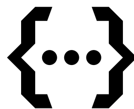
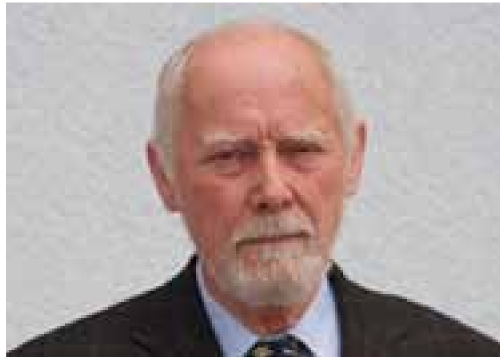


Univerzita Hradec Králové
Filozofická fakulta

Czech Association for African Studies

MODERN AFRICA
politics, history and society

This issue is dedicated to Otakar Hulec on the occasion of his 80th birthday



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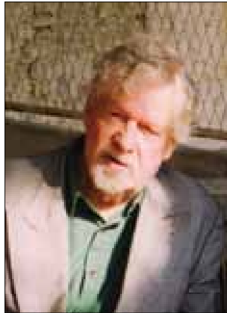
OBITUARIES

Jack Goody (1919–2015)



The world renowned Africanist and social anthropologist John Rankine Goody, to all known and publishing as Jack, died in Cambridge after 95 years of an exceptionally fertile life. He authored more than two dozens books, edited another dozen volumes, contributed to a number of collections, wrote and published innumerable journal articles. He was married three times and fathered five children. Jack Goody was an original thinker and a warm person, who cherished friendship. Although he was a Cambridge professor he never was a don, who would look down on people surrounding him. Although he deserved a knighthood a long time ago, he got it only when he was 86. Perhaps he had to wait because he did not cherish undeserved privileges and was essentially an egalitarian.

His interest in Africa was awoken when fighting Rommel's Afrikakorps as a soldier in the British Army. He was captured, escaped twice from Italian POW camps, and read his first anthropology books while in a German camp. After the war he studied first in Oxford, under the Africanist Edward Evans-Pritchard, and later under another famous anthropologist of Africa, Meyer Fortes, in Cambridge. It was Fortes who sent him to the northwestern Gold Coast to carry out research on the stateless and chiefless LoWiili and LoDagaa. Altogether he spent five years in the field. While Ghana was being born, he became a supporter of Nkrumah's Convention People's Party. The revised PhD

thesis, turned into the book *Death, Property and the Ancestors* (1962), is arguably one of Goody's best works. In this major study he addressed the human quest for posterity on the basis of data from Africa. Goody later continued his research in Ghana among the Gonja, in collaboration with his second wife Esther and a local chief and scholar J.A. Braimah. He eventually published a voluminous transcription and translation of the *Myth of Bagre* (1972) that he considered his most important contribution to posterity.

I first met Jack Goody in Prague in 1970 where he came to talk about his Africanist and anthropological work at an invitation arranged through Ladislav Holy, who knew Goody from his Cambridge days. Jack followed his head of the department, Fortes, who visited Prague twice, in 1962 and 1966. The lecture in the Department of Oriental Studies at Charles University was a reflection of his pioneering article "Feudalism in Africa?" Then I had to adjust for the first time to his mumbling style of speech. The lecture revealed to the listeners in what ways sub-Saharan Africa was different from North Africa, Europe and Asia. His stress on technology and war ("booty production") as state-forming factors seemed to me pretty close to Marxism, at least anti-dogmatic Marxism, then in vogue, one which respected the data from the field. The ensuing book *Technology, Tradition, and the State in Africa* (1971) was another milestone on Goody's academic trajectory. Goody soon turned into "Jack" for me, we met the same year in Varna during the World Sociology Congress and had the opportunity to discuss our joint interests. It was Jack Goody, who along with Fortes and Susan Drucker-Brown, inspired me to choose my fieldwork site within northern Ghana: the Nanumba people and their chieftaincy. Once I managed to escape from communist Czechoslovakia in 1976, Goody invited my wife and me to Cambridge and we stayed for a week in his spacious house at 8 Adams Road. Jack's hospitality was endearing. I recall meeting Chinua Achebe in that house when he was passing through Cambridge. Later Jack also found a lectureship for me in Zaria, in case I would not be able to settle in the Netherlands. Instead of Zaria, however, I went to Ghana for my first period of fieldwork. Jack was among the few whom I informed about my fieldwork results in northern Ghana. Eventually I managed to spend a month at his invitation at Cambridge in 1981. Jack assigned me to an office next to his in the department and I could observe how busy he was as the departmental head. I was asked to present a paper in the

regular Friday afternoon seminar. I recall that seminar vividly because I refuted the idea that Nanun was a state and Jack did not like that. He expressed his objections so clearly that the audience was shocked because normally Jack would be mumbling. In 1983, when Goody was 64, he retired prematurely from his departmental headship, I passed through Cambridge to say good bye before I left for Cape Town, and we did not keep in touch during the intense nine years I worked there. When I came to Cambridge for another month in the winter of 1992, Jack was more relaxed as he no longer needed to attend to administrative duties; he was now enjoying writing his books in his spacious quarters in St. John's College. Whenever I visited him there he hardly stopped searching for something in the heaps of paper that covered the floor. He apparently worked on several pieces at once. Later we saw each other in Piran and Halle. I joined Chris Hann when he took Jack to the airport. On the way, we stopped at Wittenberg. He was then in his eighties but did not stop walking in and around the church famous for Martin Luther's 95 theses, asked questions and behaved like a fieldworker in Ghana. The last time I saw Jack Goody was again in Cambridge. He was then 92 but still writing normally in his new quarters near the college gate. He was then working on the last touches of his book *Metals, Culture and Capitalism: An Essay on the Origins of the Modern World*.

Jack Goody was a good Africanist fieldworker but in his heart he was a comparative social anthropologist, a historian of social structure, a student of culture across centuries, interested in both Africa and Eurasia, enormously erudite with a broad expertise from technical kinship studies to the social role of food and flowers. He wrote extensively on the family in three continents, explained the difference between dowry and bridewealth, but was fascinated by the continental distinction between the logic of writing and orally transmitted knowledge. Early in my studies I admired the lucidity in his analysis of succession to high office in Africa, Europe and the Near East. It helped me in my own research on the Nanumba paramountcy. Goody also tackled cognitive developments in human culture, referring to the spurious dichotomy between primitive and advanced societies. Pre-literate scientists was one of the subjects. Anyone with an interest should read his book, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (1977). His interest in Africa never petered out. In 1995 he published his meticulously researched account of the rise and shine of British

anthropology. By spending a great deal of time studying Ghanaian and other archives he documented the intricacies of relations and circumstances of doing anthropology in Africa between several anthropological giants such as Malinowski, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard. It makes for exciting reading and I have to emphasise that Jack Goody wrote very lucidly, while perfectly documenting every fact taken from others. Chapter 8 of this book, *The Expansive Moment*, summarises Goody's own contributions up to his book, *The Culture of Flowers* (1993). He clarified a number of points, which others did not know well or at all. The intellectual influences on him were numerous and his interests were very wide. If the reader wants to learn to know Goody, I recommend to study this chapter first and then follow it up with the works as they emerged from his workshop.

Science lost a giant with encyclopaedic knowledge, passionately pursuing the right questions and looking for answers to them. He was keen to know and understand what had been happening in the eastern parts of Europe. Africa and Africanists will profit from the knowledge and wisdom contained in his books and other works for a long time.

Petr Skalník

Jack Goody's major works (in chronological order)

1954 *An Ethnography of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast East of the White Volta*. London (mimeographed).

1956 *The Social Organisation of the LoWiili* (London: H.M.S.O. (2nd ed. 1976, London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute).

1958 ed. *The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1962 *Death, Property and the Ancestors: A Study of the Mortuary Customs of the LoDagaa of West Africa*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

1966 ed. *Succession to High Office*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1966 ed. with Kwame Arhin. *Ashanti and the North-West*. Legon: University of Ghana.

1968 ed. *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1969 *Comparative Studies in Kinship*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (Family and Kinship, in 7 volumes, vol. 3). Reprinted in 2004.

1971 *Technology, Tradition, and the State in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1971 ed. *Kinship: Selected Readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

1972 ed. *The Myth of the Bagre*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

1973 ed. *The Character of Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1973 with Stanley J. Tambiah. *Bridewealth and Dowry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1975 *Changing Social Structure in Ghana: Essays in the Comparative Study of a New State and an Old Tradition*. London: International African Institute.

1975 with Nelson O. Adda. *Siblings in Ghana*. Legon: University of Ghana.

1976 *Production and Reproduction: A Comparative Study of the Domestic Domain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1976 ed. with Joan Thirsk and E.P. Thompson, *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1977 *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1982 *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1983 *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1986 *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1987 *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1990 *The Oriental, the Ancient and the Primitive: Systems of Marriage and the Family in the Pre-Industrial Societies of Eurasia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1993 *The Culture of Flowers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1995 *The Expansive Moment: The Rise of Social Anthropology in Britain and Africa, 1918–1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1996 *The East in the West.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; translated into French and Italian.

1997 *Representations and Contradictions: Ambivalence towards Images, Theatre, Fiction, Relics and Sexuality.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

1998 *Food and Love: A Cultural History of East and West*. London: Verso.

2000 *The European Family: An Historico-Anthropological Essay*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

2000 *The Power of the Written Tradition*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.

2003 *Islam in Europe*. London: Blackwell. Reprinted 2004 Cambridge: Polity Press.

2004 *Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

2004 *Comparative Studies in Kinship*. London: Routledge. Previously publ. 1969.

2006 *The Theft of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

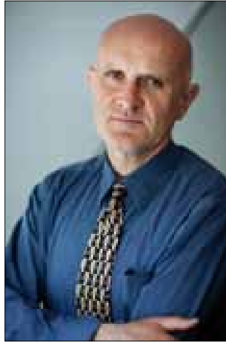
2010 *Myth, Ritual and the Oral*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2010 *Renaissances: The One or the Many?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2010 *The Eurasian Miracle*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

2012 *Metals, Culture and Capitalism: An Essay on the Origins of the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Researching and Reporting Africa without Fear or Favour
Stephen Ellis (13 June 1953–29 July 2015)



Stephen Ellis was one of the most authoritative Africanists of our time. He was easily the most versatile among the scholars of Africa, featuring not only as an academic, but also as a journalist and a public intellectual. His research interests ranged from religion to organised crime, from Madagascar to Liberia, from Africa's position in a globalising world to the role of the South African Communist Party in the struggle against apartheid. A glance at his list of publications would convince anyone of his prodigious productivity and his wide-ranging interests. Ellis had the gift of the helicopter view: he crafted his stories of Africa's predicaments with fascinating details, warts and all, while situating his analysis in a broader global perspective.

Stephen Ellis died in Amsterdam on 29 July 2015, having suffered from leukaemia for some three years. Stephen Ellis was born in Nottingham, Great Britain on 13 June 1953. He studied modern history at the University of Oxford. For his PhD he wrote about a revolt in Madagascar in the late 1890s, which was published by Cambridge University Press (the *Rising of the Red Shawls*, in 1985). Later he published a book about Madagascar in French (*Un Complot à Madagascar*, Karthala, 1990). In 1979-80 he had worked as a lecturer at the University of Madagascar, but that was not his first time in Africa: when he was eighteen years old he worked as a teacher in Douala, Cameroon. Between 1982 and 1986 he was head of the Africa desk

at the International Secretariat of Amnesty International in London, followed by a position as editor for the *Africa Confidential* newsletter. His subsequent directorship of the African Studies Centre in Leiden, The Netherlands (1991-94) was not the most fortunate episode of his career. While enormously inspiring as a fellow researcher, he had neither time nor talent for tedious administrative duties. After an unhappy exit as director, he thrived again as a researcher, sought after by academia, publishers, mass media and policymakers alike. He remained a senior researcher at the African Studies Centre, which he combined with the position of Desmond Tutu Professor at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam from 2008 on.

His most popular book is *The Criminalization of the State in Africa* (1999), which he wrote together with Jean-François Bayart and Béatrice Hibou. The authors exposed how the World Bank demand for the privatisation of state assets resulted in their transfer from state institutions to the ownership of the politically powerful. This grab for the national wealth by the political elite contributed to the wars and violence of the 1990s. Other well-known books of his hand are *The Mask of Anarchy: The destruction of Liberia and the religious dimension of an African civil war* (2001), *Worlds of Power: Religious thought and political practice in Africa* (with Gerrie ter Haar, 2004), and *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in exile* (with Tsepo Sechaba, 1992). Among his recent publications are *External Mission: The ANC in exile, 1960-1990* (2013), *Season of Rains: Africa in the world* (2012), and "West Africa's international drug trade' (in *African Affairs*, 2009). His last book, a history of organised crime in Nigeria, will be published in 2016.

Undeterred by taboos, Ellis pursued shocking topics such as cannibalism in the Liberian civil war or the murky waters of the African drug trade, as well as touchy issues such as the dominant role of the South African Communist Party during the exile years of the African National Congress. He also delved into African traditional spirituality, together with his partner, Gerrie ter Haar. His explorations of the obscure sometimes landed him in hot water, as happened after his revelations of Charles Taylor's cannibalism as part of traditional ritual practices in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Taylor sued Ellis but when several witnesses offered to testify in support of Stephen's allegation, he did not pursue the case.

His descriptions of the atrocities in the ANC's detention camps in Angola, where young ANC recruits were badly tortured on the basis of ill-founded suspicions, which found fertile ground in the exile condition of rampant paranoia, were a hallmark of his determination to tackle the unsavoury aspects of liberation movements. Ellis exposed the ANC's drug dealing business and its profitable smuggling rings as examples of the intricate intertwining of crime and politics, which was not an unusual feature for liberation movements in search of revenue. *External Mission* infuriated people, who wanted to stick to the one-dimensional view of the ANC as an heroic movement led by larger-than-life saintly leaders such as Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela.

Some have called him a cynic, a label which Stephen resented. Just because he did not share the belief of many of his contemporaries in academia and journalism in the egalitarian utopias promised by Africa's liberation movements, did that make him a cynic? Was it not much more cynical to gloss over rampant corruption and ruthless abuses of human rights in the name of solidarity with the cause? In Stephen Ellis' idea of research there was no place for holy cows, sentimental musings or ideological doctrine. His critical stance did not mean that he lacked compassion, as is evident from his work for Amnesty International and his quiet initiatives to assist less fortunate colleagues.

Stephen also left his mark as a talent scout, mentoring numerous young talented researchers in Africa and beyond. As editor of *Africa Confidential* (1986-90), he had cultivated an extensive network of sources feeding him with information that authoritarian rulers would rather keep in the closet. Yet, the thin blue newsletter was considered vital reading for Africa's power holders and power brokers. Later, he helped to open up the bastion of academic journals for more contributions from Africa, notably from young researchers. As editor of *African Affairs* (1998-2006) he was keen to provide a platform for promising young African scholars as well as established pundits.

We mourn the loss of a prominent scholar and an inspiring colleague. But it is more in keeping with Stephen's spirit to celebrate his legacy and to continue asking irreverent questions, pursue unlikely leads and publish the outcomes, even if these outcomes are not always palatable in certain circles. As countless others who have enjoyed the legendary

hospitality and the fascinating conversations with Stephen Ellis and his partner Gerrie ter Haar, I will cherish the memory of an impressive scholar, a generous colleague and a great friend of Africa.

Ineke van Kessel

EDITOR´S NOTE

This is the sixth issue of *Modern Africa*, with which we are closing its third volume. We are proud to announce that the journal was included into ERIH Plus and we applied for inclusion into the Scopus database. The flow of submissions increases and the pool of our peer reviewers grows. We are also improving our copy editing by harnessing the services of Dr. Han Vermeulen, specialising in language and content editing. The editorial board has met on the margins of the 9th International Conference on African Studies "Viva Africa" held in Prague on 22-23 October 2015, where we agreed on a number of measures aimed at enhancing the professional quality of the journal.

This issue of *Modern Africa* is dedicated to Otakar Hulec on the occasion of his 80th birthday. Dr. Hulec has been an outstanding historian of southern Africa and the author of numerous publications in Czech and English. The issue also carries two obituaries, of Jack Goody (1919-2015) and Stephen Ellis (1953-2015). We shall miss these two towering figures of European Africanist research.

The international character of *Modern Africa* is further evidenced by research articles that appear in the present issue. Getnet Tamene, an Ethiopian political scientist based in Slovakia, explains how inequities in the production of knowledge about and in Africa are reproduced. Irina Turner of Bayreuth University in Germany presents her most recent research concerning the politics of language choice in South Africa, exemplified by research in the Eastern Cape. Henry Kam Kah of Buea University in Cameroon analyses modern abuses of the age-old fosterage, whereby the rich accept the children of poor parents children into their households. Primus M. Tazanu's contribution problematises the usage of mobile telephones in keeping contact among Cameroonians in Germany and Cameroon. Instead of enjoyment by contacting family and friends, frustration, misunderstandings and insecurities can emerge from it. Meron Eresso discusses cyber spirituality and online religious activism in Ethiopia.

Furthermore, there is a report about the 2015 conference "Viva Africa" and we present a summary of the keynote address delivered at this conference by Daniel Bach, a leading specialist in the field of

international relations. Five reviews conclude the issue. The editorial board and our team at the University of Hradec Králové wishes our readers the very best in the New Year 2016.

Petr Skalník

PROBLEMS OF KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN AFRICA

Getnet Tamene

Abstract: Indigenous and foreign researchers have long produced knowledge on African realities. Nevertheless, the outcome has shown perceptual imbalances. This is because the knowledge gatekeepers, or individuals and organisations such as researchers and companies who associate with knowledge production and sharing, might have usually produced misconceptions on African realties due to various reasons, including inadequate data procession, politics and deliberate acts of juxtaposing the African realities. With globalisation now operating, the question how knowledge is being produced in Africa and what role gatekeepers play in this respect becomes harder to answer. Africa pursues low-level knowledge production activities, focusing on traditional sources of knowledge and a limited scale of individual interaction, as opposed to the high-level mainstream academia of the industrialised world, which is based on official interaction, aided by adequate infrastructures encompassing numerous educational institutions, facilities, skilled human power, technological capacity and financial resources. The African indigenous knowledge system (AIKS) is inadequate in all these areas. As compared to the technologically advanced Western knowledge system (WKS), the African case projects a substantial discrepancy. Basically, knowledge production in Africa is subordinate to foreign influence. Despite being independent in theory, the process in practice remains intact under the political pressure of globalisation with governments jumping on board. Even though one can observe that some Africa-related foreign media run commercials, the process of knowledge production in Africa has not led to raise public awareness, ensure job security, or sustainability in all senses of the term. The notion that knowledge is tantamount to power falls short when applied to Africa. There is a vivid cause of intellectual poverty across Africa, the fixing of which is an urgent matter. That would provide the key to solving a range of misfortunes from poverty to violence that have inflicted the continent as we know it today.

Keywords: *Knowledge, Knowledge Production, Gatekeepers, Africa, Indigenous, Network*

Introduction

This article tries to re-examine the problems of knowledge and knowledge production in Africa by comparing the African indigenous knowledge system (AIKS), which is local in scope, with the Western knowledge system (WKS), which is international in scope. Knowledge production by indigenous individuals and by Western gatekeepers do not seem to be mutually exclusive. As a result, knowledge has not yet become a power that causes and sustains development in Africa. In order for knowledge production, sharing and its adoption to become beneficial to boosting sustainable growth and human development in Africa, it is worthwhile to start with and preserve the AIKS. This is to say that it is relevant to maintain and foster the root upon which knowledge in Africa should base itself in order to develop further.

The way in which Western scientists and local artisans have participated in Africa over the last several decades has not produced significant progress in various areas including the power relations among relevant stakeholders. Africa is not yet being seen as an entity that has entered history,[1] it does not play a significant role in the process of international political decision-making and it is not represented in major decision-making structures like the United Nations Security Council. Thus, the socio-economic conditions in the continent remain worrisome and continue to be under persistent foreign influence to the present day. While critically assessing cultural, political, environmental and economic issues in relation to knowledge production on Africa, within the ongoing discourse encompassing the interface between the local and the international, this paper will emphasise the recognition and perpetuation of local modes of knowledge, which may be taken as the basis for development research. The basic idea is that sustainable growth should not lack a traceable

1 For instance, the former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, during a visit to Senegal on 27 July 2007, declared, "the tragedy of Africa is that the African has not fully entered into history ... They have never really launched themselves into the future." Even though this notion was not new to history, it was seen as outrageous by the African Union and most African intellectuals. The speech did not stress the significant share of colonialism in lagging Africa's progress, in which France itself was one of the major actors.

root connecting it with the continent. This paper attempts to find a balanced framework that avoids Western misconceptions and to develop a non-unilateral model of credible integration in which both WKS and AIKS, during the process of interaction, could truly cooperate to cause veritable change.

While embarking on the topic by means of an analytical method, the ongoing sees the African knowledge-manufacturing context as possibly obtainable from organisational informal networks even though it occurs in the absence of sophisticated technologies, highly qualified personnel, and technical knowledge. Here the emphasis on the informal is, arguably, due to the fact that in Africa formal organisational networks themselves are experiencing a huge influence from the global informal version of institutional networks. As a result, they largely seem to be inept in the sense of producing the kind of knowledge that embodies local ingredients, nor capable enough to induce development within the context. The discourse about the interface between the AIKS and the WKS and, broadly speaking, the entire discussion on Afrocentrism as compared to Eurocentrism, currently rising to attention, appears to have long been downgraded by the majority of Western historians or contemporary African philosophers of Western affiliates who mostly hold gatekeeping positions.

Afrocentric versus Eurocentric Views of Knowledge

Most discussions on Africa, including the present topic, do not circumvent the Eurocentric and Afrocentric debates of various natures. In the context of knowledge production, as circumscribed above, it sounds as if Afrocentrists are scarcely welcomed or cited by the gatekeepers in the circles of academic African philosophers (van Binsbergen 2011: 253-81) of foreign or domestic origin alike.

Howe, for instance, presents a devastating political and ideological critique of Afrocentrism as a case of intellectual history. Despite belittling the intellectual values of Afrocentrism, he has been led by the best of intentions, by concern for the future of scholarship and education (Howe 1999). It is now obvious that the compartmentalising process of globalisation that had started in the past has paved the way for a mythical geopolitics, which came into being on the foundation

of Western knowledge production. This notion is in agreement with Bernal, who among others sees the mystery of Europe, and recently that of North Atlantic in general, as a solid ideological power base for colonialism and postcolonial hegemony that maintained itself on the basis of keeping the indigenous efforts of knowledge in a subordinate place. According to this way of thinking, arguably, one may lean towards endorsing a view of knowledge or world history which is, as van Binsbergen (ibid.) blatantly puts it, potentially "hegemonic, Euro-centric, mythical, non-inclusive and probably demonstrably incorrect." In this light, as also discussed above, Afrocentrism may be seen as an inspiring reversal of accepted hegemonic paradigms, that is to say, it brings us much closer to the empirical or demonstrable truth concerning the knowledge of Africa, which can be claimed as a contribution to humankind's world-wide culture that has emerged over the millennia.

In this regard, Bernal indicates the need to "recognise the Afro-asiatic roots of classical Greek civilisation, which predates the Graeco-Roman Antiquity based Eurocentrism" (Bernal 1987, 1991). According to Bernal the notion of Eurocentrism, being heir to the genial Greek civilisation, allegedly without roots in any previous non-European civilisation, has played a major role in the justification of European intercontinental imperialism.[2] As Paar-Jakli (2015) has also presented in her work by calling upon Stone (2005), the notion indicated above in relation to the hegemonic paradigms can be further reinforced by the neo-Gramscian approach,[3] which treats knowledge discourse "as a tool of power, used by dominant interests in maintaining the capitalist order", rather than cause equitable and sustainable development to the multitude of people of the earth, including Africa. In this more vivid view, knowledge, its networks and the gatekeepers are politicised and have become part of the "micro-politics of contemporary hegemony… [or a] component of the 'globalising elite'" (Gill 1995, as quoted in Stone 2005, cited in Paar-Jakli 2015: 20), instead of distancing

2 See Bernal, *Black Athena*, I, o.c.; W. Burkett 1992, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

3 This is one of the three approaches Stone has incorporated in her work, while explaining the usefulness of knowledge networks in global governance since they systematise knowledge from a wide variety of sources. The other two are the epistemic community approach and the discourse coalition and communities approach.

themselves from ostensibly one-way-street practices. It could thus be argued that if historical truth, intellectual integrity, the canons of logic and proof are to be violated for the sake of boosting the prospects of the capitalist order, the state of our current knowledge production and dissemination raises more questions.

