discussed area within the public domain, yet lacking scholarly research. Further research can address subsequent speeches and communicative material of the President's second term and other political engagements. This will help to provide a more expanded analysis of his communicative approach, major themes, ideologies, and values.

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