Knowledge – Meaning and Context

Before proceeding with a discussion of knowledge production in Africa or beyond, we have to establish the meaning of the concept itself. The term knowledge is an ambiguous concept, thus several definitions and theories have attempted to explain it in various ways. In a nutshell, however, it is understood as familiarity, awareness, or an understanding gained through experience or study. Thereby science is being understood as organised knowledge.

Further assessments reveal that knowledge refers to facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education, which amounts to saying that knowledge is the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. Accordingly, it can be implicit, as with practical skills and expertise, or explicit, as with the theoretical understanding of a subject; knowledge can be more or less formal or systematic.[4] It is often viewed as a human faculty resulting from interpreted information, or an understanding that germinates from the combination of data, information, experience and individual interpretation. In recent years, knowledge has come to be recognised as a factor of production, as in knowledge capital, in which case it is, in its own right, distinct from labour. In the legal sense, it means awareness or the understanding of a circumstance or a fact, gained through association or experience.[5]

The definition of knowledge is still a matter of ongoing debate among philosophers in the field of the theory of knowledge (epistemology). As Peters discussed it well, the classical definition, described but not ultimately endorsed by Plato, specifies that a statement must meet three criteria in order to be considered knowledge: it must be

4 On the variant of the general definition of knowledge consult for example *The Oxford Dictionary*.

5 This explanation of knowledge appears in the *Business Dictionary*, and it may be consulted at <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/knowledge.html>

justified, true, and believed (Peters 2001: 13). Some, for instance, Richard Kirkham,[6] claim that these conditions are not sufficient. Also, it is worth mentioning that knowledge acquisition involves complex cognitive processes including perception, communication and reasoning; while knowledge is also said to be related to the capacity of acknowledgment in human beings.

Technically, we have to make a distinction between propositional (codified or explicit) knowledge and tacit (implicit) knowledge (Polanyi 1958; Ryle 1949). The former refers to knowledge that involves facts about the world and scientific knowledge, that is to say, knowledge that can be expressed in sentences, often formal, and can be shared (Nonaka 1991: 97-8), while the latter refers to know-how, that is, knowledge of how to do something. Thus, in contrast to explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge usually refers to skills and it is not necessarily easy to communicate this kind of knowledge (at low cost) to other individual actors, or between organisations (Olssen and Peters 2005: 333-4). To Nonaka, cited above, tacit knowledge "consists of mental models, beliefs, and perspectives so ingrained that we take them for granted and therefore cannot easily articulate them." However, according to Hildreth and Kimble (2002), explicit (or "hard") and tacit (or "soft") forms of knowledge are interwoven, that is to say, knowledge is a duality and tacit knowledge may become in some other context explicit knowledge.

As far as its scope is concerned, knowledge is widely understood as either indigenous and local or as non-indigenous and international. The indigenous knowledge system, to which African indigenous knowledge is part and parcel, forms a huge body of knowledge that predates the WKS but it is not solely local in scope. It may go under various names; nevertheless, indigenous knowledge refers to knowledge that is based on the social, physical and spiritual understandings that have informed a people's survival and contributed to their sense of being in the world. In more general terms, however, knowledge reflects the capacity of causing development that ultimately leads towards the betterment of a certain society. In the case of African societies, however, arguably, the cooperation of the indigenous forms of knowledge with that of the non-indigenous and, particularly, Western knowledge system has

6 He discusses this issue in his much-cited *Theories of Truth* (MIT Press, 1992), available at <http://philpapers.org/s/Richard%20L.%20Kirkham>

not produced any significant improvement in the status of the prior. This is probably due, among others, to perpetual prejudices of Western gatekeepers, who deny acknowledging and embracing the local mode of knowledge production, while deeming it inferior. The way Western gatekeepers behave in regard to the African indigenous knowledge system and its production, in various fields of research, as well as the failure of their cooperation to deliver what has now convincingly come to the forefront, needs to be seen through a critical lens.

Knowledge Gatekeepers and How They Operate

Knowledge gatekeepers explore and analyse significant events of knowledge in the light of perspectives that show the ways in which the production, storage and access of the source materials of knowledge, such as books, CDs, etc. have been privileged, while encouraging the marginalisation of other sources. According to Allen, knowledge gatekeepers are "a small number of key people to whom others frequently turned for information. They differ from their colleagues in the degree to which they exposed themselves to sources of technological knowledge outside their organisation. Their features are such as they constitute a small community of individuals, they are at the core of an information network, they are overexposed to external sources of information, and the linkages they developed with external actors are more informal" (Allen 1977: 145). They are knowledge senders, or knowledge brokers. Since they are so well interconnected, they are largely identified by their degree of interconnectivity, which they maintain with other colleagues of various organisations or institutions.

Organisations acting as gatekeepers play their role through creating platforms of knowledge sharing, which are assumed to fulfil several functions at a time, including the function of influencing and the task of public relations in favour of the existing system. Hence, they do not seem to be defying vested interests that seek to maintain the status quo at any cost. They work as inter alias and are located in the government structure as stakeholders, where they have substantial influence in the field of science and technology policy decision-making, which in turn guides research and development activities. Through expanding their networks of interaction, such gatekeepers access valuable knowledge from their networks for the operation of daily formal and informal

activities. They are seen as sources of veritable knowledge that is able to cause development. They act as relevant actors in the areas of knowledge transfer, which is one of their dominant preoccupations in the process of building the knowledge-based capitalist economy. Nevertheless, AIKS and WKS relations have shown several barriers that hinder effective knowledge creation and transfer in various fields, among which cultural distance between the actors is the main feature. In such a situation, one brand of knowledge gatekeepers, also known as communities of practice (CsP), plays a significant role of facilitating knowledge exchange in culturally homogenous spaces. However, CsP are less effective for connecting different organisations in culturally heterogeneous spaces. Thus, gatekeepers (GKs) other than CsP have become the subsequent solution, mainly in situations of inter-organisational networks.

In between the formal and informal organisational networks at least four forms of knowledge gatekeepers seem to be operating upon the notion presented above. According to Harorimana,[7] the gatekeepers include technological gatekeepers (TGKs); communities of practice (CsP); key persons (KPs), also referred to as key men (KM), as well as communities of key organisations (CKO) all of whom collect information; they vet and contextualise information before sharing or transferring it to their professional networks. TGKs are predominantly operating within the boundaries of an informal network. They are not fulfilling an administrative role or any contractual obligation. They are inclined to share information and knowledge with only a few technological experts within their network from whom they expect some level of peer recognition by citing the contributions of their peers in meetings, financial rewards, in findings reporting and intellectual property rights. KPs and CKOs such as the academia are acting as key people and organisations because this is part of their daily routine and they have been appointed by or make up an organisation. They are not necessarily the experts. They are considered as "key people" for the daily work and are operating within a formalised network of the organisation. Communities of practice constitute a form of KM with a collective relation to an element of TGKs as a sub-set. CsP is

7 See Deogratias Harorimana. 2012. "The Gatekeeper and the knowledge environment-who they are, how they work. Empirical evidences from High-tech Manufacturing and R&D Firms."
Available at <http://works.bepress.com/knowledgeispower/1>

perceived to be a source of transformational power and a way through which knowledge can be accessed from the organisational informal network that is available within. Among key barriers to successful knowledge management are issues of trust, the relational context, and the identity between the source and recipient of knowledge.[8]

The gatekeepers thus encompass those people and organisations who interact within local and international knowledge networks. Stone explains that those who typically interact in such knowledge networks are "university researchers and other experts who may be based in consultancy firms, philanthropic foundations, independent research institutes and think tanks" (2005: 87-89). They contribute to knowledge production through "a complex interweaving of network interactions" (Stone 2003: 55). They play a significant role in knowledge production and gatekeeping, within international knowledge networks, which can be understood as "system[s] of coordinated research, [through which they] disseminated and published results, study ... intellectual exchange, and financing, across national boundaries" (Parmar 2002: 13).

Their research on Africa, or other parts of the non-Western world, as developed thus far through the so-called approach of a long intellectual tradition, appears to be part of an overall project of knowledge accumulation initiated and controlled by the West, which as a result maintains its knowledge dominance at an international scale over other types of knowledge systems.

Understanding the Essence of Knowledge Production

There are at least three models of knowledge production. According to Harold Jarche,[9] knowledge is a process that undergoes various stages before being produced. These include the low value or seeking stage, the sensing stage, and the high value or sharing stage. To demonstrate this, Jarche presents a much improved version of the model describing personal knowledge management, which includes intermediate stages between gathering and distributing. These intermediate stages involve filtering or gatekeeping, that is to say, the separation of relevant from

8 See Harorimana, in ibid. above, at <http://works.bepress.com/knowledgeispower/1>

9 This has been discussed in Stephen Downes, Three Models of Knowledge Production, Half an Hour blog, Wednesday, March 17, 2010.

irrelevant information based on specific criteria; a validation that amounts to saying that information at use is supported by research thus far reliable; a synthesis that is to be able to describe patterns or trends in large amounts of information flow; a presentation, that is, the capacity of making information understandable through visualisation or logical demonstration; and a customisation, that is, the process of describing accumulated information in context.

The "filtering" or mining approach is one in which one goes from data to wisdom through successive filtering processes. And while there are different ways to think of knowledge, the mining model (with data, information, knowledge, understanding and wisdom) arguably adheres to a more basic view. The construction and the growth approaches, too, share a similar view. The mining approach aims at accuracy and purity, or getting at accurate data and validating it. It focuses on "best practices" and aims at adding value to what is out there by nature, and not to something different from what is in nature.[10] The construction approach, by contrast, is focused on sameness and identity. This means that something is being represented. And this meaning must be consistent, be identical, from instance to instance. Standards-based, meaning-based and representational systems, such as the Semantic Web, are illustrative of the construction approach (Downes 2010).

The growth approach focuses on creation and creativity. In this case, the "knowledge" produced from the input is contained in the state of the system as it grows and produces (Downes 2010). This organic model is the only one of the three in which knowledge and wisdom are not "outputs" of the process, but rather knowledge and wisdom remain as properties or artefacts of the knowing system from which we infer the knowledge they contain. To the organic model, each agent is the sole source of its own knowledge and it cannot pass along that knowledge per se, but rather, passes along artefacts, which are embodied in the system and can become the raw material for other entities in the system to create their own knowledge. Artefacts are not consumed as commodities. The pyramids in Egypt, the rock-hewn churches of Ethiopia, such as Lalibela, are but some examples among ranges of artefacts from which knowledge can be inferred and

10 See Stephen Downes, Three Models of Knowledge Production, Half an Hour blog, Wednesday, March 17, 2010.

produced. This third model associates more fully with the indigenous knowledge systems.

Filtering, which the gatekeepers ostensibly conduct, for example, is not merely a matter of selecting the best and the purest. It is also a matter of selecting the most salient, the most relevant and the most important. And we filter deliberately, when doubting a testimony or refusing to be fooled by a mirage. This may also imply that there is a deliberate bias to misuse information for the purpose of creating a knowledge base that suits the political, military, or other powerful intentions. In this sense, mutual cooperation between the local and international systems of knowledge has become even harder.

In the present discussion, we observe two types of knowledge systems. On the one hand, there is the commoditised and franchised WKS, which dares to spread swiftly beyond its own boundaries in an attempt of imposing itself on the global scale, in order to stifle the local or indigenous systems of knowledge, while deeming them inferior. This WKS spreads through various actors, including private companies, knowledge gatekeepers and ranges of other actors. Its objective is, among others, to supplant the local system of knowledge abroad. In Africa, which is still seen as a major frontier of Western expansion, despite some self-serving commercials that propagate the attainment of progress in the content, in reality there are no plausible signs that indicate the continent is getting anywhere closer to the point of playing a dominant role in global politics or economics, due to the benefits acquired from the Western system of knowledge that has been imposed upon it for decades if not centuries. On the other hand, there is the local or indigenous system of knowledge that purports for autonomy or for a meaningful two-way-street cooperation. As concerns Africa, its objective includes, among others, the reestablishment of African studies (Hountondji 2009:1)[11] on a different basis, distinct from that of Western dominated so-called African studies, including other interrelated disciplines such as African sociology and anthropology, African philosophy, African history, etc. This is a different approach with the objective of getting the continent to an appropriate place

11 The term "African studies" does not refer to just one discipline. Usually it meant the whole range of disciplines that take Africa as a subject of study. According to Hountondji, these include, among others, such disciplines as "African history," "African sociology and anthropology," "African linguistics," "African politics," "African philosophy," and the like.

in the international arena, while advocating more generally for the development of an autonomous, self-reliant tradition of research and knowledge that addresses problems and issues directly or indirectly posed by Africans.

The Politics underneath Knowledge Discourses

When it comes to the distinctions between AIKS and WKS, as has been indicated earlier, the former is seen as being inferior, illogical or unsystematic, whereas the latter is perceived as superior by powerful voices or gatekeepers within the knowledge industry. Unlike the modernists' claim that knowledge is global, post-modernists see it as local, partial and fragmented (Foucault 1973, 1980; Kolawele 2012).

To a large extent, knowledge production seems to be constantly politicised amongst African academics and scientists as well as Western gatekeepers. Africans who trained in the West often downgrade the knowledge that is indigenous to Africa. For example, those indoctrinated by the modernist school of thought support aspects such as "... positivism, rationalism, the belief in the linear progress and universal truth ... and the standardisation of knowledge and production" (Kolawele 2012).

In this manner of thinking, the perception about African Indigenous knowledge is retrogressive and anti-development. Those holding this view seem to assert that one can only be called civilised if one is educated in the West. When it comes to research administration, again there is a huge imbalance because selected powerful groups decide what is appropriate for research and where and when to conduct it. In this regard, at the international and national policy levels, resource allocation is mostly directed to studies deemed "appropriate" as research is headed towards where the rich and powerful [interests] direct it (Chambers 1983, as cited in Kolawele).

This dismal situation led the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the "premier pan-African institution of knowledge production" (CODESRIA 2009, as cited in Kolawele), to solicit endowment fund from its members in order to ensure intellectual autonomy. It emphasises: "in the last decade, the research funding environment has become increasingly volatile,

with many donors supporting only specific, earmarked projects and programs that coincide with their priorities or the priorities set for them by their governments or founders" (CODESRIA 2009b, cited in Kolawele). Unfortunately, those who are sympathetic towards the validation of local knowledge are few in number and as such appear not to have a voice that is loud enough to chart a new pathway.

In so far as Western knowledge's political motivation, and their actors' behaviour in the face of non-Western systems is concerned, one among the numerous relevant examples may be the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where a number of Western actors, including the gatekeepers, Western governments and predominantly Western companies pressured a United Nations panel to omit details of shady business dealings revealed in October 2003.

As the British newspaper, *The Independent*, had reported one year earlier, in October 2002, the panel accused 85 companies of breaching OECD standards through unfair business activities. Humiliating misconducts such as rape, murder, torture and other human rights abuses followed the scramble to exploit Congo's wealth after the war had exploded in 1998. According to the panel, for example, the trade in coltan, a rare mineral used in computers and mobile phones, had social effects "akin to slavery." But, as Tamene and Bočaková (2014) claim, concerning this case no Western government or gatekeeper nor unbiased activist had expressly investigated these Western companies, alleged to be linked to such abuses. Some, including those from the UK, the USA, Belgium and Germany, had lobbied to have their companies' names cleared from the "list of shame." This blatantly undemocratic practice has been aided with biased gatekeepers of knowledge, erroneous and deceptive in the face of those beyond the West. Despite little lip service about human rights, the rule of law, and the pursuit of democracy, the major target in the case of the DRC appeared to be the international battle over resources. This conduct, to the contrary, encouraged further corruption and self-enrichment, which led to the exploitation of the mineral wealth of the country (Bekoe and Swearingen 2009). Resources from the mining sector have provided a source of violent competition as well as income for combatants in eastern DRC (Collier and Hoeffler 2000). On top of this, the mainstream media too, as a gatekeeper, have acted for most part, manipulating information and knowledge in favour of power.

In turn, this behaviour seems to have been imposed on Africa in the current time of neoliberalism and globalisation, resulting in a knowledge production in Africa that is subordinate to foreign influence, regarding for instance the notions of corruption, immigration, democracy and human rights. Solutions that come from within the local arena and attempts from below are primarily subjugated in favour of practices of global dominance even if these practices do not intersect with the local ones. This case exemplifies the possible misconceptions that gatekeepers usually projected onto African realties due to various reasons, including the inadequate data procession, the cultural differences, a desire for funding and/or a deliberate act of juxtaposing African realities.

African Indigenous Knowledge System and Western Knowledge System

As indicated earlier, Africa possesses an indigenous knowledge system. According to the World Bank Group assessment, as Warren (1991) wrote, indigenous knowledge refers to a local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. It contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. It is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities.[12]

The historical background of AIKS and local knowledge production predates the coming of WKS; its future, too, should not depend exclusively on Western world views. Various scholars, including Kimwaga, seem to think that human societies across the globe, including African indigenous societies have, for centuries, developed their own sets of experiences and explanations relating to the environments they live in (Kimwaga 2010). This is due to the fact that the way learning is perceived and how people actually learn is culturally specific. Different cultures have different ways and experiences of social reality and, hence, learning (Matike 2008). As several other scholars confirm, the process of learning and knowledge production in various societies is influenced by their worldview and belief systems about the natural environment, including the socio-economic and

12 This description has been endorsed by the World Bank Group. Available at <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/basic.htm>

ecological context of their livelihood. Thus knowledge and knowledge production happens to be culture and local specific. These culturally and locally specific ways of knowing and of knowledge production are often referred to as traditional, ecological, community, local knowledge systems, and so on. They encompass sophisticated arrays of information, understanding and interpretation that guide interactions with the natural milieu: in agriculture and animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, natural resource management, conflict resolution, transformation, health, the naming and explanation of natural phenomena, and strategies to cope with fluctuating environments (Semali and Kincheloe 1999).

Numerous projects support the argument developed above. An example is the study conducted at Lokupung Village in South Africa's North-West Province in 2012. Students of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Program at North-West University conducted this study, in collaboration with the North-West Provincial Department of Agriculture and Environment. Village community members initiated the project, based on their concern and experience with interfacing indigenous and modern knowledge systems. The findings indicate that, in most situations, the application of technologies from outside (such as extension services, hybrid seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, machinery and credit systems) were not always adapted to the local conditions; i.e., the local ecological conditions could be inappropriate for their application, the inputs required might be unavailable locally, maintenance and follow-up systems might be lacking, or conditions might be socially or culturally (including linguistically) unfavourable,[13] thus causing mutually exclusive situations.

Although the foundation of all knowledge systems is local, Western nations and cultures have universally imposed their knowledge systems, cultures and languages due to unbalanced power relations stemming from colonialism and other forms of imperialism (Wa Thiong'o 1986; Timothy 1998), a practice still being perpetuated. However, due to the currently relatively intensified advance of globalisation, many problems such as climate change, poverty and

13 See Hassan O. Kaya, Revitalising African Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Knowledge Production, May 26, 2014. Moreover, an extensive, related explanation on this subject is presented by E-International Relations' free-to-download Edited Collection, Restoring Indigenous Self Determination, available at <http://www.e-ir.info/publications>

environmental degradation have become global. This raises important questions about how AIKS can contribute to the global knowledge industry. It is suggested that sustaining AIKS, given the broader global challenges indicated, necessitates the convergence of African indigenous world-views – embedded in African social practices through orality in their indigenous languages and knowledge systems – with other ways of knowing and knowledge production embedded through literality (Moodie 2003; McCarthy 2004).

The best practices of AIKS are identified in such areas as (1) indigenous agriculture and food security, (2) African traditional medicine and healing ailments, (3) conflict settlement and management, (4) traditional system of governance and (5) linguistic, cultural and self-reflection on the history of the continent. Africa can benefit from its indigenous knowledge, which it may use to base itself upon, while carefully enriching its scope from the increased exposure to global knowledge pools, which globalisation has made possible.

Africa may also need to intensify knowledge diplomacy with the BRICS, the EU and other regional blocs to be able to transform its economy from a natural resource-based traditional approach to the modern knowledge-based trend. This is not to deny the fact that the Western concept of knowledge-based economy is one of its cultural hegemony archetypes. To impose knowledge-based economy may mean to culturally dominate non-Western societies. Western-based knowledge production is now obviously connected to the notion of knowledge-based economy. This has been discussed very well, among others, by Foucault, who elaborated the process through the concept of the market as a regime of truth (Foucault 1973-4; Foucault 1979-80). When I insist on knowledge-based economy in the African context, I am referring to an economy that should base itself on the huge array of indigenous knowledge systems, which should be cultivated in order to enable an effective communication and representation of Africa at all levels. AIKS should not be sneezed at; if appropriately brought up it can be an alternative tool of knowledge to address issues of economic growth, development, the ecology, social justice and various interrelated subjects, in which the WKS has diametrically failed. On top of challenging the inappropriate approaches of WKS, it may as well work to strike a balance for cooperation. It could be the basis for ideas of an African renaissance, a renewal of political commitment

to science and technological innovation that should induce overall development and progress in the continent. This sounds a difficult task, but it is undeniably inescapable.

The discussion about revitalising AIKS and knowledge production facilitates an intra- and intercultural dialogue between ways of knowing, knowledge production and value systems. It enables local African communities to better understand the differences and interactions between AIKS and other knowledge systems in order to appraise their own knowledge system as one upon which their own communities should be based in order to make better-informed decisions, or to be able to choose appropriate systems (indigenous or international) for their sustainable future (Ntuli 1999).

Cases of Knowledge Production and Gatekeeper Relations in Africa and Beyond

Among the various accounts that attempt to describe this subject is the general case presented by the environmental anthropologist Sabine Luning, titled "Anthropologists in the company of gatekeepers," which was posted on the *Leiden Anthropology Blog* on 3 September 2013.[14] In her fieldwork experiences in Suriname and French Guiana, the implication of which is also relevant to Africa, this anthropologist raised the problem of access to the fields held by concessional companies, which are gatekeepers themselves. Her observation was that the process of negotiating access to people and places, during the field study, is in itself a major source of knowledge about power relations,[15] that possibly affect the nature of knowledge production about many non-Western societies including Africa. Such cases underscore how field studies are in many ways unreliable in producing unbiased knowledge, and how research could be influenced to come up with results that are favourable to the interests of the dominant actors or gatekeepers rather than reflect truth, reliable and justifiable results.

From this example it is obvious that under approaches of WKS a juxtaposed knowledge may emerge. Negotiations between the company (TNC), the interlocutor and the community could possibly

14 The material is available online, at <http://www.leidenanthropologyblog.nl/articles/anthropologists-in-the-company-of-gatekeepers>

15 See ibid.

end up in favour of the dominant actor, that is, the company, at the expense of the communities in question. Basically, the researcher is seen as a potential ally who may help solve the problems identified by the gatekeeper companies.

What has contributed to this state of affairs is probably a weak social capital of the developing world and, in the case of Africa, most likely, the lack of attention to revitalise the AIKS; hence, the awareness level of the population is still unimproved; what is out there is thus now a societal structure in which people live their lives as if given to them by fate, while conducting little or none conscious negotiation to ascertain their rights within the social fabric of their society. In regard to this state of affairs, while sociologists like Beck and Giddens perceive modern society as reflexive, they also suggest that people, where-ever they may be, should live their lives less as a fateful given, and more as a continuously conscious negotiation on the effects of a "risk society" (Beck 1992: 1-6; Giddens 1991: 2-4). Beck seems to have been critical about the tendency that reflexivity has been excluded from the social and political interactions between experts and social groups over modern risks, because of the systemic assumption in science (Beck 1995: 3-7). Similar arguments have recently been reflected by Paar-Jakli (Paar-Jakli, 2015: 11-12). In connection with indigenous communities and knowledge production, as has been indicated above, often the negotiations do not seem to be yielding mutual benefit. From what has been covered thus far, it is possible to infer the problem of knowledge gatekeeping and knowledge production in Africa.

In another well-known example the historian Curtis A. Keim (2013) depicts the problem of knowledge in Africa through his writings on the deliberate misperception of Africa. He emphasises how this act often leads to the production of mistaken knowledge about the continent. His "Mistaking Africa" looks into the historical evolution of the mind-set that infuriates Africa, while criticising the role that popular media play in creating and disseminating a biased knowledge. Keim addresses the most prevalent myths and preconceptions, demonstrating how this attitude prevents a true understanding of otherwise diverse peoples and cultures of Africa (Keim 2013).

As the author describes in detail, the WKS-based perception of Africa immediately conjures up in the Western mind-set images of safaris,

ferocious animals, strangely dressed "tribesmen" and impenetrable jungles. Although the occasional newspaper headline includes genocide, AIDS, malaria or civil war in Africa, the predominant collective American consciousness still carries strong mental images of Africa that are reflected in advertising, movies, amusement parks, cartoons, and many other corners of society (Keim 2013). The account confirms that almost none or very few intellectuals or knowledge gatekeepers have dared to question these misperceptions or the topic of how they came to be so deeply lodged at the heart of the WKS. "Mistaking Africa" is one of few important works that warns against the usually juxtaposed production of knowledge by the gatekeepers on Africa.

As has been argued in the foregoing, the process of production of knowledge about Africa and its dissemination by Western gatekeepers looks like the production of a major misperception that can serve various interests of the West, including the prolongation of economic, political and cultural forms of domination. In this context, the South African researcher Catherine O. Hoppers, who has significantly contributed to the advancement of AIKS, argues that the current phase of international political system that occurs in the environment of globalisation and the neoliberal ideology driving it, with regard to Africa, has become simply a " continuation of the war that began with colonialism and never ended" (cited in Ukeje 2000: 149; Tamene 2009: 92).

One last example comes from Sharlene Khan's account, "Gatekeeping Africa," which was edited in *Artlink*, volume 27, number 2, 2007.[16] The author critically discusses "contemporary" African art in an attempt to challenge the role of the gatekeepers, in this particular area where, observably, Western curators take on the job of selecting and sharing knowledge on African art by displacing the rightful owner — the African. Calling upon Edward Said's idea of the intellectual and of curators, Khan complains about these knowledge gatekeepers, urging that they should seriously consider the implications of their role as intellectuals in contemporary culture.

16 For more insight, see Khan online. Available at <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/2959/gatekeeping-africa/>

He reveals that many Western curators who have traversed African countries in order to acquire artwork to represent the continent have deficiencies. He criticises them for perpetuating some of the same stereotypes that they themselves have tried to challenge; he emphasises that such gatekeepers can be seen as guilty conscious, who collaborate in exploiting “Africa” in the same way colonist traders, anthropologists and historians did in the past.[17] More recently, the phenomenon has manifested itself through engaging with African art superficially, by choosing to focus on socio-political work only and then through a “supermarket shopping” mentality that intends to commodify almost everything, including knowledge,[18] solely in favour of profit making. This entails a serious moral and intellectual problem that hides behind Western gatekeepers’ activities in particular and behind prejudices of the WKS in general.

Khan argues that the curator-intellectuals or gatekeepers are active players in the ongoing ”redefinition” of Africa for the West; they fail to define Africa for the African peoples, who struggle with life in various parts of Africa. The masses do not seem to be ready to endorse the view that intellectuals are in the position of serving their interests. As the post-modernist critic, Michel Foucault, put it aptly: “In the most recent upheaval, the intellectual discovered that the masses no longer need him to gain knowledge, they know perfectly well, without illusion; they know far better than he and they are certainly capable of expressing themselves” (Foucault 1978-79). Nevertheless, it is still hard to hear expressions of people in Africa about themselves, their homes, and their art except through these Western curators or gatekeepers.[19] This and similar reasons call upon the people of Africa to rise up with an action to revitalise the AIKS.

In all of the cases considered above, indigenous elements have faced a deliberate exclusion from the process of knowledge production. The likely outcome of such practices is a troubling brand of knowledge. Currently, as the interface of the local and the international intensifies, the choice may be resisting domination through cooperative efforts that may lead to inclusion, or push to maintain some sort of autonomy.

17 See ibid.

18 See Sappy on the commodification of knowledge; Noble also gives a wonderful insight in this topic.

19 Ibid.

Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this study has been to compare AIKS and knowledge production with that of the WKS and to analyse the interface in the space available. It sought to address the role of knowledge gatekeepers in the wake of the interaction, how their cooperation or failure could advance or affect development, and how this in turn affects the overall progress of the continent. The success of AIKS is the likely foundation upon which local progress could flourish. By attempting to explain who the gatekeepers are, and how they operate, this paper has identified the barriers to knowledge creation and knowledge sharing that have been caused within the manufacturing and high tech areas as well as in the areas of public domains.

The best experiences of the AIKS, which are discernible in various areas of activity, including indigenous agriculture, traditional medicine and the like, should not be undermined. They need to be revitalised and enhanced by a careful use of wider sources of the knowledge pool from across the world, to which Africa has more exposure at present due to the access that globalisation has enabled. Indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge production facilitates a between and across cultures dialogue that could produce a better understanding of various ways of knowing, or ways of knowledge production, as well as boost tolerance between various value systems.

Presumably this approach can contribute to enable the local African communities to grasp the differences and the on-going interactions between AIKS and other knowledge systems. It will facilitate the capability of the continent to gain an appropriate place in the international political and economic structures. By cultivating and revitalising the AIKS, local African communities would be able to make better-informed decisions about their current situation and their sustainable future, including which knowledge system is appropriate for their conditions. This is also part of a creative step to induce development and progress in the continent, which are significantly unavailable despite the talk of cooperation between WKS and AIKS.

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A MATTER OF CHOICE? THE ROLE OF ENGLISH AND ISIXHOSA FOR UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN THEIR EARLY CAREERS

Irina Turner

Abstract: In multilingual South Africa, language use is more often than not a matter of choice than of ability. The application of indigenous languages like isiXhosa seems nevertheless less preferable in certain social contexts such as the job environment, where English is seen as the language of "success and status" (Casale and Posel 2010: 58). This paper probes the relationship between an isiXhosa language identity and career chances for university graduates. It examines, in a micro study, how young graduates from Fort Hare University in East London perceive the role and conception of English and isiXhosa for identity construction with a focus on employment opportunities. This view is contrasted with local employers' perceptions on the matter. The interviews show that the dominance of English in the workplace as a global and "neutral" language remains largely unquestioned. In conclusion, the paper provides suggestions for further research into the role of indigenous languages in the South African business environment, on a broader scale.

Keywords: *isiXhosa, English Proficiency, Multilingualism at the Workplace, Language Identity, Career Chances*

1. Introduction: isiXhosa and English in South Africa

South Africa is a multilingual society "where languages have been [...] sites of resistance, empowerment and discrimination" (Kamwangamalu 2007: 263)[1]. Up to today, the choice of language in a specific communicative context is also always a social and political matter; "power relations are today expressed in symbolic relations" (Park and Wee 2015: 5).

1 The author refers to Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004.

Although there are 11 official national languages and unofficially many more in South Africa, English is hereby increasingly prevalent; especially in the economic sphere (Kamwangamalu 2007: 271ff.). Skills in this language are considered an important qualification by the job market and English is seen as the language of "success and status" (Casale and Posel 2010: 58).

However, English is by no means accessible to everyone in South Africa. Township schools up until today suffer from historic and contemporary systematic undermining of educational quality (Kamwangamalu 2007: 271ff; Rudwick 2008: 103), of which instruction in and of English is a crucial element.

9.4% of all South Africans and 1% of Africans[2] speak English, and 23% isiXhosa as their home language (Casale and Posel 2010: 58ff.). In the province of the Eastern Cape, with about 8 million L1 speakers, isiXhosa is the dominant language in social spheres and education (Lewis et.al. 2015). At the same time, with 29.6%, the province has the third highest unemployment rate[3] in the country (Statistics South Africa 2015: xiii) and poverty is rife. The National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS)[4] found a positive correlation between family income and the degree of English language proficiency in South Africa (Casale and Posel 2010: 58ff).

Beyond that, few studies examine the relationship between "language and labour market outcomes in developing countries"[5] and South Africa[6] (Casale and Posel 2010: 63). Either the data on South Africa is outdated (Cornwell and Inder 2008; data from 1996-1998), or

2 This term is used by the authors (Casale & Posel) and refers to black South Africans. The terminology is contentious, since reference to skin colour on the one hand reaffirms apartheid categories of citizenship, on the other hand the term "Africans" used in this way, distinctly excludes white Africans.

3 The official unemployment rate only counts people who are actively looking for work. For a problematization of that data profiling see Posel et al 2013.

4 NIDS is a nationally representative household survey, designed as a panel study (with the first wave in 2008), by the Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU), University of Cape Town (www.nids.uct.ac.za). The data for the study was collected in 2008, 7,300 households took part and 28,000 adults (15 years or older) were interviewed(Casale & Posel 2010: 58).

5 Chiswick BR & Miller PW 1995.

6 Deumert A, Inder B & Maitra P 2005. Cornwell K & Inder B 2008.

small-scale and very group-specific (Deumert et.al. 2005)[7] (Casale and Posel 2010: 65).

The role of local languages against global English in European multinational companies has been examined by Gunnarson (2014). She found that the situation varies from one country to another (Gunnarson 2014: 27). While in France for instance, English is seen as a threat to the French language,[8] its dominance is seen as unproblematic in Scandinavian countries[9] and "perceived as a 'must'" in Germany[10]; nevertheless, German maintains an important role in business communication (Gunnarson 2014: 16).

This paper examines in a micro study how young graduates from Fort Hare University in East London perceive the role of English and isiXhosa with regards to employment opportunities. This view is contrasted with the local employers' perception of that matter. The following questions will be addressed:

Are chances of securing a job seemingly increased by portraying a "global" English identity? What are the consequences for using and identifying with isiXhosa for young university graduates seeking employment? Do employers systematically undermine vernacular language use in favour of English? Does English suffocate indigenous African languages like isiXhosa?

The paper sets out with a theoretical anchoring. After introducing method and interviewees' profiles, the students' self-description of language use and concepts of isiXhosa and English are presented and discussed. The role of those languages with regards to employment is then considered in more detail from the employers' perspective. Concluding, the paper gives suggestions for further research on a broader scale.

2. Theoretical Anchoring

The paper moves within the disciplinary framework of sociolinguistics, as it examines a particular aspect of the relationship between language

7 This is a study on migrants in Cape Town.
8 Gunnarson refers to Deneire 2008.
9 Gunnarson refers to Firth 1995.
10 Gunnarson refers to Ehrenreich 2010.

and society (Crystal 2008: 440), namely the role of isiXhosa in an environment dominated by a notion of global English, i.e., the South African business world; albeit in the very specific and limited setting of Fort Hare University and two companies in East London.

The paper follows Park and Wee's call for a broader, market-theoretical, perspective on global English that "recognizes simultaneously the structural relations of power that shape the conditions by which different uses of English are evaluated and the various practices through which language users engage with such conditions by negotiating the identities and social positions they flexibly occupy through their use of English" (Park and Wee 2015: 24).

Their theoretical anchoring in the metaphor of Bourdieu's linguistic market (1984, 1986, 1991)[11] proves helpful for the enquiries at hand, as it "highlights practice as a link between structure and agency" and puts the focus on the "subjectivity and meaning-making practices of speakers" in their use of English (Park and Wee 2015: 40). In order to understand Bourdieu's metaphor, it is important to comprehend how English functions as an indexical sign and a value on three levels. Firstly, on a sociological level, English enables a marking of ethics and expression of values in terms of evaluating and distinguishing between good and bad; secondly, on an economic level, English serves as an exchange value, whereby language competence can be exchanged into material gain; and thirdly, as a linguistic value, English can serve as a "meaningful difference" in the construction of a speaker's identity (Park and Wee 2015: 25ff.). For the context at hand, the notion of English as a value is relevant, as the paper asks how the graduates employ these different types of values with regards to their career considerations.

The structure of the linguistic market indicates the power relations within a society (Park and Wee 2015: 28). In the South African context, "white English" symbolizes cultural, social and linguistic capital in Bourdieu's sense (1986).

11 The authors argue that the critique from linguistics against Bourdieu's market theory, that too strong a focus on institutions negates the role of social actors and individual capacity, is unfounded, since both are integral parts of the notion of habitus (Park & Wee 2015: 33ff.).

The notion of global English as a value in the linguistic market reveals its problematic role between "postcolonial linguistic nationalism", promoting and enforcing the use of local languages, vs. the "economically driven pursuit", favouring English as a *lingua franca* (Park and Wee 2015: 10).

The close association of English with globalisation transforms the language into a symbol for its problems: "English [...] is a language of inequality, [...] renewing relations of [...] oppression on the global scale between the centre and the periphery"; through the "ideological distinction of native versus nonnative speaker" delegitimising non-Western appropriation, "and the class divisions" restricting "access to English" (Park and Wee 2015: 3ff.).

Despite the practical aspects of inequality, English also symbolises the estrangement and identity struggles of the colonialised subject. It is "considered a language of the Other for many communities" (Park and Wee 2015: 12). This is not only a historical problem but continues to play out its power dominance today in the form of suggested incompetence resulting in insecurities:

> The speaker comes to acknowledge the authority of Standard English but not by forced imposition or rational calculation of its economic value but by occupying a specific subject position in relation to the language-as-entity; the anxiety and insecurity the speaker feels in the relation to the abstract standard comes to be recognized as evidence of the legitimacy of the standard (Park and Wee 2015: 109).

In that way, promoting English as a global language, is a practice of gatekeeping; "especially in [...] the workplace, influencing individuals' social trajectories" (Park and Wee 2015: 119). It is thus nowadays impossible to see English as an inexhaustible good that is free to all (Park and Wee 2015: 117)[12]. Rather, English is a commodity and "an acquirable skill, obscuring and reproducing class-based inequalities of power that undergird the structure of the linguistic market" (Park and Wee 2015: 189).

12 Park & Wee point out that there is an inner logic in keeping up this estrangement, because "to appropriate the language of the Other is to go against the indexical meaning of English as Otherness" (Park & Wee 2015: 140).

When global English is conceived of as having value on the linguistic market, and as such as something measurable, by implication it is conceptualised as a thing and "capital" instead of a practice (Park and Wee 2015:105). Although identity, of which language is a constructive part, should not be "subject to exchange" or treated "as an economic resource to be cultivated for material profit"[13] (Park and Wee 2015: 125), the dominance of English in international communication forces the speaker to choose between language use in order to mark ones "inherited identity" and the "perceived use-value" (Park and Wee 2015: 14).

English has come to play the role of a global commodity through the worldwide spread of neoliberalism symbolising some of its core aspects like the claim for ideological and national neutrality (Park and Wee 2015: 161). Not succeeding in the linguistic market is entirely framed as individual failure and as such a "neoliberal rationalization of unequal structures" (Park and Wee 2015: 188).

At the workplace, English is largely celebrated as an ideal means for intercultural communication. However, one needs to differentiate among various spheres of workplace discourses, i.e., local, national, and supranational, and its contextual frames; i.e., socio-cultural, legal-political, technical-economical, and linguistic (Gunnarson 2014: 23). For the question at hand, the linguistic framework is of special relevance. It describes the varying adherences of the local, national and global language community to language policies influencing verbal and written discourse at the workplace (Gunnarson 2014: 26).

To which extent are these language policies part of a larger Language Management Strategy? Sherman et al. define the Language Management Theory as firstly seeing "behavior toward language as a process", of noting a "deviation from a norm at any level of language generation", i.e., identifying certain linguistic behaviour as problematic, which results in the "design of an adjustment" and its implementation (Sherman et al. 2012: 290). Secondly, this reaches an organisational stage and as soon as it transcends the individual self-correction but "occurs repeatedly in a number of situations, [it becomes] the subject of discussion, reflection, and [...] acts of policy or 'strategy', such as the determination of the language to be used

13 Park & Wee refer to Uricuoli 2008.

for meetings, it is called organized management" (Sherman et al. 2012: 290). It will be shown that these aspects play a role in the case studies at hand.

This paper does not exclusively see the problems of English but simultaneously considers the role of vernacular languages in the corporate world. Hence, the importance of local knowledge and vernacular linguistic practices in the workplace are of relevance. Gunnarson found that there is a potential conflict between local and international linguistic norms (Gunnarson 2014: 24). Sherman et al. point out the importance of local knowledge in international companies, as this is synonymous with interactional and tactical knowledge vital for successful business communication, which maintains "innovative capabilities in the new economy" (Sherman et al. 2012: 292ff.).

Multinational companies distinguish between "codified" knowledge, i.e., manifested in "manuals, books and instructive courses, measurable through some sort of testing", and "tactic" knowledge, i.e., informal knowledge "acquired through experience in specific situations"[14] (Sherman et al. 2012: 300). Pertaining to the case studies, the use of isiXhosa largely falls into the second category.

Although stressing the importance of vernacular languages and local knowledge in itself does not indicate a general shift in the conception of global English and changing power relations towards smaller languages in intercultural communication (Sherman et al. 2012: 303), their constitutive role for "effective communication" in multicultural companies should be re-evaluated (Sherman et al. 2012: 306).

This is particularly true for an environment like South Africa, where English is also a local language, i.e., not a second language to all,[15] and

14 Sherman et al give an example that is applicable to the case study in this paper as well: "Machine operators in Company A, when asked by a researcher about the fact that there was software in German on a computer in their manufacturing space, stated that it was not the case that they would "know" or "use" German, but rather, that they had learned over time and with the use of manuals "where to click", without actually mastering the language outside the given situation" (Sherman et al. 2012: 300).

15 In Kachru's model of circles (1992), South Africa belongs to the Inner Circle, where English is used as a native language "by whites of British descent and by the younger generations of Indian South Africans", as well as the Outer Circle, where it is used as

thus part of a complicated inner power set-up. It is hence not neutral, as the notion of global English implies, i.e., the false assumption that "it is no longer a language that is tied to anyone's culture, and that it can benefit anyone economically through its acquisition" (Park and Wee 2015: 143).

According to Kamwangamalu (2007: 264), the role of English for the black majority in South Africa underwent different historic stages. While initially, English had been the language of the colonisers and thus was perceived as a distinct "*they*-code". Later, during the anti-apartheid struggle, it had been positively connoted and adopted as a so-called "*we*-code"; i.e., as "a language that the black community used to inform the outside world about their opposition against apartheid" (Kamwangamalu 2007: 264). In the post-apartheid era, where race struggles have been largely replaced by class struggles (Tomaselli 2011: 171ff.), English is a "*they*-code" for people without access to a good education (mostly rural), and at the same time a "naturalized *we*-code for the black elite" (Kamwangamalu 2007: 264). Kamwangamalu defines this "naturalized *we*-code as an outgroup language that, because of its positive attributes (e.g. association with power, privilege, education, upward social mobility), has been adopted [and] [...] become their chief medium of communication" (Kamwangamalu 2007: 268ff.).

In the light of these theoretical deliberations, the paper follows Park and Wee in asking about the "values [...] speakers attribute to English when they appropriate it in contexts where it would otherwise be considered the language of the Other" (Park and Wee 2015: 13). Pursuing the larger question of the role of language in multilingual companies in an increasingly knowledge-based economic set-up (Sherman et al. 2012: 288), this paper starts from a micro study. It enquires specific argumentation strategies for the dominant use of English and for or against the acknowledgement of isiXhosa in business among employers and graduates. This preliminary study sets the direction for future in-depth research in companies to pay closer attention "to the specific conditions that limit or open up spaces for change in the linguistic market" (Park and Wee 2015: 140) and assessing the consequences for indigenous African languages

a second language; mostly by the black population and Afrikaners (Kamwangamalu 2007: 264).

(Kamwangamalu 2007: 270). Gunnarson identified a research gap for Europe:

> Future research on multilingualism in the workplace needs to continue to explore how the gap between visions and practice can be overcome, thus increasing our understanding of how linguistic and cultural issues affect workplace discourse and how problems can be solved (Gunnarson 2014: 27).

This equally applies to South Africa; perhaps even more urgently.

3. Interviews

This probing micro-case study is based on four interviews with isiXhosa students in East London and two employer interviews with HR executives in the city. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in March 2015. The students, two women and two men, were mature isiXhosa mother tongue speakers currently studying at Fort Hare University with previous job experience.[16]

For the employers' view, I chose two large established companies that run a professional Human Resource (HR) department and operate within global structures. Rick[17] is a Regional HR business partner (HR generalist) at a leading South African food and clothing retailer employing about 25,000 staff nationwide. While his function "covers the full spectrum of an employee's life cycle", his role in the recruitment process is to participate in the interviews (Interview 5: Rick).

Joleen is Manager of Executive Development and Performance Management at a large German car production company in the Eastern Cape. She is responsible for performance and management, Executive HR development, and the coordination of strategic HRD activities in the company (Interview 6: Joleen). In the recruitment process, Joleen

16 I had met those four students during a teaching stint at Fort Hare University in February-March 2015. My selection criteria were maturity and previous job experience. The fact that they were studying in the Humanities, were prepared to talk to me, and all had a very good command of English is owed to the context in which I had met them. Hence, they are not representative of all students at Fort Hare University.

17 All names are pseudonyms for the protection of privacy.

handles recruitment regulation and policy (Interview 6: Joleen). The company employs about 5,000 people in South Africa and of those about 3,500 in East London; it is the largest employer in the city.

Although the dominance of global English can be expected in these companies, due to their size and internationally linked operations at a higher management level, both have firm local ties in terms of their recruitment sources. While the car manufacturer needs a large pool of blue collar workers for its local production plant, the retailer nurtures a strong customer-orientation that requires professional face-to-face communication. Hence, it is feasible to assume that the dominant vernacular language isiXhosa plays an important role in skills resourcing; also pertaining to early career graduates. Even though, the chosen companies are not representative of the employment landscape in East London, as the language situation might be very different in small and medium sized businesses in the city, their degree of professionalism increases the likelihood of the existence of a strategic language management in line with the South African constitution and an increased awareness of language matters within the company.

4. Student's View

4.1. Concepts and use of isiXhosa and English

Three of the four students went to an English, so-called Model C school, formerly reserved to whites, and they assessed their English proficiency higher than their isiXhosa proficiency; although isiXhosa is named by all as their home language and mother tongue.

Andile is an Honours Philosophy student who pursues an academic career. In conversation with friends and in public places, he emphasizes the individual freedom in communication:

> It depends on my mood. Today, I feel like I am in touch with a different side of myself. More close to the isiXhosa culture custom. [...] Sometimes I indulge people that can't speak; who I know that can't speak just to engage with them. It is never fixed (Interview 1: Andile).

Andile finds communication in isiXhosa an advantage in terms of achieving certain things "quicker" when addressing people "in their own language" (Interview 1: Andile). For him, isiXhosa signifies home:

> Home. It is where I come from. [...] Wherever I would be ...it is where I always remain. It is the idea of transcending, that is, presence and future, preserve but move forward. You move but you keep it. That is where I am with isiXhosa. I will always keep it there (Interview 1: Andile).

While isiXhosa seems to signify stability, English is the "door to the world", to change, "access to culture" and "cross-cultural communication" (Interview 1: Andile). In contrast to the perceived stability of isiXhosa, Andile finds the instability of English unpleasant; "it is ever changing" (Interview 1: Andile). He describes the function of English as a commercial good and a link to the global world which comes with the promise of opportunities but needs rooting in individual cultures:

> Perhaps it is OK that English connects us to the world, but it's our onus to fall back to what we know and make that a place of grounding. [...] We have the onus, - not me, unfortunately I am lower class - but the middle class has access to some mechanics, they can contribute back. This is how we cement what we know. The other people don't have to know. If we are standard with it, if we can communicate, that will be enough. [...] It is ours. Have English for income (Interview 1: Andile)

Andile considers the dominance of English in South Africa as problematic and potentially "threatening"; he finds that the standard of isiXhosa teaching is insufficient and it's "not doing the language justice" (Interview 1: Andile). He felt that he had to redress his Xhosa identity by taking isiXhosa classes in the 2nd and 3rd year at university "to preserve it":

> I have been associated with the term Coconut person. I needed a way of detaching myself from English; a way to try to understand isiXhosa better (Interview 1: Andile).

Thumeka is a first year part-time Social Science BA student with several years of work experience. She works at the Department of Health as

an administrative officer and would like to advance to the Unit of Occupational Safety and Wellness as a qualified psychologist. She names isiXhosa as her mother tongue and assesses her English skills closely below those of isiXhosa. In the friends and family circle, Xhosa dominates; however, she sends her children to an English school: "We speak mainly Xhosa [at home]. I sometimes speak English to my five-year-old boy but my husband doesn't like it. He wants me to speak Xhosa. At school they speak English" (Interview 2: Thumeka). At university, English seems to be a pre-determined communication code "because they are conducting the classes in English" (Interview 2: Thumeka). Xhosa is also the language of communication at work, when she is consulting in rural hospitals for instance, where people only understand isiXhosa (Interview 2: Thumeka).

English, for Thumeka, is an "important" and "universal" language, spoken by most South Africans "and abroad" (Interview 2: Thumeka). It is the language that allows her to "address whoever I want to address to different people of different nations" (Interview 2: Thumeka). Nevertheless, she advocates for an appreciation and marketing of African languages, especially "their own mother tongue", while at the same time fostering an active interest in South African languages other than one's own (Interview 2: Thumeka).

Thumeka does not feel that English is threatening other languages. Her emphasis is on freedom of choice: "Most people make it an issue that you must know and understand English, as if you are forced to, whereas you are not forced to speak English" (Interview 2: Thumeka).[18]

Vuyo, a first year Education student who is also running his own business selling cleaning detergents, went to an English Model C school and therefore is very fluent in English. He also used to work as a receptionist and as an apprentice for a Real Estate agency. Now at university, he takes an isiXhosa beginners course, although he describes it as his mother tongue, to improve his understanding,

18 This emphasis on forced language instruction has a special significance in the South African context as it is a reminder of the Soweto uprising in 1976, where pupils rebelled against being forcefully taught in Afrikaans and were consequently killed by the apartheid police. It is still remembered today "how intensely and even dangerously the issue of language is tied to South Africa's past" (Rudwick 2008: 103ff.).

grammar, and "structure" (Interview 4: Vuyo). He describes the language situation at home as follows:

> Zulu and Xhosa is practically the same thing. My parents, one is Zulu, one Xhosa. [...] My own language is sort of a mixture of the two languages together. We had a trilingual [language situation at home] ... Xhosa, Zulu, English. The whole family [...] would start a sentence in English but then to get to the depth of it, you would finish in Xhosa or Zulu. Some words in Xhosa and Zulu give it more of a definitive meaning (Interview 4: Vuyo).

While English gives him access, isiXhosa connects to emotions[19]:

> For you to understand isiXhosa, it means you've been through the same things with this person; [...] like divorce. If divorce happens, you have a term in Xhosa [...] would actually really define the pain and suffering. You have to go through it, to actually understand it (Interview 4: Vuyo).

Vuyo finds the ability to switch between languages advantageous. He points out that sometimes, English, which is in his opinion "the most understood language in South Africa", can be used as an ethnical neutralizer[20]:

> For example, if you go to Durban, which is a Zulu-speaking environment, and you speak isiXhosa, you are not gonna be welcomed as much. That is why I prefer speaking English, because English is sort of like a neutral thing. It puts everyone on the same level (Interview 4: Vuyo).

On the one hand, Vuyo associates English with "freedom", on the other hand, it is a symbol of "superiority"; especially in his attitude towards rural isiXhosa speakers (Interview 4: Vuyo).

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19 Vuyo gives another example: "Ubuntu is a Xhosa word [...]. The English translation of ubuntu is empathy, but ubuntu goes beyond empathy. Empathy is doing something for someone, but ubuntu is doing something for someone not out of feeling guilty but out of the goodness of your heart and not expecting anything in return. [...] Empathy would have not have defined that deep enough" (Interview 4: Vuyo).

20 However, elsewhere in the interview, he emphasizes contradictorily that ethnicity, e.g. clan names amongst Xhosa, plays a major role in the success of business communication within the small and medium enterprise environment he operates in.

Nomsa is in her second Master's year in Rural Development and considers a career at university. In her job environment as an English lecturer, the dominant language is English. When she moved to the Alice campus, which has a higher degree of Xhosa students and staff, Xhosa became more prevalent (Interview 3: Nomsa).

Her own English schooling background also raises identity tensions even within her family:

> At home [...] I probably speak more English that Xhosa. My siblings mix, but I speak probably the most English. My sibling stayed within the township setting; I didn't. I went to boarding school with predominately white kids. Though, most of my friends are black, they are not Xhosa. [...] I dream in English (Interview 3: Nomsa).

There is still a felt identity gap in not speaking isiXhosa in depth. Nomsa feels that her own Xhosa knowledge is inadequate to teach her children. Hence, independent of whom she would marry, she'd send her children to "proper" Xhosa lessons (Interview 3: Nomsa). She puts her own identity struggles in these terms:

> In the beginning, isiXhosa is a place of knowing who I am. A mixed space, privileged, when you went to a private school you get confused... lay a hold of figuring out what it means to be a Xhosa woman (Interview 3: Nomsa).

For Nomsa, isiXhosa is a door-opener in certain contexts: "Yes I think there are certain avenues. You are not welcome or you don't have favour unless you speak Xhosa. In the changing times that we live in, it is actually beneficial to be proficient in an African language" (Interview 3: Nomsa). In that regard, isiXhosa means "freedom" to her.

She considers English a threat that is killing other languages and observes that "the younger generation" is no longer as fluent in their "own languages" as in English (Interview 3: Nomsa). Furthermore, English even dominates in "all-Xhosa" environments like her church:

> Everybody is Xhosa, and people are preaching in English. And you are like: why? God is not English. There is the fact that English is still seen as superior, therefore we neglect our own languages (Interview 3: Nomsa).

However, Nomsa observes stereotypical connotations attached to a variety of English which comes with a certain accent:

> People think you are smart because you sound good in English. It is a ridiculous assumption. So for example if I went to a job interview, I can go with a super smart person that is way smarter than me but let's say, they didn't go to a private school. Until I have proven to be dumb, I am going to get further than he does; the way I sound; socially (Interview 3: Nomsa).

She stated that these clichés can be exploited and can be used to advance a career. Nomsa "absolutely" agrees that portraying an English identity, beyond the use of language, has opened doors for her.

4.2. Language in the job

Three of four interviewees have secured their – mostly casual – jobs not through a formal process but through the random dropping of CVs and networking. Only Thumeka's government appointment followed a formal procedure.

Thumeka remembered the job interview for her current job as an officer at the department of health:

> It was advertised in the local newspaper and on the departmental website and then I applied and they called me for an interview. It was in English. One guy was Coloured in the panel. There were about 4-5 people. The rest was Xhosa. If I had chosen to have my answers in Xhosa, it would have been possible. I chose to speak English though for one, there was that one Coloured guy, to accommodate him. And two, I thought I better express myself in English than in Xhosa, maybe some policies and other stuff I don't have in Xhosa so they are better in English (Interview 2: Thumeka).

What becomes clear from this statement is that there is a lack of lexis and professionalised terms in isiXhosa even for educated people who speak the language very comfortably.

Incidentally, I met Andile at a bookstore in East London where he was about to go into a job interview for a part-time job as a bookseller.

Afterwards, he told me that the interview had been conducted in English:

> It is the language in that situation. [...] To a bookstore people are coming in the English language. You must know the industry and the market. Xhosas do have bookstores but not in a contribution to the economy. You must be versed in English. [...] There is a way of presenting yourself to different cultures; to people of a like-minded nature. A book in itself is a thing of learning. [...] Presenting yourself as someone who understands the people who buy these books. If you can't relate to that white person, do you think they are inclined to buy books? (Interview 1: Andile).

Here, it becomes evident that the English language is strongly associated with culture, education, and economic power.

Andile also remembered how he obtained a position as a salesman at a clothing trader. He described his search for jobs as going from shop to shop and handing in his CV randomly. Eventually, he was successful due to one personal interaction:

> There was no opening; there is no other way to do it. The guy liked me, so he took [the CV] and he said I should come back the next day. [...] [The manager] was Coloured; biracial; so he himself was not so well versed in articulating himself in English. So we already had that understanding. So already it was almost sorted and being done (Interview 1: Andile).

It is interesting to note the racial implications of this comment. Belonging to a formerly disadvantaged group automatically grants a status of "understanding", of struggling with the English – read white – culture; irrespective of the actual home language, of the interactors, which could easily be English.

Nomsa finds English essential to finding a job in South Africa; especially for the interview situation emphasising the importance of first impressions: "For being interviewed, you want to be able to speak English well" (Interview 3: Nomsa). A previous job interview at Fort Hare University had been quite peculiar:

> It was to teach English at Fort Hare. I didn't end up getting the job. And funnily enough, I didn't get it because I was Xhosa. The panel was mostly black Xhosa people. [...] It is always a confusing one. English is the medium of communication but of course we are Xhosa. So why would we speak in English? [...] I had to work very hard to prove that Xhosa is not going to be a [problem] [...] I think, I already sound pretty white, but I mean. I laid it on thick [...]. One of the things that they were worried about was that in teaching English [...] to the group; that I would revert to Xhosa. [...]. Coming into the interview, I really felt the pressure on my English to be very like.... "I am a white person." Excuse me, I am the right person. So I think that was an interesting situation where I had to shed any sort of evidence of being like [Xhosa]...I don't necessarily think that they were looking for [an English] mother tongue speaker. From a dominantly black university. A black panel. I thought that was crazy (Interview 3: Nomsa).

Again, it becomes evident that the language discourse is closely linked to a discourse on race relations.

Vuyo obtained his jobs through personal connections and did not go through a formal application process (Interview 4: Vuyo). At the Real Estate Agent, his isiXhosa skills were to his advantage:

> I come from a sales background, my parents were sales people. It is a job where you make a living through people and you have to accommodate all types of people. [...] Like when I am around Coloured people, I'll speak a few words in Afrikaans just to make them feel more comfortable. And the same when I am around Xhosa people. It's sort of like playing with words. It breaks the communication barrier (Interview 4: Vuyo).

Code-switching is thus a sought after skill in the South African business world.

4.3. Discussion of results

There is a strong link between general literacy, education, home-language proficiency and English language proficiency (Casale and

Posel 2010: 62). In the nationwide NIDS study, 42% of all Africans[21] self-assessed their English reading, and 41% their English writing skills with the highest score of "very well" equalling the criterion for "English proficiency"[22] (Casale and Posel 2010: 59ff.). By contrast, the self-assessment of reading and writing in the home language was much higher (62%) (Casale and Posel 2010: 59). In the Eastern Cape, "less than a third of the adults" consider themselves English proficient (Casale and Posel 2010: 61). Younger Africans have a higher English proficiency and education than their parents, who often still suffer from the aftermath of Bantu education,[23] and there is a gap in English proficiency between urban and rural areas (Casale and Posel 2010: 61).

Due to the facts that we met at Fort Hare University, that they were aged between 20 and 25, that they had already been successful in the job market, and that we were conducting all interviews in English, the students I interviewed were part of an educated elite who are not representative of the population of the Eastern Cape in general when it comes to English proficiency. Nevertheless, they too find themselves within the dilemma of language use as a "marker of inherited identity" competing with its "perceived use-value" (Park and Wee 2015: 14).

The attitude towards English by non-mother tongue speakers in South Africa has been described as "merely instrumental" and ambivalent due to "a perceived dichotomy between the economic values of English

21 Unfortunately, the study did not differentiate among the African languages, because the point was here to make the racial skew evident: "Comparing the two extremes of South Africa's racial polarization, home-language proficiency is more than 30 percent lower among African adults than among white adults (61 per cent compared to 94 per cent), whereas English-language proficiency is 40 percent lower (41 per cent compared to 81 per cent)" (Casale & Posel 2010: 60).

22 „We use the highest response option in the questions in NIDS in the light of concerns that self-reported data on literacy ability may be overestimated" (Casale & Posel 2010: 60).

23 Hence, mother tongue instruction in primary schools is contentious today for didactic, historical and political reasons. While it is evidently favourable for learning and developing literacy skills in general (Casale & Posel 2010: 58ff.), during apartheid, unskilled and under-resourced teachers had systematically made black schools "dysfunctional" (Rudwick 2008: 103) and hence the association of vernacular instruction with a bad education is still strong amongst South African parents today. English schools are still seen as superior (e.g. Casale & Posel 2010: 58). For a differentiated discussion of this question, see Mesthrie (2008) and Hlatshwayo (2000).

in South Africa and their love" for their vernacular "home" language (Rudwick 2008: 110ff.).

In South Africa, the language shift towards English is ubiquously tangible and "the number of spheres in which languages other than English can be used is rapidly declining" (Kamwangamalu 2007: 270). Kamwangamalu describes the consequences of this language shift in the social migration of black township students into Model C-schools "in their quest to be educated through the medium of English only" and a decline in university enrolments into African language courses[24] (Kamwangamalu 2007: 271ff.).

In South Africa, there is a strong perceived link between a successful career and English language skills and respectively; mother-tongue learning of African languages is often still associated with inferior apartheid Bantu education (Casale and Posel 2010: 58).

The economic value of English proficiency as a "ticket for success" is "undisputed" (Rudwick 2008: 110). It is precisely this silencing undisputedness that gives reason for concern as dissatisfaction with this lingual hegemony is rising. The dominance of English often leads to the perception that other languages and by implication cultures are suppressed,[25] tampered and even threatened to die. Though scholars did not yet see an "immediate danger" for South African vernaculars (e.g., Reagan 2001: 63). Mesthrie points out that these assumptions about the decline of African language standards "should not be made lightly" (Mesthrie 2008: 19), since many vibrant urban varieties in South Africa defy essentialist notions of language use and heritage.

The preference of English is often described for situations where there is a lingually mixed audience and the language serves as the most common denominator. The students describe the reason to choose English in these situations "to accommodate," "to indulge" (Interview

24 For instance, UNISA (the University of South Africa), the only institution that offers tuition in all eleven official languages, reports that the number of undergraduate students registered for courses in African languages dropped from 25,000 in 1997 to 3,000 in 2001" (Kamwangamalu 2007: 271ff).

25 A study in Kwa-Zulu-Natal involving 200 high school learners found that 46% perceived English as having "a negative influence on their culture" and "suggesting that a good portion of these youths reject English as a marker of their cultural identity"; however, 95% were in agreement that this language can serve "as an empowerment device" (Rudwick 2008: 110).

1: Andile), "to engage with non-Xhosa speakers" (Interview 1: Andile), or "to make them comfortable" (Interview 4: Vuyo).

Three of the four interviewees carry markers of model C education, and "immaculate" English. The so-called "white" accent, though evidently not linked to an assumed better cognitive processing, carries heavy prestige among young South Africans and is thus often consciously acquired by L2 speakers (Mesthrie 2008: 17). Its perceived higher social status indicates that the wounds of apartheid have not yet been healed (see Mesthrie 2008: 14). A certain accent can serve on the one hand "as an index of a speaker's identity", and on the other hand, as "a resource for getting a particular job in another context" (Park and Wee 2015:126). However, there is also the trend to cultivate and promote a Black South African accent (see Mesthrie 2008: 18).

An overtly portrayal of English culture can lead to alienation by the community as an English identity is still "dichotomized" to "blackness" in contemporary South Africa (Rudwick 2008: 112). This is prevalent in the use of the derogatory term "coconut" (see Interview 1: Andile) referring to a black person who speaks "excessive" and "immaculate" English – i.e., with no trace of an African accent – implying that "although this person has dark skin on the outside, he or she is 'white' on the inside, just as a coconut's shell is dark and its fruit is white" (Rudwick 2008: 102). This is not only a matter of linguistic but also of cultural crossing and the alleged loss of home identity (Mesthrie 2008: 14). In other words, a "coconut" acts and behaves "white" (Rudwick 2008: 102). The language switch to English presumably comes along with a loss of certain Xhosa values like "unbridged obedience to elders, practising certain rituals and customs, gender roles" and is thus seen as a threat and despicable behaviour by traditionalists (Mesthrie 2008: 17). Rudwick points out that these identity tensions mostly apply to young South Africans as the generation "most affected by recent changes in the sociolinguistic and socioeconomic landscape of South Africa" (Rudwick 2008: 109). She contends that these "coconut dynamics" are rooted in the "South African struggle to find clarity on the question of what it means 'to be' or 'not to be' an African" (Rudwick 2008:113). Hence, the language question is still inevitably linked to the racial question.

The three interviewed students who went to English schools felt the need to balance their Xhosa identity and improve on their isiXhosa skills to different degrees (Interview 1: Andile; Interview 3: Nomsa; Interview 4: Vuyo). This trend to redress the perceived lack of formal knowledge in the mother tongue through special tuition is not uncommon (Mesthrie 2008: 18).

Although not the only identity marker, the choice of language is a strong and easily perceivable distinction tool to establish "external boundaries as well as internal lines", "to privilege and even worship the in-group while isolating the out-group" (Rudwick 2008: 108). Deumert shows that the use of certain old-fashioned isiXhosa lexis is an identity performance strategy that "indexes locality (rural) and origin ('where we come from'; first-order indexicality). [...] it signals knowledge of the 'deep' [...] variant of the language, superiority over other (younger) speakers, and a claim to a true amaXhosa identity" (Deumert 2010: 257).

The Eastern Cape is seen as the place of "true", "pure" and "deep" isiXhosa (Deumert 2010: 251). These terms are also used by my interviewees. Vuyo, for instance, points out that the "deep" isiXhosa is to a certain extent inaccessible and considered "a very challenging" language (Interview 4: Vuyo); which gives it a high social significance. IsiXhosa has several dialects, and the written standardisation is derived from the rural Eastern Cape varieties Ngqika and Gcaleka; hence "rural speech has become firmly associated in the minds of speakers with exemplary language use"; a "superior standard to which one should aspire" as it promises the link to traditional isiXhosa culture (Deumert 2010: 251). In contrast, urban varieties, with a higher degree of code-mixing, for instance in Cape Town or Port Elizabeth, are conceived of as being "simple", "vague", "weak", "mixed", "casual" or "watered-down" (Deumert 2010: 251).

Although identities are "never fixed" (Interview 1: Andile), people move between dichotomies of identity and position themselves through language use:

> The categories of standard/non-standard, rural/urban, traditional/ modern, pure/mixed, etc. are coordinates of an important semiotic field onto which speakers of isiXhosa place themselves

> and others based on their language use [...] These categories are not a modernist binary, but points of orientation or positionings (Deumert 2010: 252).

As the interviews confirmed, the ability to code-switch in order to "accommodate" speakers from various language backgrounds is an important skill for the working environment; English thus becomes a "pragmatic *we*-code" for L2 speakers in South Africa aiding to negotiate "interpersonal communication with South Africans of different ethnic groups" (Kamwangamalu 2007: 267).

5. The employers' view

The pragmatic "*we*-code" function of English (Kamwangamalu 2007: 267), i.e., its intercultural comprehension, is foregrounded by employers and its general importance in the workplace is not denied. However, the racial and social implications and inequalities seem to be glossed over by a "culture accommodating" discourse under the umbrella of Diversity Management.

In Rick's company, the language for all written and verbal communication is in English; all interviews are conducted and job advertisements are published in English (Interview 5: Rick).

According to Rick, the company does nevertheless not have a problem with BEE[26] requirements, because they are a highly diversified company and employ people from all cultural groups (Interview 5: Rick).

Both HR managers stated that although English is the dominant language of communication, the corporate culture tries to accommodate the diversified cultures of South Africa in some ways.[27]

26 Black Economic Empowerment is a programme based on employment preference of previously disadvantaged social groups introduced by the South African government in 1994, to reach racial equality in the South African economy. For an assessment of the failures and successes of BEE, see e.g., Wesenmüller 2005.

27 As an example of accommodating cultural diversity, Joleen mentions the performance of a Xhosa poet at a plant opening, who wrote an English poem "about this plant and how we work here, and the standards that we have" (Interview 6: Joleen). This seems rather a glossy gesture than real diversity management.

There are no activities, policies or language guidelines in Rick's company to accommodate multilingualism in particular (Interview 5: Rick). However, if at disciplinary hearings an employee requests a translator, this right is not impeded (Interview 5: Rick). Apparently, the dominance of English is not openly questioned, because in a recent internal company survey employees did not address the issue of multilingualism (Interview 5: Rick).

Rick's company puts high emphasis on the question of culture; "attitude" and "a set of values that underpins everything" relating not "specifically to language but to someone's ability to communicate [...] in accordance with the values":

> I would think that improving our culture and making it conducive is definitely a strategy. It is high on our agenda. And it goes back to what I said about attitude versus skills. You can't teach someone certain values or personal attributes of character, so that is what we look for in the recruitment process (Interview 5: Rick) [emphasis added].

Although he did not want to specify the values for fear of identification, they belong to a neo-liberal discourse and represent a specific corporate culture.

In Joleen's company which employs more blue-collar workers, multilingualism seems to be accommodated to a higher degree; directly as well as indirectly:

> If there would be a plant town hall meeting, you would have English as the common language. [...] In any big communication, there is always a translator. Especially, if there is a specific message from the leader. Because here, we are in the culture of Xhosa tradition, the leader is actually a very important figurehead. [...] We have the praise singers, who welcome the leader into this plant like a big home and he is the leader of this home. It is accommodated (Interview 6: Joleen).

A distinction is made between language and culture, since accommodating culture comes with more vagueness and has less costly implications:

> Although we are a German company, we have to take into account that we work within an African context [...]. And that we have our own South African culture. [...]. One, we are the largest employer here. People like to work for this company. [...] That pride is instilled in the very accommodation that we speak about of language and culture. [...] If you go around, you will see a lot of stuff written in Xhosa but also in English. Some key messages around the plant. I think that builds spirit. Posters and things. Take the names that we are using. For example, the in-house agreement between the union and management is called Siyaphambili. It is a Xhosa word, not an English not a German word. It means moving forward together. It is that spirit that keeps the people (Interview 6: Joleen).

The issue of re-naming programmes and political projects in vernacular languages is a popular marketing tool, especially promoted by the South African post-apartheid government (Turner 2015). In business, it is question-able whether these programmes reach beyond a window-dressing function.

There is a strong connection between general education and English language skills and as the two HR executives put it, "communication skills" in general. This is confirmed by the findings of Casale and Posel: "Home-language proficiency and education (specifically having a matric or tertiary education) were found to be the most important predictors of English-language proficiency" (Casale and Posel 2010: 62).

This taken for granted equivalence between education, communication and English carries discrimination potential. When looking at the English skills of some top managers in Germany, for instance, it is quite evident, that there is not necessarily a correlation between the three factors (Education First 2014: 18).

In Joleen's company, BEE and employment equity play an important role (Interview 6: Joleen). Most people employed at the manufacturing plant in East London are black and isiXhosa speaking (Interview 6: Joleen). However, the distribution through the career steps is very uneven:

> At the lowest operating level, you would have these 70-80% Xhosa speaking people. As you go higher, skills become few and far between. For example, we only have two Xhosa-speaking level three senior managers in the whole plant. Difficult one. At level three. The language. It is Germans, but also locals, who had been in the job long enough (Interview 6: Joleen).

Joleen relates that English proficiency is becoming more important on all kinds of job levels, as the manufacturing becomes increasingly more specialised and thus more bureaucratically monitored, e.g. in terms of "work instructions" (Interview 6: Joleen). Even though the people working the factory are "mainly from a Xhosa background", "they have to understand English" well (Interview 6: Joleen).

The NDSI study found that there is a distinct correlation between age, income, and English proficiency:

> The gap in earnings by English language proficiency starts to grow from age 28 onwards. By age 40, African adults with at least a matric education earn more than four times as much, on average, if they are proficient in the English-language. It is interesting that even among those who would be considered well-educated in South Africa, the average earnings trajectory is relatively flat if they are not English-language proficient (Casale and Posel 2010: 63).

Mother-tongue speakers of African languages who ascribe themselves as being proficiency good in English can "earn almost three times more, on average, than African adults who do not report these skills" (Casale and Posel 2010: 65). This is also related to the time span someone is employed at the company. Those with high English proficiency apparently receive more opportunities for training and advancing their careers within the company (Casale and Posel 2010: 63).

Joleen's company belongs to a world-wide operating conglomerate. The policies regarding language use apply to the company as a whole and the "official business language is English worldwide"; this pertains to written communication at management level down to security boards in the plant (Interview 6: Joleen). The globalisation argument in the corporate world does not allow for the consideration of boosting

the indigenous language presence, as this seems counterintuitive and anachronistic.

Nevertheless, since the company originates from Germany, German is also very prevalent as a communication language: "If we get communication from the mother company, the first text will be in German and the second text will be in English, not in Afrikaans or Chinese" (Interview 6: Joleen). This is also expressed in the aspiration of many employee's, including Joleen, to learn German (Interview 6: Joleen). German, here, seems to hold a higher esteem in the company than local languages. Hence it can be argued that there is a link between economic power and cultural alignment resulting in language dominance, which is not necessarily English (see Gunnarson 2014: 16).

From Joleen's statements, it has become clear that there are different levels of language practice in this multinational company: "language for communication vs. language as a symbol, language for communication vs. language for social purposes, language for communication vs. language for emotion, and language for communication vs. language for privacy" (Sherman et al. 2012: 300). The differentiation between the language of the German mother company, as the language of "economic power", and the language of most employees (see Sherman et al. 2012: 301) – in this case the isiXhosa blue collar workers – are important. Even though there seems to be no specific Language Management for the East London plant, especially with regards to isiXhosa, certain features identified as Language Management Strategy are in place: "recruiting native speakers with language skills, website adaptation, the use of translators and interpreters and offering language training" (Sherman et al. 2012: 303).

Rick confirms that language skills – and by implication that refers to English language skills – are a vital recruitment criterion. The measured competency, "someone's ability to interpret your questions", is communication[28] (Interview 5: Rick). Indirectly, the dominance

28 Rick's company puts high emphasis on training and runs an annual 6 month formal graduate programme. Of those, 1.5 thousand recruits are from the Eastern Cape (Interview 5: Rick). Skills are assessed through different methods, in order to "assess the individual's ability to communicate effectively" (Interview 5: Rick). In Rick's opinion, measuring communication skills is quite accurate and easily conducted: "We have indicators in the business that shows us how communication

of English is thus sustained, argued from a "large customer base" and "most common language" (Interview 5: Rick). As a result, Rick's company hires "people who are conversant in at least one language"; and naturally, this is English (Interview 5: Rick). In the English job advertisement, English proficiency is as indirectly required as legally possible:

> The description needs to be very clear. So we do highlight that the individual needs very strong written and verbal communication skills; <u>preferably in English</u> (Interview 5: Rick) [emphasis added].

Even though, proficiency in an African language is a nice-to-have-add-on which is "increasingly" called for in job advertisements, "proficiency in English remains the unspoken prerequisite" (Rudwick 2008: 107).

Rick says that especially in the Eastern Cape, the recruitment does not target graduates in particular as the "principle is to hire for attitude" (Interview 5: Rick). On a positive note, "attitude" can of course also go beyond language proficiency and might not merely be a euphemism. However, both are often linked.

Casale and Posel describe this so-called "selection-effect" which refers to other attributes such as self-confidence and interpersonal skills, which people who are English-proficient might bring into their workplace and hence have a generally better chance of being employed and promoted; "part of the premium that is associated with English-language proficiency may reflect these character differences, rather than English language skill per se" (Casale and Posel 2010: 65). This can also be a positive effect, since it downplays the importance of language accuracy in favour of "carrying yourself well" and displaying confidence; these features are not necessarily related.

A matter also stressed by Joleen:

> Maybe one of our criteria is not English proficiency, but it is definitely in the manner you would come across to us. I wouldn't say to someone who didn't speak good English or couldn't carry his

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has improved. […] What you put in, you get out. Discuss goals, challenges, etc. in a certain way, in a certain order, and the output is easy to see and measurable" (Interview 5: Rick).

> or her ideas through the assessmentcenter, just because you have a BSc I would allow you in. They wouldn't be successful (Interview 6: Joleen).

The recruitment methods draw from a variety of tools like "psychometric assessment", "online test", or "assessment centre" where you "can definitely get people who speak better English" (Interview 6: Joleen).

Joleen states that there is a shortage of engineering skills in graduates; even though this is a core function at the car manufacturing plant (Interview 6: Joleen). Hence, HR seeks matriculants with good maths and science marks in particular. Nevertheless, English language proficiency is equally important, as she explains:

> We have to recruit people who speak very good English and who could then learn German. [...] For me, English is very, very critical in this environment that I am in, because it is a group environment. You have to write regulations, you have to write processes. Communication goes out to the entire company (Interview 6: Joleen).

Proficiency is foremost checked based on tests from Matric exams and Matric marks; English language proficiency is not a specific but one of many qualifications. This framing of qualification and skills makes evident that a high English proficiency is implicitly taken for granted ("Obviously we take it that you've studied English", Interview 6: Joleen).

The dominance of English and the vital need for English proficiency is not spelled out directly in both companies, as succinctly put by Joleen:

> English is crucial but more in the background. Communication is definitely one of the competencies we look for. Although we don't say English language proficiency, it is an unwritten thing (Interview 6: Joleen).

The requirement is "unwritten" because it is controversial. Striking here is that both Rick and Joleen euphemistically circumscribe English proficiency as a "communication skill" and "attitude". This indirectness is a rhetoric device to avoid negative legal implications as the Employment Equity Act specifically prohibits discrimination due

to language (Act 55/1998 Section 25(1) chapter 2.1. UFS n.d.). The interviews at hand confirm Casale and Posel's finding that "employers use English-language proficiency as a way of 'screening' the quality of education of a job applicant" (Casale and Posel 2010: 64).

6. Conclusion

The results of this preliminary micro-study on the role of English and isiXhosa in the recruitment process and career environment suggest that the hegemony of English in the business world in South Africa is a form of modernist language standardisation (see Deumert 2010: 245ff.). The companies do not really question the dominance of English as it befits the modernisation, globalisation, and internationalisation discourse. Strikingly prominent is the unquestioned link between general conduct and "communication skills" and English proficiency.

Why should businesses then promote the use of indigenous African languages within their company? Not only does the use of local languages boost innovation and tactical communication (Sherman et al. 2012: 292ff.), but it is also a constitutional right and political will to realize linguistic diversity in all social spheres in South Africa; including the workplace. Not least, it is a matter of fairness and equity; and the question of language impacts on hard facts like employment and remuneration (see Casale and Posel 2010: 63).

The unquestioned dominance of English in South Africa is problematic as there is always an underlying racial bias implied, as the interviews confirmed. Vuyo says that the continuous racism in South Africa, i.e., "the fact that a specific race, not through being taught and told, somehow thinks that specific things were meant to be done by them", maintains an attitude of "superiority" which "will never bring ourselves down to neutral and understand each other" (Interview 4: Vuyo).

The students described the ideal multilingual society as a place, "where everyone has the right to converse in their mother tongue at every place" (Interview 1: Andile), where "people are proud to speak their mother tongue and still converse with other people in their languages" (Interview 2: Thumeka), "where people value the

languages" (Interview 3: Nomsa), where everyone understands all the languages (Interview 4: Vuyo).

The paper has offered some views and experiences from graduates and employers on the role of English and isiXhosa in relation to recruitment with regards to identity, policy, and strategy. This micro-study can only serve as a preliminary probing which indicates the need for a larger scale analysis of the internal dynamics in companies with regard to the use and promotion of indigenous African languages. Hereby, a closer examination of policies, job advertisements (see Gunnarson 2009), the various formalised and non-formalised indexical functions of isiXhosa in the workplace, a comparison of medium and small businesses, and the integration of the employees' views, e.g., informal bottom-up de-standardisation strategies[29] by employees to break the hegemony of English at work are further avenues for research.

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Interview 5: Rick, 25 March 2015, 21:00, East London.

Interview 6: Joleen, 30 March 2015, 13:00, East London.

FROM FOSTER CARE TO ENSLAVEMENT: WHAT FUTURE FOR AFRICA'S SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM?

Henry Kam Kah

Abstract: Foster care, an age-old tradition of social security in Africa has unfortunately been abused, bastardised and turned into an evil practice of enslavement with consequences for families, communities and countries. In different parts of the continent, this socio-cultural practice has been criticised by human rights groups; non-governmental organisations, competent government departments and religious groups and structures have been set up to educate parents and society about the evils associated with it. In spite of this, the practice has continued in different forms. This paper probes into the motivations for and evolution of this cultural practice. The practice was well intentioned in Africa's past and resulted in the emergence of some elite or important personalities through fosterage. Unfortunately, this beneficial socio-cultural practice is now more or less an economic enterprise benefitting a network of government officials and other dubious individuals who pass for good Samaritans or pretend to fight it. From the look of things, the future of the practice spells greater enslavement if effective measures are not taken by relevant stakeholders to curb the excesses. The methodology in this study includes personal observation and discussion, discussion with children of foster parents, foster parents, and workers of NGOs dealing with such cases, church leaders, community leaders, newspaper reports and written texts.

Keywords: *Foster care, Enslavement, Social security, Tradition, Africa*

Introduction

Foster care takes place in different forms and degrees in different countries of the world. In the United States for example, African-American children form the bulk in the country's foster care system

(Wulczyn and Lery 2007: 1). This is probably because of the low income levels of many African-Americans compared to other Americans. In Africa, the informal systems are characterised by broad familial links, the practice of adoption, fosterage and raising grandchildren. This is intended to widen the support base in African societies. The African informal support system is also based on kinship, community and tribal support (Messkoub 2008: 16). The extended family systems handle socio-economic inequality in different African societies through the fosterage of children across nuclear family units. This system, which was very strong and supported in the past, is however being affected by globalisation and the recent world economic quagmire with negative consequences on the African continent (Eloundou-Enyegue and Shapiro n.d.: 1).

The practice of foster care is based on the provision of social security for families and communities. In traditional African communities in the past, the practice was encouraged, and promoted as a way of social stability and security for all members because the wealthy took care of the children of the less wealthy. Fosterage was also built on the culture of establishing strong kinship and social bonds among the people of a given area. The inability of the extended family system to continue to provide fosterage today without abuse is a result of several factors key among which is the penetration of global capita and the development of individualistic attitudes over the communal spirit. Since a certain degree of social security is expected to be provided either by the government or by family members and friends, fosterage now takes on different forms, which was the case in the past and which have had dire consequences.

In this study we have employed the methodology of personal observation and discussion, discussion with children in fosterage, foster parents, workers of human rights groups, community leaders, a content analysis of literature in books and journals, and personal experiences and observations. Many of the people interviewed in Cameroon did not want their names mentioned, especially because of the current outcry against the maltreatment of Cameroonian girls in Kuwait and other parts of the Middle East. Many of them were lured into travelling to this region on the promise of good jobs but were shocked to see that they had been more or less sold into slavery. Individuals like Beatrice Titanji, a lecturer in the Department of

English at the University of Buea, and faith-based organisations like the Catholic Church are involved in the rehabilitation and education of the public against domestic servitude and the culture of sending people to others for fosterage. Parents from poor homes in the rural areas are encouraged to empower and care for their children. This is because many friends and relatives are today enslaving children who were given to them for fosterage. The discussion on fosterage needs to be contextualised in this study.

Definition and Contextualisation of Fosterage

Foster care or fosterage and associated phenomena have been variously defined in the existing literature on Africa and other parts of the world. The substitute family care for children, who are not adequately maintained and cared for at their home of origin, is referred to as foster care or fosterage (De Vos 1998: 23; Richter n.d.: 17; Brown n.d.: 60-1; Brown 2009: 5; Bledsoe 1990). These children are often placed with members of the community, outside their own family, for a stated period of time. They can be taken care of by a member of the family like an aunt or a grandmother, a social worker, the police, a private agency or a government official. This practice takes place in many different ways and can be done in the short-term, in a matter of days or throughout a child's entire childhood. Fosterage is both formal and informal and in Africa fosterage is more informal than formal but for a few countries that include South Africa and Uganda where formal fosterage has been developed, the challenges notwithstanding (Johnson 2005: 4-6).

Foster care is generally defined differently in various countries, and within countries, depending on the cultural values of the people involved. In the United Kingdom, for example, foster care is "a way of providing a family life for children who cannot live with their own parents." Meanwhile in South Africa foster care is "the placement of child, who needs to be removed from the parental home, into custody of a suitable family or person willing to be a foster parent. This is done by order of the Children's Court." The definition of fosterage in Australia emphasises "out-of-home care for children and young people up to eighteen years of age, who are unable to live with their families generally because the children have been maltreated. It involves the placement of a young person with care-givers who then

look after the young person in their own homes on a short or long term basis." In Uganda, the Ugandan Children Act defines foster care as "the placement of a child with a person who is not his or her parent or relative and who is willing to undertake the care and maintenance of the child." The formal foster care system in Tanzania relies on people coming forward voluntarily and asking the Social Welfare Office whether they could be considered to foster a child (Johnson 2005: 7-9, 19).

There is also informal foster care, which is called "family and friends" or "kinship" fostering. This involves aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters or grandparents without outside involvement (Johnson 2005: 16). Informal foster care is in fact a cultural practice where children are given to relatives and friends to bring them up as useful members of the community. Informal care does not demand the sanction of an administrative or judicial authority or any duly accredited body (Abubakari and Yahaya 2013: 64; Roby 2011: 10). Rather, it is based on the good will of relatives and friends. The informal foster care system is very common in many African countries. It has expanded to involve people who are neither relatives nor friends. Children are given to them for foster care because of their status and also because of the socio-economic motivations of their parents. This is where there is a problem because some of these children are literarily sold and bought and then turned into slaves.

Fosterage as a practice is based on the nature and philosophy behind the African social security system. It could best be understood within the context of what social security means. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines social security as:

> ... the protection which society provides for its members, through a series of public measures, against the economic and social distress that otherwise would be caused by the stoppage or substantial reduction of earnings resulting from sickness, maternity, employment in jury, unemployment, invalidity, old age and death; the provision of medical care and the provision of subsidies for families with children (Tostensen 2008: 4).

It was and still is the protection in some cases where in traditional Africa the solidarity of extended family members and the ethnic group

provided and provides income and other basic needs for them. These collective, community-based social security arrangements have been built on mutual dependence or reciprocity. It was and still is this philosophy of life that has contributed to the persistence of informal or traditional foster care in Africa (Joe Koi, personal communication 2015). The modern social security system in Africa today is problematic because of serious budgetary constraints (Social Security 2008: 3). Many governments cannot provide social security for their citizens.

There is often confusion in the definition of foster care, fostering, fosterage, adoption, child relocation and transfer, child circulation, child migration and child rearing delegation (Pilon 2003: 6). While there is a link between them, there are slight differences in what each of them stands for. Adoption, for example, is different from foster care. Formal adoption, both domestic and international, is a legal act of transfer of rights over a child. Unlike fosterage, an adopted child is moved permanently and assimilated into the culture and tradition of the adopting parents (Kandiwa n.d.: 9). Fosterage involves the partial transfer of rights and duties in care taking. This does not involve rights to inheritance but to food and shelter among others (Sommerfelt n.d.: 21; Silk n.d.: 40).

Foster care has also been given a greater definition and meaning by international organisations, which are concerned with child upbringing and improvement of the social security system. According to the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) in article 20, foster care is:

> A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.
>
> State Parties shall, in accordance with their national laws, ensure alternative care for such a child. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafala of Islamic law, adoption, or if necessary, placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background (Johnson 2005: 4).

The issues highlighted in this convention, which inform what foster care is include deprivation from the family environment, assistance of the state, foster placement and upbringing. This definition is, however, about formal foster care, which is the responsibility of the relevant and competent state parties. It does not address the bulk of foster care, which is informal and very common in Africa. It also talks about adoption but this is not similar to foster care in that adoption involves the legal sanctioning of the transfer of a child from the biological parents to new parents for eternity. Foster care does not involve the complete transfer of a child to a new parent.

Similarly, in the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children as defined by the United Nations in 2009 in Article 28, foster care is:

> Situations where children are placed by a competent authority for the purpose of alternative care in the domestic environment of a family other than the children's own family that has been selected, qualified, approved and supervised for providing such care.

The same Guidelines, Article 28, also defines informal care as:

> Any private arrangement provided in a family environment whereby the child is looked after by relatives or friends ... or by others in their individual capacity, at the initiative of the child, his/her parents or other person without this arrangement having been ordered by an administrative or judicial authority or a duly accredited body.

This definition of foster care, as outlined in the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, is somehow comprehensive because it recognises formal and informal foster care as social security for people all over the world. In Africa fosterage is both formal and informal. A greater proportion of the population of the continent are involved in foster care, a social security measure for vulnerable families, the difficulties and shortcomings notwithstanding. This is similar to what prevails in much of Asia (Fostering Better Care 2011: 11). Foster care has continued to be a socio-cultural practice based on certain motivations for the parties involved.

Justification for Foster Care in Africa

There was and still is a justification for informal and formal foster care as a social security measure in many African societies. There are two basic patterns of fosterage and these include voluntary and crisis-led fostering. Voluntary fosterage follows an arrangement between biological parents and foster care-givers to raise a child while crisis-led fostering is usually a response to the death of a biological parent or a major shock (Gillespie 2005: 4). Throughout most regions of West Africa people have considered fostering as the best way of raising children. This is the case in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria and Cameroon where child fosterage is a frequent and accepted practice. Among the Baatombu of the northern Benin Republic, for example, fosterage is emphasised as the best way to raise children. It is this strong belief that results in the relatively high rates of fosterage. Within this ethnic group, the foster parent teaches a child how to be a good person; to respect elders and to have shame but also to have confidence. Among the Mbondessi of East Cameroon, a married woman tries to balance the number of foster children from her own lineage with the number of foster children from her husband's lineage (Adoption 2012: 17-20). This is to avoid being criticised for taking care only of her family members. This practice is generally encouraged in Cameroon by the fact that marriage is a union of families and not just those getting married (Lucas Aseh, personal communication Bomaka 2015). A woman will therefore want children from both families in order to be seen to encourage them to become responsible people tomorrow.

In the South African formal child-care system, foster care has been justified on the basis of the absence of opportunities for the adoption of children (Pitso et al. 2014: 644). This means that children who are not adopted are placed under a formal foster-care system in South Africa. Other justifications for the foster care for children are the need to take care of their psycho-social problems, such as those of them who are left parentless due to AIDS (Ashton 2009; Ngwenya 2011: 3). Other factors accounting for the emergence of foster care include the parenting style of some parents, the dysfunctional family, early parenthood and socio-economic factors. The dysfunctional family is that where one or more of the individuals are not having their needs met. This might be a result of parental alcoholism, mental illness,

child abuse or extreme parental rigidity and control. Other factors that provide the enabling environment for foster care to thrive is the death of parents, divorce, parents' separation, strengthening of family ties and group belonging, socialisation, infertility, child neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse (Pitso et al. 2014: 645-6; Pilon 2003: 6 and 14; Alber 2003; Alber 2004; Alberet al. 2010: 46-7; Abubakari and Yahaya 2013: 64-8; Bigombe and Khadiagala 2004:164-5; Rolleston 2011: viii). Today, families and next of kin are encouraged to take care of children in South Africa at no cost to the state (Mokgosi 1997: 21). In this way, informal foster care has continued to thrive in African countries, even in those that have developed a fairly successful formal foster care system.

Furthermore, the heightening of societal expectations and standards for acceptable family functioning has contributed to justify the prevalence of formal and informal foster care in Africa and other parts of the world like the United States (Barbell and Freundlich 2001: v). This shift began in the 1960s and is compounded by increasing poverty, homelessness, death of real parents, substance abuse, discrimination and declining informal and extended family support (Freundlich 1997; Nagasaka 1998: 82-4). Increasingly in the African urban space, there are children who are without homes and the drive for materialism has contributed towards weakening the bond of the extended family in Africa, although in some areas this extended family is still playing an important role in social security for the disadvantaged members of the family. Foster care is also becoming the norm for children and young people, who previously would have been handled by mental health programmes or would have been placed under correctional facilities. Poverty has severely limited the ability of some families to provide basic necessities for their children, including food, shelter, clothing, health care, and transportation to school and needed services (Barbell and Freundlich 2001: 9). The way out of this dilemma is to place children into foster care and be saved from the headache of looking for food, clothing and shelter for this child.

From a professional point of view, foster care in the 21st century is made possible by a number of factors. These include the increasing reliance on kin as care givers for children, the use of concurrent planning, the use of an expanded array of permanency options and increases in the use of specialised foster care placements, foster care accountability

and in the attention being given to the development and retention of qualified professional staff (Barbell and Freundlich 2001: 19). Although some of these factors are not as well developed in Africa as in Europe and America, there is a developing formal foster care system in Africa in countries like Uganda, South Africa and Tanzania, which still retain many values of the informal foster care system.

Education and urbanisation also explain foster care in several parts of Africa. The massive increase in fosterage in places like Borgu in Northern Ghana and among the Mokolle and Baatombu in Northern Benin is due to the need to attend school and also to diversify fosterage due to urbanisation respectively. In the Borgu area, many boys are sent to school in the urban areas to live with relatives and further their education. In the case of the Mokolle and Baatombu, developments in urbanisation have made households to diversify forms of fosterage, which is a combination of traditional and neo-traditional arrangements. The main distinction here is that whereas in traditional arrangements all rights and obligations regarding the children are transferred to the foster parents, this is no longer the case when a child is fostered for the purpose of attending school (Alber et al. 2010: 51; Abubakari and Yahaya 2013: 65). Many families without resources to educate their children often send them to live with family members and friends so that they can assist them in their education.

Others factors for fosterage in some African communities are superstition, witchcraft and the need to appease the ancestors. Among the Dagomba of Northern Ghana people believe that foster parents, especially the aunts, have some kind of supernatural powers that can be invoked on any fostered child whose parents want to take her or him away without their consent. This belief among the Dagomba has made it difficult for fostered children to break away from these circumstances, even if they are not properly treated (Abubakari and Yahaya 2013: 73). In many African communities the ancestors are an intermediary between the living and the dead and are venerated. Witchcraft is a common belief and people are not usually willing to expose their children or members of the family to witches and wizards. Some of the foster children may actually be fostered out because of the need to prevent witches and wizards from inflicting pain on them. Other people will also willingly give up their children to members of the kin group in order not to anger them and cause harm to these

children. This is a deeply entrenched belief among African Christians and non-Christians alike (Sylvester Njaah, personal communication 2015).

In addition, fosterage has been justified on the basis of the financial benefits to those who send out their children for fosterage. A key component of this practice is that remittances are channelled from the urban workers to rural areas in order to support them especially in the education of other members of the family. This generally mitigates inequalities in resource endowment among children, because they benefit from the resources of the smaller and wealthier members of the family resident in the urban areas (Bigombe and Khadiagala 2004: 165). Akresh (2009) observed a similar phenomenon during research in Burkina Faso. The difficult economic climate notwithstanding, many family members continue to impress upon family members, friends and others living in the towns and cities to foster their children so that they can benefit from them by way of the education of their children and the sending of money and other items to support the family back home. In some cases, these other persons are experts in a profession and are expected to teach the foster child in that profession (Mahama 2004; Goody 1982). When foster care takes place based on this principle, it reduces the cost of children to parents and promotes high fertility. It may also benefit the children by reducing the number of dependent children in the household, thereby enhancing resource allocation per child (Amey n.d.: 76).

In various traditional African societies, foster care was justified on the basis of redistributing children and also providing room for the discipline of the child. A couple that was blessed with several children could see the family of the women asking to foster one of the children, who was either male or female (Rolleston 2011: 7). This was in line with the African philosophy that a child belongs to the parents only when still in the womb but once this child is born s/he becomes that of any other member of the society. This explains why, when this child goes wayward, any member of the community can correct him/her through advice or beating, as the case may be. The redistribution of children would certainly have been and continues to be a way of assisting those members of the society with especially close family relations to have someone who can assist them in the household and other daily activities. Bledsoe (1985) has also noted that among the

Gonja, a commonly cited motive for fosterage was that parents could not effectively discipline their own offspring and needed to give them out to foster care-givers to discipline them. Whether this remains a key motivation for foster care today is debatable, because some people in Cameroon for example believe that children from foster care homes are even more wayward than those raised by their parents (Jonathan Ndang, personal communication 2015). This is not always the case, because some of these children have remained shining examples of well brought up children and are successful in whatever they do.

The reasons for foster care notwithstanding, Isiugo-Abanihe (1985) outlines four major factors responsible for fostering children in West Africa. These included a wish to improve a child's social mobility and opportunity, to manage an economic shock to the biological home, such as death, to satisfy the labour needs of the recipient household and to meet kinship obligations and rights. From these four factors, one can infer that the promotion of foster care in West Africa, like other parts of Africa, has socio-economic and political motivations for the families fostering out and those fostering in children. Brown (n.d.: 61-2) has also examined the motivations for foster care among the Aaumbo of Namibia, which is also tenable in other parts of Africa. According to Brown, Weisner et al. (1997), Ankrah, 1993), Andres (2009) and Fleischer (Fleischer 2006: 6) these motivations are multifarious and encompass the desire to teach discipline, fulfil cultural norms, provide a better education for a child, gifting, sharing between families, establishment of social bonds, enhancement of fertility, the need to be childless when entering a new relationship with a man and times of crisis, such as sickness and famine, and the firm belief that all children are treated equal in their house (Brown 2011). Other justifiable reasons for this practice discussed by Brown, based on research in Namibia, include the need for a helper either in the short or long term, the need for an heir, and tokens of friendship. Some of these issues have been discussed already, but it suffices to state that foster care for children has moved from a purely social responsibility to have economic considerations with political implications.

Whatever arguments there are for the promotion of foster care in Africa today, this practice has evolved over time and has taken on different dimensions. The motivations will continue to widen as African societies continue to undergo change. It is worth noting that fosterage did not

originate as a result of poverty and other contemporary motivations. It was, as Andres (2009: 3) argues, a matter of raising children in the bet possible manner, towards adulthood, in relation to the resources that were available in a society. Several of the contemporary justifications for especially informal fosterage are simply based on expediency, while reciprocity has a limited relevance and, in some cases, does not even play a role. There are therefore several problems associated with the practice, which challenges the important social security role that it had and should continue to play. A lot of what goes on now is turning a good practice of the past into a form of enslavement, business and the trafficking of children.

The Evils of Foster Care Today

Foster care today in Africa is riddled with a lot of problems. The evils associated with formal and informal foster care are many and account for an outcry from several quarters on the *raison d'être* of this practice. The neglect of some children in foster care homes has made them develop a low level of positive adjustments, such as school achievements, social competence, personal achievement, physical health and psycho-social adjustments (Pitso et al. 2014: 645; Unrau et al. 2008: 1256; Halfon and Klee 1991; Courtney et al. 2007; Pecora et al. 2005; Dubowitz 1990; Wald and Carlsmith 1985; Pilon 2003: 19). Some of them provide unpaid labour services to their foster care-givers, who do not even care about their mental and physical well-being. This has led to some of them growing up lacking the confidence that is needed to propel them to greater achievements in life. Others have been turned into slaves, are victims of child trafficking and prostitution. These are all modern manifestations of enslavement for this category of children, who are not given adequate protection by those entrusted with giving them foster care (Pitso et al. 2014: 646).

According to Save the Children, children living in residential centres come under abuse in several ways (Johnson 2005: 5). The abuse of children's rights is a form of enslavement, which should not be the case. Such abuse in residential centres has often escaped international attention and explains the need for a good community-based child-care alternative, which governments, individuals and donors should give serious attention to. Another problem that exposes children under foster care to risks include the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has

claimed many lives and placed children under the care of extended families, which are unable to cope with the increasing responsibility of feeding many more mouths. In Tanzania, where the government has established a formal foster care system, for example, the problems are still overwhelming for the Social Welfare Office. It is stretched beyond its capacity and is not able to cope with large numbers of children leaving residential homes and being moved into fostering (Johnson 2005: 22). When a system is unable to handle the number of children, who need to be fostered, then these children are likely to fall into the hands of unscrupulous individuals who will enslave them and make a profit for themselves instead of preparing these children for a future that is assured for them. Social security is also compromised on the altar of exploitation of the vulnerable and helpless in society.

One other form of enslavement for children living in foster care is that the foster parent prefers to send his/her children to school, while leaving behind the foster children or forcing them to work too hard to attend to their studies (Goody 1973; Foster 2000; Bicego et al. 2003; Brown 2009: 5; Abubakari and Yahaya 2013: 68; Rolleston 2011: viii). In the Ivory Coast, the social dimensions of adjustment have shown that educational expenses, which are earmarked for foster children, are lower than those assigned to the children of the household. Under-enrolment is acute for girls in several African countries. Some of them, who are sent to the cities to attend school. like in West Africa. eventually drop out because of a lack of assistance and also primarily because of the household chores they are assigned to perform. Very often, the lower the level of involvement of the family of origin in giving financial and other support, the higher the risk that the foster child will suffer mistreatment in the host family. The host family also engages the child in several domestic tasks, which include the washing of dishes and clothes, carrying of water, helping out in the cooking and shopping and in some cases contributing to certain productive or commercial activities. In some cases, these children are not well-fed and work more than the others in the household usually under the pretext that this is giving them a good upbringing (Simon Anang, personal communication Douala 2015). In fact, the children who go through this ordeal are practically considered to be domestic servants. This has often had a negative influence on their school performance. Girls suffer the most, because they perform more domestic chores and in Burkina Faso, for example, female heads of households in cities

prefer to host especially girls as foster children because of the need to give them a lot of work (Vreyer de 1994; Pilon 2003: 15-19; Pilon 1995; Boursin 2009: 9; Vandermeersch 2000: 431).

In Africa, like elsewhere, preparing to become independent and self-sufficient is difficult enough for a youth, who remains in the care of foster parents (Leigh et al. 2007: 3). This is most likely so, because not enough attention is given to many of them. They are not sufficiently empowered to live a life of fulfilment after foster care. The absence of attention, which was usually a characteristic of the past in informal foster care in Africa, shows that foster care has gradually turned into an enterprise where many of those involved in it are interested in nothing else than the use of free labour for the development of their enterprises (Victor Kechem, personal communication Bomaka 2015). This is where foster care no longer provides social security to the underprivileged and the downtrodden in society. It is being used to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. This is more or less a fulfilment of the biblical saying that for those who have, more shall be added unto them and for those who do not have, even the little that they have will be taken away and added to those who have. A clear indication that foster care homes have failed in their duty of bringing up children, who need their assistance, is seen in some children wanting to re-enter foster care a few months after they return home. Evidence suggests that these children may become gradually re-exposed to living conditions, which are below the minimum standard of care (The Reunification 1995: 2).

The enslavement of foster children has taken a new dimension today with women showing an increasing interest in fostering girls like in Mokolle and Baatombu in Northern Benin. The changes that were introduced in the agricultural sector by President Mathieu Kérékou increased the workload of farmers, including women. Cotton cultivation expanded and this gave farmers greater opportunities to accumulate capital. As a result of this, there was greater work for the female household. The girls living in the compounds, including fostered girls, were especially affected. Still in Benin, as elsewhere in Africa, biological parents started speaking out against the exploitation of the labour services of foster children (Alber et al. 2010: 49; Roby 2011: 24). These conflicts over children in Benin, as in other parts of Africa, is a clear indication of the degree to which foster children have been exploited, maltreated and enslaved by their foster parents

because of their craving to accumulate wealth. Among the Dagomba of Northern Ghana, the fostering of a child today is in part an opportunity for the acquisition of an asset, which involves domestic work, farming or petty trading (Rolleston 2011: 5). It is a fact that today many people want to foster children so that they can subject them to deplorable working conditions on their farms and other businesses in the towns and cities.

Fostering has also been found to negatively affect the education of the biological children of the fostered parent. This is because, like in Cameroon, fostering is a kinship obligation and not necessarily because host families are better able to care for the children they receive. The presence of the foster children in their household therefore contributes to tightening liquidity constraints and reducing the ability of the parents to pursue their biological children's education (Marazyan 2009; Andrew Ngong, personal communication Bamenda 2015). The presence of many children in the household, that is, both biological and foster children, goes a long way to compromise the chances of a decent education and even adequate feeding for members of this household (Elvis Kah, personal communication Yaounde 2015; Henry Nyenghe, personal communication Douala 2015). The situation becomes even more pre-occupying in the towns and cities where there is no other source of income than a monthly wage and some petty trading (Ebenezar Metche, personal communication Kumba 2015). Many Cameroonians are therefore placed in a precarious situation, since without adequate financial resources they are still expected to fulfil kinship responsibilities and be counted among the responsible members of the family.

The greatest form of enslavement today in Africa, which is linked to foster care, is the trafficking of children for domestic work under different guises, including child fosterage. This has been the practice in Nigeria for some time now. Today, child fosterage has been targeted by agents, who offer families false promises about fosterage, but instead engage in the trafficking of children for domestic work (Child Fosterage; Emeka Okereke, personal communication 2014). This is what has made a once cherished traditional practice for the purpose of strengthening social bonds to become bastardised and hated by organisations like church groups and other genuine Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working to save children from

enslavement or sale to unscrupulous individuals. Considering the challenges of fosterage, there is a need for effective measures to be taken to solve them. This therefore raises the question of the future of this practice.

The Future of Foster Care and Social Security

Considering the problems associated with formal and informal foster care in Africa, like elsewhere in the world, there is a compelling need to rethink this practice. It is also important to rethink how foster care can again be made a sustainable social security system for Africans at present and in the future. In South Africa, where formal foster care has been developed to an appreciable level, for example, the South African government still needs to design additional strategies to combat the problem of the intergenerational vicious cycle of children in need among the most disadvantaged communities of the country. The many ills associated with fosterage can also be tackled through additional educational programmes for members of the community offered by skilfully trained professionals such as psychologists, social workers and community-based workers. This is likely to help vulnerable children acquire the necessary skills to combat the daily psycho-social problems and equip those in foster care with self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-esteem (Pitso et al. 2014: 647). The greater involvement of community-based workers in foster care will help to facilitate the identification of family relations willing to provide foster care to their relations children. The care for relations will have a greater meaning when there is a willingness to do so, than when literally forced to do so. The government can also take up the additional responsibility of foster care for less privileged children and mould them for the service of humanity.

Another way of improving fosterage is to give attention to the overburdened and frustrated social welfare providers in formal foster care systems. At present, many of them are not given attention and they are overburdened to the extent that they cannot offer their best. Giving them attention will motivate them to engage in fast quality service delivery to children desperately in need. Open communication should also be encouraged among and between social workers. Through this they will easily and quickly detect challenges in foster care and contribute to the well-being of their clients (Ngwenya 2011:

79). In countries like Uganda, South Africa and Tanzania, which are into formal foster care, efforts have been made in this direction but a lot more is needed to cushion the rising phenomenon of fosterage. Financial motivation is also needed for overburdened and frustrated service providers. This will encourage them to be dutiful and provide services to benefit foster children and, by extension, the larger society (Joshua Kwai, personal communication 2013). Negligence of these issues will affect foster care, and the social security system in Africa will be seriously affected, if not at present then in the future. The vulnerable groups will become a serious menace to the peace of their respective communities.

The suggestions of Dougherty (2001), on the improvement of foster care generally, may also apply to the future of fosterage in Africa. He argues that foster care must be responsive to the needs of children and families and must be shaped by five key principles, such as a family focus that views foster care as a service for the entire family as opposed to a service for the child or for the parents. It should have a child-centred orientation that places the needs of the individual child at the forefront of case planning, and the delivery of services from a community-based perspective so that children remain in contact with the important people in their lives and live in familiar environments. There is also a need for developmental appropriateness so that the child and services that a child receives are responsive to the child's age and physical, cognitive, behavioural and emotional status as well as cultural competence. This will result in strengths, respect and accommodation of all families. These suggestions may seem illusionary and high sounding in the present dispensation of child care in Africa, but these are a necessary and possible step to improve fosterage in Africa. As the continent's towns and cities become more cosmopolitan than before, there is a need for a serious rethinking of foster care as a reliable social security measure, especially in these areas. This is where the ideas of Dougherty about a better foster care system become relevant to the people of Africa in the urban and peri-urban areas.

In addition, it is important to recognise that biological families are better placed to at all times play a key role in children's lives, irrespective of the permanency outcomes that are planned for these children (Barbell and Freundlich 2001: 27). Programmes organised to enhance foster care in Africa in the future should lay emphasis on the

centrality of the biological families. These families can better address children's psychological problems, even when they are not with their own family members. Barbell and Freundlich, (2001: 27) argue that for the future of foster care, when children must enter foster care, a community-based approach must be taken into consideration that allows for the involvement of the many individuals who know and care about the children. Such people should include a child's extended family members, neighbours, friends, teachers, and others already involved in the family's life. They further contend that a family-focused, community-based approach to foster care is the basis on which people can build a fully responsive service system. Community partners should also play the critical role of providing children with temporary care on their way to permanency with a family. The family in Africa has over the centuries remained a strategic social unit in shaping society and providing for stability. It is therefore important that, whether in formal or informal child care, the family should continue to play a dominant role during and after child care. Adoption in many cases has not successfully detached children from their biological parents once it has been established that they live in the community.

Informal foster care in countries like Tanzania, which also runs a formal foster care programme, is necessary for the future of this institution. This is because informal carers are involved in great work and without any government or formal recognition. There is therefore a need to scale-up and further implement this because it may lead to wonderful results (Johnson 2005: 22-3). It has been emphasised earlier that children, who live with people they already know and are part of the community and have a stable family environment, is beneficial to them more than if they were fostered by neutral persons because they will always live with emotional and psychological problems. Experience has shown that fostering and parenting are difficult and emotionally draining activities. These are frequently made more difficult by a sense of isolation and/or lack of group support (The Reunification 1995: 4). It is on this basis that fosterage should not exclude the key role of foster carers in African countries outside government recognition. While this should be encouraged for the future there is a need to think of other permanent ways of handling foster care. This is because society is becoming more complex and the extended family is overstrained to breaking point. It will on its own

eventually face difficulties of handling foster care for social security in Africa in the future of the future.

Again, it would be a lofty ideal to invest a portion of the money spent on foster care and group homes to improve the chance of a family to successfully meet the needs of a child than to continue to tear families apart through foster care. Besides, when families have been separated, there is a need to assist them in addressing, counselling, housing, employment and day care issues while children are in foster care, not after they have been returned to their families (The Reunification 1995: 10). This can contribute towards stabilising the family and will prevent the situation of a child, who leaves foster care, re-entering it. Many cases have been reported of people, who left foster care, returned to their families but soon re-entered foster care (Eric Ndong, personal communication 2014). This may have partly been a result of the fact that the family was not given the necessary assistance to enable it to cope with a child, who eventually leaves a foster care home. Some of the children, who return home and find life very difficult, prefer to remain under fosterage, which was much better.

Considering the arguments that have been raised against child maltreatment, the future of foster care will be affected by this, as is already the case. Many human rights and children's rights organisations today are opposed to parents sending their children to live with people who are not their biological parents. The Catholic Church in Cameroon and the National Commission on Human Rights, for example, are very vocal against this practice. Education and sensitisation campaigns against child-trafficking are also carried out. Child-trafficking has become a problem because parents allow their children to live with other people (Alber et al. 2010: 50). The influence of the global media, that transport images of family, upbringing and marriage among others, has also had an impact on the practice of foster care. These new images have been referred to as travelling models. In addition, the massive expansion of the primary school system since the beginning of the 1990s, financed and influenced mainly by western donor organisations, has had an impact on childhood fosterage as in the Northern Benin Republic. Many parents are now trying to keep their biological sons at home and directly influence their education (Alber et al. 2010: 50-1). The development of many pro-poor programmes to improve the lot of children will have

the likely effect of undermining foster care the way it is today with all its challenges and evil practices.

At the level of African countries in general, it is critical for governments to collect better data on informal care. When this has been collected, they should establish national policies regarding informal care. This will enable them to create an effective and coordinated policy with the aim of improving child-care practices. There is a need to know about the very real widespread phenomenon of informal alternative care (Roby 2011: 41). As long as very little is known about this informal alternative care system, which is the basis of the evolving foster care and social security system in Africa, the wrong policies will be enacted to organise it and this will make it less attractive as is the case now. There is no escape route from the reality of foster care for African governments, considering the increasing poverty of the population due to several factors including land grabbing by multinational companies and the political elite eager to invest money stolen from the public treasury. Foster care, which has been a social security measure for a long time in Africa, is largely informal. In spite of this, there is a deviation from this very foundation of and advantages of foster care to many a people.

Conclusion

The focus of this paper was an evaluation of the evolution of foster care in Africa as a social security system from the informal to a combination of formal and informal foster care today. While some countries have established a formal framework for foster care for its vulnerable population, other countries are still heavily reliant on informal foster care, which rotates around kinship and friendship ties. Foster care as it is known and practiced today has developed and taken on wider meanings. In this paper, fosterage was defined and contextualised within the context of child care as defined by the United Nations Organisation and other organisations. This gave the study a clear focus in terms of what was considered as foster care within the context of the African continent and the different ethnic groups engaged in this practice.

The paper also examined diverse motivations for foster care in Africa. The justification for foster care has evolved from the past to the

present. Among many African ethnic groups in the past, foster care was essentially informal and involved mostly members of kin groups. Almost everyone saw in the practice, a broader social security system that was useful to the stability of the community because wealth was redistributed from the wealthy to poor family members and friends. Today, various reasons have been advanced for foster care. Unfortunately, many of them are mainly for labour, which, however, is often practised under the guise of humanitarianism. Similar evil practices were noticed in the past but were not as rampant as they are today in the towns, cities and villages. Besides, the foster child had the duty of assisting in the production of goods for the common good and not necessarily for the accumulation of wealth by foster parents. It is a sad thing that today, foster care in some countries like Nigeria is being used to traffic children from the rural areas to other African countries and other parts of the world.

The evils of foster care, such as child trafficking, labour exploitation, etc. have also been examined in this paper. These evils and associated problems point to the fact that foster care is no longer a form of social security for vulnerable children and families but a form of enslavement and bastardisation of the children placed under foster care, be it formal or informal foster care. The absence of motivation for social welfare workers, who work in foster care homes in some African countries, has in many ways made a mockery of the practice of foster care. Others have had a herculean task of coping with too many children who turn up for fosterage. In other cases, governments do not bother about the conditions of children under fosterage and this has made some of the foster parents or workers treat these children in ways that are not dignifying.

This paper has examined what is needed to make foster care a sustainable social security system in Africa as it used to be in the past, some challenges notwithstanding. The problems associated with foster care in many African countries today cannot guarantee a safe social security system for vulnerable children on the continent. Governments of different countries must rise up to the challenge, take some of the responsibilities of providing social security and organising the sector better than it is now. There is also a need for an effective partnership between the government and families since these families are at the centre of the foster care system rather than simply ignoring

the traditional foster care system for a western model that cannot adequately address the needs of fosterage as is presently the case.

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NEW MEDIA AND EXPECTATIONS OF SOCIAL CLOSENESS: THE MOBILE PHONE AND NARRATIVES OF "THROWING PEOPLE AWAY" IN CAMEROONIAN TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract: In studies on transnationalism, mobile phones have gained prominent attention as tools that maintain relationships in the event of migration. They have transformed transnational sociality from procedural to a daily event all at the control of the actors who, for example, no longer relies on the post office for letters. Mobile phones provide avenues for social closeness and intimacy, impact social identities, facilitate participation in events dis-embedded from a locality, and help in the expression of belonging and solidarity across national borders. Despite these positive facets, the technology could become a source of discomfort as seen in this contribution, which revolves around the unmet expectations of utilising the device to sustain transnational social closeness. Drawn from a multi-sited study conducted among Cameroonians in Germany and Cameroon, the article demonstrates how the consciousness of the possibilities of direct communication negatively influences an actors' interpretation of silences and non-communication. In this context, the technology rather contributes to frustration, uncertainty and disappointments in transnational social bonds.

Keywords: *Mobile phone, Transnational Social Relationships, Expectations, Social Closeness and Discontent, Cameroon, Germany*

Introduction

Accusations that people neglect and distance from relationships among Cameroonians are commonly captured by expressions such as "you did not call me," "he does not call," "they should call," "call me!" These concerns about abandonment take exponential dimensions in

transnational relationships where the absence of national co-location significantly impacts the ways people imagine social closeness and distance. As such, there are symbolic expressions of "throwing people away," which tend to convey the idea that those accused of neglecting ties actually cast away friends and families, who should otherwise be held together through the mobile phone. Expressions of neglect, which occur when people meet face-to-face, during virtual encounters on the internet or mobile phone or through gossips, highlight the importance of the mobile phone as a gateway to the self. They emphasize that it is no longer an excuse for people not to contact others once they share mobile phone numbers; the numbers should be used in locating friends and family members across space and time. It is thus self-evident that the mobile phone should facilitate social bonds when, for example, family members migrate (Madianou and Miller 2011:458-459; Horst 2006:148-150; Tazanu 2012b). Even as some of the accusations are in the form of teasing, the anxieties about abandonment reiterate the consciousness of a perpetual connection to others and also the importance of direct interaction. Just as in other countries, the mobile phone has transformed the way people coordinate and navigate social ties and also how they locate friends and family in Cameroon and across borders (Nyamnjoh 2005; Wilding 2006; Ling and Horst 2011; Hahn and Kibora 2008; Horst and Miller 2006). My interest in this article is to reveal the ways this communication tool, through human agency, shapes expectations of social closeness, influences the ways people interpret social disconnections from partners and how silences and non-communication are interpreted by actors who expect mediated social closeness.

It is argued below that the consciousness of being connected to others, and the knowledge that people are readily available and reachable, influence the way actors experience and interpret disconnections. There is particular attention for the sensory experience or the "feel" of the mobile phone as a tool of social interaction. This "feel" is directly linked to the instantaneity (or the potentiality for this) of communication that defies the geographical location. Questions about the instantaneity of interaction better orientate the aim of the article: How do people interpret unexplained silences, that is, when they are not called? What does the *liveness* possibilities of mobile phone contacts have to do with the accusation that people have changed their identities? What implications do perceptions

of transformed identities have on social ties in the world, where partners are expected to be readily available and reachable? How do actors narrate and compare past co-local sociality with mediated ties? Answers to these questions and many more will reveal that the mobile phone transforms relationships in African societies in ways that require closer investigation.

Beyond the introduction are sub-themes that build on the troubles and expectations of mediated transnational social closeness. The context and methodology come next and are followed by theoretical aspects of the sensory experiences of direct interaction through the mobile phone. Developing from this theoretical base is the argument and narratives that centre on experiences of social distance. This is further corroborated by storylines that draw on previous face-to-face contacts to imagine and idealize what mediated relationships ought to be. The article concludes with a critique on constructivist views of the mobile phone in transnational social fields through the reiteration that the medium has, in this context, negatively impacted Cameroonian social ties across borders.

Context and Methodology

This article draws from multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Freiburg (Germany) and Buea (Cameroon) between April 2009 and February 2010. By this time, it had become normal for Cameroonians to utilize the mobile phone to maintain transnational social ties to the extent that people could not imagine life without the communication tool (for the rapid spread of mobile phone see Nyamnjoh 2004: 80; Nkwi 2009; Jensen 2003: 55; Archambault 2013: 88). Experiences of unmet expectations of mediated social closeness emerged from the fieldwork as a dominant theme, particularly among non-migrants; they decried that migrants, also known as *bushfallers*, keep their distance and do not fully exploit the opportunity of *liveness* embodied in mobile phone communication, i.e., using the possibilities of instant contacts to get in touch regularly. It is necessary to elaborate on the symbolic and cultural meaning of *bushfallers* so as to appropriately situate these expectations of transnational sociality.

In the Anglophone part of Cameroonian, *bushfaller* is a term used to refer to people who migrate to the West in order to “accumulate money

or refine their skills." Their identities are "inspired by international models of success and consumerism" (Jua 2003: 22-23). Most urban youths in Cameroon aspire to the status of *bushfaller* against a backdrop of economic crisis that has reduced the chances of a meaningful livelihood in the country. The appellation is more evident when broken down into its two component words: *bush* and *faller*. *Bush* is used to refer to abroad, most notably Europe and Northern America. *Faller* in this context describes the person who migrates. In the Cameroonian imagination, especially among young people, the *bush* is a virgin farm or forest where opportunities of exploitation are abundant. As such, there is a connection between physical migration and upward socio-economic mobility; the migrants expect to access and exploit fertile pastures abroad in order to be independent, responsible, acquire social status as well as support the family that stays behind (Alpes 2012; Nyamnjoh 2011; Frei 2012; Tazanu 2012b: 206-210). These expectations, together with the realities and the imagination of the physical crossing of borders, have implications for the Cameroonian transnational social field. It impacts the way people imagine privileges and also the ordering and reordering of social relationships maintained through mobile phone.

Understandably, Cameroonian transnational social bonds can be fairly demonstrated this way: it is mainly the migrants' responsibility to nurture the relationships. Although the mobile phone offers possibilities of instant sociality across borders, the socio-economic inequalities (real and imagined) between the actors influence the social practices of the mobile phone in social ties. In concrete terms, *bushfallers* are perceived to be rich and therefore assume or are assigned the responsibility to take care of the social bonds in socio-economic dimensions (Horst 2006; Madianou and Miller 2011; Horst and Miller 2006). Most participants in Freiburg were students with a meagre income and their role in nurturing these relationships is not abnormal in Cameroonian transnational relationships. Historically, Cameroonian migrants, irrespective of their socio-economic status in destination areas, have been held responsible for sustaining ties with the friends and families they leave behind (Ardener et al. 1960; Rowlands 1996: 198; Nyamnjoh 2002: 116; Geschiere and Gugler 1998: 310). This background implicitly situates *bushfallers* as actors who are expected to share their successes achieved in the *bush*, which

inherently means they pay for the cost of maintaining the transnational ties.

Through in-depth face-to-face narrative interviews, participation, observation and group interviews, respondents were asked to describe experiences in using the mobile phone to maintain ties with friends and families in Cameroon (for migrants) and abroad (for non-migrants). A majority of the seventy-four respondents (forty-eight in Buea and twenty-six in Freiburg) at both field sites were between the ages of twenty and thirty. Most respondents who participated in the study in Freiburg were members of *Scratch My Back,* a social group of Anglophone Cameroonians. I became a registered member and hosted some of their meetings. Individual interviews and conversations during the monthly gatherings provided diverse opportunities to understand migrants' responsibilities, challenges of mobility, unmet expectations as well as disappointments and strategies used to navigate the relationships. Respondents and interlocutors in Buea generally expected calls and support from *bushfallers*, including me, the researcher. I was even more seen as an adventurous *bushfaller* than a researcher; a *bushfaller* who would later forget and neglect the relationships developed during fieldwork (see also Sultana 2007:381). As such, non-migrants directed their narratives at me as well as appealed to migrants through me; the migrants should not "throw away" the people back home. The non-migrants' emphasis reiterated the necessity of staying in touch and being close to others once mobile phone numbers had been exchanged, as supported by the sensory experiences of mobile phone communication that come up in the next section.

Mobile Phone Technology and Sensory Experiences

Even though its technological properties continue to change and embrace new dimensions in the political, economic and health sectors, the mobile phone is still the main tool of interaction for people, who are "locationally distant" (Giddens 1990: 18). Developments in smart phone applications have specifically aimed at enhancing social experiences of closeness through instant chats, direct money transfer, an exchange of pictures, calls and even games. Irrespective of the technological developments intended at diversifying the functions of

the mobile phone, one of its peculiar properties as a tool of sociality persists over time especially in Africa. It is the expectation, and sometimes, the compulsion, to stay in touch with friends and families (see also Hahn and Kibora 2008: 89; Horst and Miller 2006: 82). This aspect has fundamentally altered the ways in which people engage in social relationships in terms of perceptions, actions and reactions. In this section of the article, I look at the sensorial appeal of the mobile phone and how this shapes the consciousness of availability and reachability, which in turn contribute to the way people expect to “feel” through the technology.

As a technology of sociality, the mobile phone facilitates instantaneous interaction and a sense of continuous connection to other people (Auslander 2008: 61) by means of live mediation; actors have a feeling of mediated co-presence. This makes it possible for actors to be embedded in friends’ and family lives at long distances even as they move independently through space (Moores 2004:30; Couldry 2004: 357). Seen from this angle, the mobile phone is a technology of possibilities, as it provides avenues for social and “affective experience” for actors, who do not necessarily share physical proximity (Auslander 2008: 62). It also allows for “continuous contact” and “continuous mediation” for people who in fact have access to, and share, a common “communication infrastructure” with their partners (Couldry 2004: 357). Our interest here is on what it means to be continuously connected to friends and also how physical absence influences narratives and imaginations of social closeness and distance. The question of what makes the mobile phone and, specifically, mobile phone calls generate a sense of co-presence or feelings of social distance is directly linked to how the technology is “felt.”

Mobile phone conversations generate a sense of “intersubjective social experience” (Rettie 2009: 425) during the course of interaction. Actors could even enjoy intimacy in the absence of face-to-face contacts (Wilding 2006). Calls are conducted live and people hear voices that are “sufficiently immediate” (White 2003: 12). A phone call generally replicates the face-to-face medium of speech and is, in fact, an extension of voice over distance (O’Brien 1999: 78). During phone conversations, actors could easily convey or *read* the emotional state of partners based on intonations, hesitations, delays and the spontaneity of the responses. Also, mobile phone conversations allow for dialogic

communication between actors (Tomlinson 2001: 162–163; see also Fortunati 2009: 43), who "spend" valuable time together at long distance. It is also expected that participants pay full attention during phone conversations (Rettie 2009: 425–429; Tomlinson 2001: 163). This in turn contributes to the evaluation of calls as a prised activity in social bonds.

It is partially based on the sensory experiences that mobile phone calls are attractive and valued in Cameroonian mediated social ties. Within the sphere of transnational relationships, the instantaneity of communication and feelings of co-presence is further demonstrated when people query others for not calling, irrespective of whether other avenues of exchanging information and greetings have been used. Mobile phones are pleasing within the Cameroonian context, even as a livelier interaction could ideally be achieved through the Internet (e.g., video chats) but for the fact that it is inconvenient, physically absent and slow. There is also the illiteracy issue, as users of the Internet generally are those who can read and write. Well, the mobile phone is a valued tool of communication as it transmits just the voice; a reason why it is popular in many parts of Africa with high illiteracy rates (see also Ling and Horst 2011). Mobile phone calls are used to evaluate "intimacy, degree of closeness or distance" in social ties in Cameroon (Tazanu 2012b: 67). It is particularly in connection with the intentional deployment of the device to contact others, meaning that calls are purposeful and planned, which demonstrates that callers thought of instantly sharing social space and time with those they call. Basically, the mobile phone numbers directly identify individuals who, in theory, are reachable at any time. Thus, the tool of communication virtually contracts distance by making people available and accessible through these personal identities. All respondents in both Freiburg and Buea more or less affirmed that calls to mobile phone numbers are a direct means of contacting particular people at planned moments. This opinion corroborates the observation by scholars that telephone calls are "strong, active, dynamic and speedy" in their immediate appeal to individuals to pick up calls and socialize there and then (Fortunati 2009: 42).

The mobile phone, through its technological, sensory and social properties, can be regarded as a technology of hope and convergence. It provides avenues for people to "feel" virtual co-presence in the event

of the migration of friends and family members. This positive note on the mobile phone means that it has the potential to either facilitate social closeness or engender feelings of social distance (for people who are not contacted). I argue in the article that unmet expectations to be called influence narratives of "throwing people away" and accusations of the post-migration transformation of identities which, in turn, support another argument that these storylines make it look as if the mobile phone destabilizes most Cameroonian cross-border social bonds.

"Throwing People Away": Experiences of Social Distance and Accusations of Changed Identities

In order to understand the dynamics of friendship and family bonds in the mediated transnational ties, I looked at personal experiences and expectations of social closeness within a setting where the mobile phone facilitates a ready accessibility to partners. The nouns friends and family suggest social proximity of varying degrees in relationships and one would expect the mobile phone to keep these friends and family close in the event of migration. After many months of fieldwork in Freiburg, during which migrants talked enthusiastically about the usefulness of the phone in maintaining ties with family and friends in Cameroon, I had thought respondents in Buea would express similar opinions (Tazanu 2012b; see also Madianou and Miller 2011: 467 about Filipino migrant mothers' enthusiasm). Contrary to this expectation, most non-migrants emphasised the distancing attitude of *bushfallers* with a surprising revelation that they were either never called at all or were contacted only infrequently; whereas they expected regular calls from the migrants. The imagery of "throwing people away," commonly used to describe the neglect of social ties, was invoked to demonstrate the migrants' unwanted attitude, which betrays the mobile phone as a technology that connects and unites people. This means, by default, that the phone has a congregative property as it already binds a collectivity of people in one form or another and not calling others is evaluated as a purposeful rejection. It was a while before I could make sense of the contrary viewpoints expressed at both field sites. In particular, I had a deeper understanding of the migrants' enthusiasm; they were excited about the possibility to directly contact a select number of friends and family members. Additionally, the excitement

of instant sociality was mainly expressed by "old" migrants, that is, those who had earlier experiences of maintaining the relationships through letters and messages sent through the post office and people who travelled across borders.

Experiences and rumours of migrants not keeping in touch with families and friends are highlighted in many accounts, including a group interview with four young men in Buea. One of them expressed emphatically that after about two months of leaving Cameroon, "communication [with migrants] may cease ... and they disappear. They start making false promises when you succeed in getting them." By early January 2010, when the interview was conducted, such narratives of distancing were no longer strange. Other respondents joined in and confirmed that friends in Cameroon might no longer matter to migrants as soon as they began to be successful in their new environment or were making new friends abroad. One of them accused migrants of suffering from the "*bush* [abroad] syndrome" characterised by the neglect of friends, deception, pride, unpredictability, unfulfilled promises and stealth as conveyed in the allegation of *bushfallers* disappearing. Non-migrants interpret disappearances in terms of the migrants' irresponsibility and disinterest in relationships which those left at home. Similar opinions were shared by many people, including Armelle, who described the migrants' distancing as a "*bushfaller* disease." She was a 28-year old university graduate, who wished to migrate out of Cameroon with the assistance of her friend in Germany and a sister in Britain. But these relations were unreliable, partly because "They are different people when they are here [in Cameroon] but become different when they cross the sea." During visits to Cameroon, the friend and sister "pretended" to be close to Armelle, but held their distance as soon they had returned to Europe; they did not call. Most non-migrants such as Armelle were particularly interested in what Wilding (2006: 132) describes as "the fact of communication" as she wished the migrants to constantly rekindle the relationship through calls.

Attempts at "getting them" tell of the struggle in overcoming silences, of a strong desire to (re)connect and be present through the mobile phone. That non-migrants wish for the *bushfallers'* attention is understood within a context where people who expect calls believe they have been "thrown away" or marginalised in a connected world. The

efforts to contact migrants basically demonstrate the ability to use the new communication media to track people and continue relationships if they fail in their responsibility to do so (see also Nyamnjoh 2005: 261–262). Disappearing in the world of the mobile phone is seen as abnormal and goes against expectations of connectivity. It was therefore rational to question why people get lost, when indeed the mobile phone is a sure way of locating partners across space. One of the surest ways to do this was to engage in mobile phone practices such as calling or beeping migrants' phone number in order to ascertain whether the numbers were still in use (see Kriem 2009; Donner 2008; Tazanu 2012b: 69–79 for beeping practices). Some of them also sent e-mails requesting for calls in return. In other words, the fact that they share a common communication infrastructure and, more specifically, that the migrants would likely recognize their numbers and e-mails, made them not doubt their conclusion that the *bushfallers'* were reluctant to keep in touch. John, one of the disappointed young men in Buea, tried unsuccessfully to attract calls from his cousins in Belgium through e-mail requests. The then twenty-four years old was just too aware that his efforts might well just be in vain:

> They promised to call but deceived me all the time. They take advantage of the fact that I do not see them. We were very close before they left. I know they would make excuses and tell lies when they return and we meet face-to-face. They may talk of fake e-mails they sent. They may say they sent information to me through some other person. The e-mails I send to them never bounce back, meaning that they received the e-mails.

Non-migrants understood non-communication within a framework of "changed" *bushfallers*, who are inclined to make "false promises" if they are located. Even as they were aware migrants transformed in part because their "heads are too crowded to think of something else," according to Armelle, respondents in Buea downplayed and dismissed the *bushfallers'* complaint about a busy life abroad. Armelle and others alternatively read the *bushfallers'* claim of a busy life as a false pretext for distancing themselves from relationships and even mockingly challenged migrants to return to Cameroon if they truly experienced a hard life abroad. To them, the existence of the possibilities of direct contacts requires sensitivity and constant awareness of the relationships in Cameroon regardless of the migrants' daily routine.

Such a misconception of life abroad reveals contrary standpoints and different frames of reference for the two categories of actors. While those in Cameroon rely mainly on their imaginations, rumours, stories and media sources, the *bushfallers* have concrete experiences of living abroad (see also Frei 2012/2013; Alpes 2012; Nyamnjoh 2011; Förster 2010; Tazanu 2015). Most non-migrants interpreted a busy life abroad in terms of migrant employment; they are earning money. Aside from honouring remittance obligations, some of the money should be used to pay for calls to Cameroon.

However, migrants' accounts tell of the difficulties of navigating through the demands of daily life abroad amidst the consciousness that they maintain ties with people back home. For example, the daily routine of the then thirty-one year old Andrew offers a glimpse into what self-sponsoring migrant students go through abroad. He got up early in the morning and headed to the university to learn or attend lessons. He returned in the afternoon and had a short rest before going to work in the evening. After detailing his daily activities, Andrew asked resignedly "where is the time?" Just as most migrants, Andrew was conscious of the accusation that he was distancing himself from ties by not calling friends and family as regularly as they expected. He also regretted his inability to nurture ties with certain friends and family (see also Riak Akuei 2005). Unable to convince people about life abroad, Andrew concluded that the non-migrants "do not understand life abroad" or "what we go through here." Thus, beside the consciousness of direct connectivity, the claims of transformed migrants and their supposed unwillingness to stay in touch seem very much related to a misunderstanding that goes with the absence of co-locality (see also Vertovec 2009: 60).

Experiences of social distance are in part fuelled by the tendency to equate availability with the regularity of calls. In the Cameroonian transnational social sphere, non-migrants usually emphasize that frequent mobile phone calls should fill in the communicative gaps, which exist when sociality is disembedded from physical (and national) space. This challenge mostly arises from the consciousness that transnational social relationships could easily be maintained through the mobile phone. Non-migrants' expectations to be called on the one hand and the migrants' inability to regularly acknowledge the relationship contributes to feelings of unease, especially for those

who stay back in Cameroon. Amidst the burden, compulsion and expectation to maintain many ties (see also Horst 2006: 154; Horst and Miller 2006: 87; Madianou and Miller 2011: 466), migrants resorted to scaling down and prioritising the number of people they regularly contact in Cameroon. *Bushfallers* narrowed their ties to immediate families and a few friends. They do this despite the defamation of their names and the negative rumours that swirls around them for not keeping in touch (see Riak Akuei 2005: 9–10; Horst 2006: 155; Wilding 2006: 136 for similar claims about bad names). Andrew purportedly reduced his number of friends to three or four and did:

> … not keep regular contacts with them, but we keep in touch. My number of friends has reduced. I am the one calling them … It is becoming very cheap to call [to Germany] from Cameroon. People can call you with as little as 100 FCFA … People have the mentality that calls should always come from here. But it becomes a burden if you have to call several people, especially friends.

Understandably, it is financially demanding for migrants to maintain relationships with the many friends and family members they have in Cameroon. The process of scaling down the number of people contacted could mean many friends and even family members are left out completely. This practice of narrowing the number of contacts in Cameroon is usually the migrants' decision. It does not usually involve informing people in Cameroon that they have been "thrown away," marginalised or no longer count as friends or family worth maintaining ties with. But the mere fact that these non-migrants still believe they have friends or family members abroad, and more specifically, that they shared phone numbers with *bushfallers* from whom they anticipate to be contacted (Hahn and Kibora 2008: 89), makes it hard for one not to conclude that the mobile phone ownership fuels feelings of social distance in these relationships. In the Cameroonian cross-border mobile phone-mediated relationships, silence is often interpreted from the angle of social distance, even if the social relationships have not experienced any friction (Tazanu 2012b: 268). Many young people in Buea, while claiming that they were not called, furiously showed me migrant friends' numbers to prove the existence of the relationship and thus the expectation to be contacted. Whether the migrants had or still retained the mobile phone numbers of these young men is hard to say, but most migrants

in Freiburg purportedly deleted numbers of people who had become a burden to them.

These opinions on social distance generally suggest that relationships risk breaking up if not groomed through regular calls. In extreme cases, the narratives tended to predict disruption in future face-to-face contacts if calls were not regularly used to rekindle the relationship. But this appeared more a function of the trick of availability magnified by unmet expectations to be contacted. For example, a few migrants narrated experiences of smooth encounters when they accidentally met friends while on holidays in Cameroon. These were friends who had not received calls from the migrants. The narratives of a total break-up of ties further reveal that ownership of new media identities incites sensitivity to cold relationships in the absence of (regular) contacts. Furthermore, the unmet expectations of closeness provoked reflections of previous co-local relationships when the migrants were still in Cameroon. How do some respondents remember earlier face-to-face contacts as judged against the expectations and experiences of the mediated relationships?

Transformations, Idealisation and Reflections of Previous Co-local Ties

Mobile phone researchers have placed considerable interest in exploring different aspects of life in which the device is "implicated." In nearly all studies focusing on social relationships, researchers have reported findings in which the technology is used to fulfil cultural ideals such as mothering (Madianou and Miller 2011; Chib et al. 2014), family bonds (Horst and Miller 2006) and remittances (Tazanu 2012b; Tazanu 2015; Nyamnjoh 2005). Other innovations such as M-health and Mobile Money demonstrate the imaginative appropriation and the tendency of users to harness the technology to their advantage. But it needs to be mentioned that these developments feed social consciousness such that when expectations fail, the imagination might take on negative dimensions as mobile phones, even while enhancing communication, do not necessarily dispel misunderstanding. How do Cameroonians, especially non-migrants, make sense of misunderstandings when they experience unmet hopes in transnational social closeness? In the previous section, the attention

was on narratives and experiences of distancing, which are themselves partly provoked by the expectations of what people think they can do with the mobile phone. Against the backdrop of unmet wishes of uninterrupted communication, most respondents recollected and reflected on past co-local ties, which were said to be cordial. In this section, I argue that a recollection of past social ties is embellished with ideals that are in part influenced by the existence of the mobile phone and, specifically, the expectation that it is utilised to foster intimacy within Cameroonian transnational social relationships.

The previous section has demonstrated how non-migrants and *bushfallers* experience and narrate social distance differently. In fact, one would hardly understand the divergent narratives if two independent studies were conducted, focusing on either the migrants or those who stay behind. For example, beside the cost of sustaining the ties, all migrants reportedly felt the pressure and irritation of direct remittance requests from home. It is a topic I have explored in details elsewhere (Tazanu 2012b: 199-253; Tazanu 2015). Requests for remittances usually contradict the excited intentions of calling "just to keep in touch" (Drew and Chilton 2000) and, to a great extent, contribute to experiences of friction in social ties. Migrants shared many disappointing experiences when calling friends with the excitement to talk, only to hear demands for money. Yet non-migrants were reluctant in admitting that their requests for remittances alienate *bushfallers* and contribute to them being "thrown away." This is not a claim that migrants do not value the mobile phone as a useful tool to coordinate and channel remittances. Yes, they value the mobile phone in this practice and are happy that they can directly call the beneficiary to inform them about the sent financial support, but this is more in connection to those who are entitled to remittances. Rather, the argument is that requests for remittances, a practice done instantly through phone calls nowadays, causes a rift in the ties. The connection between remittance requests and imaginations of previous co-local social bonds is that most non-migrants, who positioned themselves as poor people, believed they were entitled to the successes of the *bushfallers*. Through such positioning and requests, we see how migration transforms relationships as the migrants assume or are assigned responsibilities while non-migrants, some of whom had been responsible and self-sustaining, suddenly express socio-economic vulnerability. This would, for example, mean that migrants

such as the then twenty-four years old Marie, who depended on their parents before migrating to Germany, are reminded by these parents to support them financially:

> Everything changed as soon as I entered the plane. They [parents] look at me as a responsible person. I used to ask them for money before, in order to do my hair or pay for a taxi and things like that, but now they expect me to send them money. It is as if they have no income at all ... But I can never complain even though I feel the pain. I now see why some people completely cut ties with their families. The pressure is too much.

All migrants in Freiburg described their experiences with transformed relationships with parents, guardians, siblings and friends. In many cases, the expectations to support the family were not clearly outlined before the *bushfaller* left Cameroon, even though it is generally expected that they remit. But within friendship ties in particular, non-migrants detailed plans and projects they had discussed with the migrants when they were still in Cameroon. Most of these storylines do not only imagine a migrants' success, but indicate that these *bushfallers* withhold support, which they were naturally expected to share (see also Drotbohm 2010; Tazanu 2015). This narrative, and migrants' practices of sharing their successes, is deeply rooted in the history of migration in Cameroon whereby those who move out support the people who stay behind (Brain 1972; Ardener et al. 1960; Ouden 1987). The imaginations of *bushfallers'* "accumulated" money influenced non-migrants to use the mobile phone for requesting remittances when migrants failed in their responsibility to do so. It also meant non-migrants expected potential remitters to call them. Take, for example, the view of the then twenty-three year old Martin, one of my key respondents in Buea. He just graduated from the local university and was uncertain about his future. Migrating out of Cameroon was among his top priorities. Martin had friends in Europe, the USA and South Africa, whom he thought were unwilling to support him. He was particularly disappointed that his best friend failed to keep a promise they made to each other.

> He travelled last year [2009]. I was very close to him ... I would not abandon him if I were abroad today. He has my number. At least he should call or even reply to my e-mails. We were always together

> and promised to help each other in case any of us has better opportunities ... If I do not tell you that I have a source of income, you need to understand that I need your help. You cannot pretend that you do not know what your friend goes through because you have been in that very situation too [Shaking his head in doubt] ... But life in Europe could be funny. How can someone just stay without contacting friends?

Accordingly, the geopolitical locations of migrants and the imaginings of what they have achieved and, more importantly, the hopes that they share their successes, influence perceptions of the meaning of the mobile phone in these relationships. This also influences accounts and perceptions of being "thrown away." Going by such storylines, previous face-to-face contacts should function as predictors of cordial relationships mediated by the mobile phone without taking into consideration the reality that individual priorities change over time and that people act or react unpredictably in different settings (O'Brien 1999; Donath 1999). By solely expecting words and plans discussed in previous face-to-face interaction to automatically transform into actions and support, non-migrants' expectations can actually be illusions and imaginations filling the gap of silences and non-communication. As to whether Martin's friend was financially able to support him is not known but for the fact that they potentially had access to each other through a shared communication infrastructure made it easy to imagine a rift in the relationship during the period of non-communication. *Bushfallers* were accused of the "*bush* syndrome" or "*bushfaller* disease," primarily based on the simple suspicion that non-migrants were not a priority and were "thrown away" as soon as they (migrants) started experiencing upward socio-economic mobility abroad. This observation concluded that the rich migrants did not want to associate with the poor people they left behind in Cameroon. Stories, rumours and imaginings of a good life abroad but more concretely, migrants' successes displayed in urban Buea—their cars, real estate investments, spaces of leisure, indulgence in bodily pleasure, etc, all prove that these *bushfallers* are successful and unwilling to share their success. Respondents in Buea, who thought that the phone offers a direct avenue to channel remittances, decried that migrants "waste" money in unnecessary displays and consumption when they visit Cameroon (Tazanu 2012a:107–114; Riccio 2005; Bourdieu 2002: 374–375).

When one includes the accounts of migrants, a different picture is obtained of the ways social ties are expected to be and, more importantly, what one could regard as perceptions on resource sharing. Unlike non-migrants, the *bushfallers* are expected to account for how they expend theirearnings. As mentioned earlier, media practices such as calls and beeps are used to question *bushfallers* on what they do with their money. Non-migrants such as Martin vehemently believed migrants have to share their resources and even tended to paint a picture of a relationship where financial resources in the pre-migration period were collective. But this seemed to be an exaggerated evaluation of the social bonds. Migrants even contested such a viewpoint as one could hear them express "you cannot just give money to people as though it is free," or "we do not harvest money on trees." Beyond these expressions is the reality that people, be they migrants or not, often retain their income although they may share some of their earnings once in a while. Evidently, even as experiences of life abroad could influence migrants to scrutinize certain values they share with non-migrants (see also Eriksen 2007: 4), the suspicion that the *bushfallers'* upward socio-economic mobility significantly distorts their perception of collective resource ownership appear to be exaggerated.

It, however, remains engrained in the minds of most non-migrants that *bushfallers* withhold and waste resources that should "normally" be transferred to non-migrants in order to rekindle social bonds. Non-migrants were not hesitant in seeking further explanations for their disappointments in cold social bonds. In particular, some of them sought answers by evaluating what they believed to be the lifestyle of Europeans (or Westerners) and how this in turn reforms Cameroonian migrants to be selfish. They referred to individualism, usually attributed to the Western way of life, as contributing to their experiences of being "thrown away." Western individualism was contrasted to "African values" characterised by other-oriented social ties. The claim of African values and the readiness to maintain social ties at all costs was vividly expressed by the then twenty-three years old Laura, a mobile phone call operator in Buea. She emphasised that "...Africans are welcoming, social and friendly. Since I am an African, I will always want to maintain my friendship with other people." Thus, experiences of silences and non-communication through the mobile phone actually contribute to uncovering narratives about African and Western sociality. In these accounts, the African

sociality, whatever it is, is deemed superior compared to the degraded European way of managing social relations. It is therefore surprising that Africans stay silent in a world where the mobile phone could be used to easily communicate or express the African lively nature. Just as most respondents in Cameroon, Laura intended to pass a message to migrants (through me) that they should not embrace the Western lifestyle of not talking; it was intrinsic for Africans to talk. The African, who is "welcoming, social and friendly," should express these values through regular mobile phone calls:

> I hear people who stay in Europe do not even know their neighbours. They do not talk. That is very strange. We expect that our people living in such an environment should feel lonely and must therefore call back home ... How do they [migrants] feel when they do not talk as we do here? I can't go a day without talking. That is the bad side of Europe ... Our people must not copy that kind of lifestyle because we are different. We like to talk and also to be together.

This is an interesting perspective on African sociality, which tends to erroneously suggest that certain practices are either intrinsically African or Western irrespective of the context. In other words, if (many) Cameroonians are not satisfactorily maintaining relationships, as revealed in my study (see also Drotbohm 2010; Nyamnoh 2005), why continue to stress the assumption that Africans like to keep ties when in reality a look at the ongoing global and local trends and realities, such as the migrants' inability to afford the cost of calling friends, offer a better understanding of the state of the relationship? It sounds essentialist when claims are made about this distorted reality that intentionally aim at glorifying the "African culture." Going by the opinions of non-migrants, one is tempted to conclude that it is only when Africans migrate to Europe that they imbibe individualism and a discontinuation of social ties. This aside, non-migrants constructed a fictive impression of egalitarianism and gratuitous depletion of their resources if they were economically viable to maintain the ties. Expressions such as "we are poor," "we in Africa have nothing," and "I would call if I had money," all aimed at positioning themselves as economically weak partners, who are committed to the "African value" of keeping ties at all costs.

If one were to adhere seriously to these claimed glorious African values, it would imply that hospitality and understanding is sought in relationships despite all too common challenges in long distant relationships. But a deeper look at actions and inactions of the actors apparently reveal the betrayal of the reified African values. A few examples, all centred on instant requests for money, illuminate this. We are left to question if it is an African value that most non-migrants pressure migrants to remit and could even tend to insult or belittle migrants when their demands are not met (Tazanu 2015). Many migrants in Freiburg even evaluated their relationships with non-migrants in terms of monetary support, that is, they were seen more as "wallets on legs" according to Francis Nyamnjoh (Nyamnjoh 2005: 244). Some of them were no longer contacted once they were found unable or unwilling to answer requests for remittances. Furthermore, most *bushfallers* accused non-migrants of rudeness when they (non-migrants) did not even have the courtesy to call and thank the migrant who sent them money. Based on these few examples, we could thus ask if the positive assertion of African readiness to keep ties at all costs is genuine or just a indication of ulterior motives. Interestingly, non-migrants do not believe their actions and inactions contribute to silences and non-communication, which in turn accounts for cold ties that could easily be maintained through the phone.

By not treating relationships with the attention they deserve, the migrants' insensitivity was described as threatening the very foundation of African solidarity, which the mobile phone is expected to preserve. There is plenty of evidence that migrants, the main caretakers of these ties, feel the burden of instantaneous communication, which is why most respondents including Andrew engaged in what I called elsewhere shallow relationships that develop out of a shallow sociality (Tazanu 2012b: 210). By this, I mean a furtive type of mediated interaction in which the actors responsible for nurturing the ties fear asking questions that could generate intimacy. In fact, the fear of intimacy, and the consciousness of the fear of intimate ties, emerged as one of the main themes in my research (see also Wilding 2006). While *bushfallers* are interested in shallow intimacy when they foresee burdens, non-migrants who sense such attempts at creating gaps in social ties find ways to scold migrants for attempting to silence or destroy family relationships. As such one hears expressions of disappointment in Buea. such as "a family is a family," "you cannot

run away from your family," "he may run, but he will still come and meet us here." etc. These normative statements reiterate the centrality of the family and demonstrate the ongoing consciousness of the possibility of direct communication across borders; a consciousness that is in part shaped by the possibility of using the mobile phone for holding people together.

From the storylines above, we see that the actors read connectivity, silences and non-communication as intentional acts. Social distance seems to be magnified by the consciousness of instant connectivity. Of course, as a technology, the mobile phone potentially enhances direct communication but it does not necessarily guarantee the quality of relationships. Through the experiences of silences, disconnections, attempts to disconnect and perceptions of changed identities, we see how the mobile phone in this context embeds uncomfortably in Cameroonian transnational social ties. Most respondents in Buea expected the *nowness* of mobile phone communication to be exploited frequently by migrants simply because they knew they could easily be located across space and time. The stance of these respondents tended to even neglect the reality that calls "cannot bridge all gaps of information and expression endemic to long-distance separation" (Vertovec 2009: 60).

Conclusion

That so much can be said about silences, disappearances, frustration and discontents in social relationships, when a simple portable device is not (frequently) used as much as expected, tells just of how deep the mobile phone has entwined itself in the life of the users. And it seems to have come to stay in that other communication technologies are using the phone as one of the central access points of social life, of political participation, health and mobile money (which is very advanced in the case of East Africa). The technology has found a place in the daily life of users as it has been integrated into "inconsequential," "tiny" and "trivial" routines (Arminen 2007: 431). Although it is no longer totally new, especially if we consider that there is a generation of people who have used the technology all their lives, the one enduring sensory dimension of this tool of interaction is the expectation of sociality. It has not been my intention to reduce

Cameroonian transnational mediated relationships to disappearances, non-communication, silences and uncomfortable encounters, as there are success stories of people who use the mobile phone for solidarity purposes, the expression of belonging and their participation in family life from abroad. By focusing on the disruptive dimensions of the mobile phone, this research contributes to research findings that highlight the unexpected significance of technologies in society. A stress on the disjuncture between the expectations and realities of the mediated ties does not necessarily mean the relationships are “ungovernable” through the mobile phone. Rather, what I seek to portray is that the consciousness and possibility of instant interaction embodied in mobile phones has engendered a degree of uncertainty in Cameroonian transnational social relationships as evidenced in narratives of silences and disappearances amidst unmet expectations of (regular) phone calls. Thus, the mobile phone, through its expectations of instant sociality, does not necessarily lead to social order or make people happy (Couldry and McCarthy 2004: 3) even as it offers new possibilities.

It is generally theorised that migrants and non-migrants positively construct transnational social fields by using media such as mobile phones. This technology is perceived as constructive as it facilitates the easy binding of transnational relationships. Findings in this article, however, reveal the destructive dimensions of the medium in Cameroonian cross-border social ties. We thus have to understand the significance of global technology, such as the mobile phone, as not having a unidirectional effect on all actors (Werbner 2002: 1; Nyamnjoh 2004: 64). In concrete terms, it leads to specific local experiences in different cultures and settings. Its appropriation and significance cannot fully be understood without referring to actors within a particular culture. Without taking this into consideration, as has been shown in the Cameroonian transnational social field, we could miss vital realities if we assume that cross-border social bonds are easily maintained simply because partners are readily available and reachable. By solely assuming the impact of the media we could erroneously conclude that friends and families interact through the mobile phone on equal terms. While it is true that the phone offers a platform for easily maintaining relationships, there is also the reality of inequalities, the most obvious being financial inequality or the unequal abilities to pay for the costs of sociality. The research

has revealed respondents' narratives, expectations, imaginations and media practices as deeply embedded within financial and power inequalities inherent in their social ties. The disparities are themselves underpinned by the participants' location within national and economic spaces and the association of these spaces with well-being and capabilities. In other words, the physical locations of actors are fairly translated into their real or imagined economic stamina. These imaginations and inequalities have led to informal "arrangements" on how the mobile phone should be deployed for transnational sociality. But the narratives of "throwing people away," revealed in this article, demonstrate that the "arrangement" that *bushfallers* maintain social ties is contributing to the unmet expectations of social closeness and to feelings of destabilised relationships.

From my understanding, the mobile phone has radically influenced the way Cameroonians perceive social ties and how they relate to each other across borders. Media practices and narratives tend to suggest that mediated social closeness should not only replicate previous face-to-face contacts, but also that social ties move towards a certain level of perfection. In describing the unmet expectations of the mobile phone in their relationships, respondents often painted a picture of a shared past in which face-to-face contacts were almost problem-free. This means that the present mediated relationships as judged against the ideal past should be strong, healthy and uninterrupted. My view is that this idealistic and exaggerated "deification" of the past is directly linked to the disappointments of unmet expectations of the possibilities associated with the instantaneity of connectivity. The findings demonstrate that mobile phones open up possibilities, which, according to respondents' accounts, could be treacherous, uncertain and destabilising, as demonstrated in the unmet expectations of social closeness embodied in such feelings as being "thrown away."

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SACRALISING CYBERSPACE: ONLINE RELIGIOUS ACTIVISM IN ETHIOPIA[1]

Meron Eresso

Abstract: In the modern technological era, social media has become one of the imperative ways to exchange ideas, converse, disseminate information and advocate for diverse socio-political causes. Accordingly, social media serves as a platform for expressing religious views, practicing religion in a virtual space with a cyber-community of believers, communicating religious differences, advocating for a religious cause, and as a forum of religious learning and teaching. The ubiquitous nature and growing use of social media pose a challenge to the geographic appeal of religion. Growing cyber spirituality is becoming visible in the global south where the technological advancement is in its formative stage. Paradoxically, despite the very poor profile of cyber technology, coupled with repressive political regimes, there is a growing religious cyber activism in contemporary Africa. There is a discernible gap of empirical studies on the appropriation of social media for religious purpose, their use by religious clerics, lay believers and religious activists. By exclusively focusing on the case of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, one of the oldest oriental orthodox churches, this paper sheds some light on how the modern social media is serving as an alternative platform for religious communities including the old conservative religious establishments.

Keywords: *Ethiopia, Social Media, Orthodox Tewahido Christians, Online Protest, Religious Activism*

1 This paper is part of an on-going postdoctoral research project of the author, who is a postdoctoral fellow and recipient of the Volkswagen Foundation "Knowledge for Tomorrow" Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Humanities in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa and an adjunct assistant professor of anthropology at Addis Ababa University, the Centre for Human Rights.

Introduction

The merits and downsides of Internet-based social networks is a debatable matter, triggering discussion among scholars across a wide range of disciplines. Some scholars emphasise how social media assists in the exchange of ideas, providing individuals and groups with interactive platforms to share and discuss various themes (Piskorski 2014). Arguing along the same line, Rainie and Welmann (2012) present the positive influences of social media and other Internet-based social networks. Part of the multiple values pointed out by scholars include the significance of social media to document memories, to inform, advertise and enhance friendship and knowledge, offer a private space, and help individuals and groups in building talents. Social media is able to positively impact social standing and the process of political mobilisation. The value of social media technologies in sparking massive social change has gained more popularity in the aftermath of the Arab spring revolutions (Alexander 2010). Social media technologies like Facebook, twitter and YouTube are considered to have significantly contributed to the revolutions across the globe. In fact, the 2009 Moldova revolution was referred to as the "Twitter Revolution" (Papic and Noonan 2011). Similar arguments were made for the Gezi Protests that took place in Turkey, in the late spring of 2013 (Gulizar and Weiyu 2015).

Others contend that the contribution that social media has/had on the rise and success of revolutions is exaggerated, rather describing the contribution of social media as being insignificant (Malcolm 2010). For those arguing along this line, even though social media offers a ground for activists to express themselves, they do not in any way guarantee the end. Furthermore they argue that the social ties to be formed on social media are built on weak stalemates. Turke (2011) argues that social media usage affects individual communication skills. The addiction to social media and the resulting psychological ailment is described as being one major downside. Others raise their concerns in relation to the effect of social media on dwarfing journalism.

In autocratic political systems, social media is said to offer new sources of information and alternative platforms for discussing diverse socio-political agendas (Kalliopi 2011) Moreover, online social networks are described to enhance public awareness about political fraud in

non-democratic environments (Ora and David 2015). On the one hand, studies contend that the diffusion of digital media does not always have democratic consequences. Numerous studies conducted in different parts of the globe, on the other, allude to governments often dissuading Internet users from political activism and tend to use social media as political instruments of control (Kathy and Sarah 2012).

The academic discourses on religion and social media evolved from an era of emphasising the effect of social media in threatening the authority of clerics, accenting the link between social media and growing radicalisation, to the latest discourse of stressing the harmony between social media and religion. Cheong (2012) discussed how earlier studies of religion and the Internet emphasised the effect of digital media in disrupting religious authority and being a threat to the power of traditional institutions claiming a charismatic authority to teach and interpret religious books. According to this earliest line of thought, the introduction of the Internet to religious realms undermines the authority of traditional religious figures by creating a fertile ground for emerging new popular clerics, who are conversant with the new technology (Cheong 2012). As Abrams, Baker, and Brown (2011) highlighted, the uses of social media are negotiated by religious figures that try to maintain their power. The other dominant discourse in earlier studies on religion and social media focused on discussing the positive correlation between growing cyber activism and growing religious radicalisation (Barnet and Reynolds 2009).

Today, a number of studies focus on addressing elements of complementarity between religion and ICT by analysing how digital media positively impacts religion. Accordingly, there are studies investigating the synergetic relationships between online and offline faith and looking into how religious leaders shape, sustain and are being sustained by digital and social media practices (Cheong 2014). Some of the scholarly works on religion and social media tend to show how social media practices and religious change are mutually constitutive (Gillespie, David and Greenhill 2012). The agency of the religious clerics in appropriating different social media is a theme addressed by scholars, wgo describe the phenomenon as "strategic arbitration" (Cheong, Huang and Poon 2011).[2]

2 Strategic arbitration is a phenomenon whereby the clergy are insinuated to adjust their social identity to become guides and mediators of knowledge and can be

The significant use of social media by religious communities and religious figures led leaders of mega churches to gain wider publicity, making them "religious celebrities" (Cooke 2008) and "holy mavericks" (Lee and Sinitiere 2009). It is further argued that such trends enhance the growth of a class of "pastor-preneurs" (Twitchell 2007), who build their power by capitalising on such technologies. Cyber activism is transforming the old debates on religious knowledge and authority, and on the formation of religious groups and communities and their networks. Cyber space is offering platforms to present and represent different thoughts and missions, providing believers with a forum to ask questions and find immediate answers to problems concerning their own religious beliefs.

Some studies conducted in different sub-Saharan African countries have extensively presented the use of social media in religious missions (Dorothea E. Schulz 2011; Brian 2014). Innocent (2012) discusses how social media is affecting community and social interaction in digital religious discourse in a Western African context, drawing on experiences form Nigeria, Ghana and Cameroon. Rosalind and Benjamin, in their edition *New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa* (2015) present different case materials on Africa's rapidly evolving religious media scene. In a nutshell, the interrelationship between media and religion is a theme that attracted less attention of scholars across various disciplines around the globe in general and in sub-Saharan African countries in particular. Accordingly, there is no single academic writing in Ethiopia addressing the religious media scene.

A recent study by Dereje (2015) has accented how social media is serving as an alternative political platform in Ethiopia. He argues that in contexts where there is an authoritarian state and an adversarial and polarised press, the social media become alternative and safer ways of communicating ideas. Social media as Dereje puts it has "revolutionized Ethiopia" (Dereje 2015: 12).

By drawing on the existing gap of research on religion and social Internet networks in Ethiopia, this paper examines how different Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido (here after, EOT) Christian individuals and groups use social media. This article is part of the author's

encountered both online and offline.

ongoing postdoctoral project that deals with the overarching theme of growing religious-based conflicts in contemporary Ethiopia. Part of the problem addressed by the project is hence, to understand the signification of social media in contemporary religious politics. With this objective of understanding the signification of the social media, the author has conducted fieldwork. One of the data collection tools used is the analysis of the contents of messages posted on Internet social networks, specifically Facebook pages and YouTube posts of EOT religious activists. Furthermore, the empirical base of this paper partly draws on accounts from the key informants interviewed. These key informants come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, whereby membership to the EOT church is their single common denominator. Hence, this paper gives an insight into the diverse purposes for which social media is being used by religious communities ranging from its utilisation for staging polemics, serving as a platform for religious protest, for proselytisation, and for mobilisation of the community of believers for diverse purposes. It tries to understand how religious discourse is developed and dispersed through social media.

These online movements' best show how the social media is helping the process of objectification of the EOT church's new discourse of victimhood, i.e., the shift from being dominant (an established Church in pre 1974 period) to the dominated, with a new sense of vulnerability. Furthermore, this is becoming a rhetorical strategy for religious mobilisation by means of defining inter-faith relations as "existential" and securitisingIslam in Ethiopia. The paper presents how the online debates surrounding religious discourses are highly informed by the offline political developments. The phrase "sacralising cyber space" refers in this paper to the signification of social media by different EOT individuals and groups as to be substantiated in the subsequent sections of the paper.

The paper is structured into four sections. The first section presents a brief background history on the development of ICT and social media in Ethiopia. The second section gives readers a brief overview of the EOT church and contemporary developments in the use of social media among the orthodox Christians. The third section presents and analyses the signification of social media by different EOT groups and individuals and the different purposes they serve. The final section presents a concluding remark.

Brief Overview: ICT and Social Mediascape in Ethiopia

The use of the Internet in Ethiopia began in 1993 when the UN Economic Commission for Africa established a store-and-forward e- mail service called PADISNet (Pan African Documentation and Information Service Network), which connected daily via direct dial calls to GreenNet's Internet gateway in London.[3] This was followed by the initiative of the US-based NGO, HealthNet, and the establishment of a node at the Medical Faculty of the University of Addis Ababa, which provided e-mail access to medical researchers via the HealthSat/VITA Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite (ITU 2002). EthioNet was launched in January 1998. Ethiopia is one of the sub-Saharan African countries with the lowest Internet penetration rate (ITU 2013). According to the latest ratings of the International Technological University (ITU) in 2014, Ethiopia ranked 151st out of 157 countries in terms of ICT development. It is a country with the largest agrarian population, about 85% of the overall citizens residing in rural parts of the country. Of this overall number the largest majority of the country's Internet users are based in the capital city Addis Ababa (Dominique 2010). It is one of the sub-Saharan African countries where the national Ethio-telecom monopolises the telecommunication market, having a significant effect on the growth of ICT. Accordingly, National Ethio-telecom is the sole institution mandated to provide services of fixed and mobile phones, Internet and data communications, acting as the sole Internet Service Provider (ISP) (ITU 2002).

In recent years, the Ethiopian government has come up with ICT expansion projects like WoredaNET, SchoolNET and the ongoing mega project of the East African Submarine Cable System (EASS). These projects targeted connecting different institutions as schools, hospitals and government offices through broadband Internet by means of satellite or fibre-optic cable. WoredaNet provides e-mail, videoconferencing and voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) services to directly connect the federal government with local governments, including peripheral areas thereby helping to digitalize state formation in the institutional sense of the term (Gebre and Melessse 2014). SchoolNET provides streaming audio and video through a

3 For the beginnings of the Internet in Ethiopia, see ICT Focus Magazine. Available online: http://www.ictfocus.info/resources/Beginning-ofInternet-inEthiopia.asp. Accessed on 3June 2015.

downlink-only VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) satellite as part of the wider political project of an equitable service provision for all (Samuel 2007). Ethio Telecom, previously known as the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation (ETC) is running mega projects worth billions of dollars on the extension of the telecommunications system and expansion projects of mobile and Internet connectivity, projects which are run by Chinese and Indian companies.

The first participatory media came into existence in the early 1990s when an Ethiopian e-mail distribution network called EDDN was formed (Abiy 2011). With strong anti-government views, EDDN remained the only platform of e-participation up to the time when Kitaw Yayehirad, an Ethiopian IT specialist living in Geneva, started networking Ethiopians using his websites cyberethiopia.com and ethioline.com in 1997. These developments in the late 1990s and the early 2000s marked a significant shift from print to online media. The year 2000 marked this significant shift, when the popular magazine of *Ethiopian Review* discontinued the printed edition of the magazine and began to exclusively publish online: Ethiopian review, consisting of multidirectional platforms of public participation such as blogs and discussion forums. The following year marked the boom of popular websites such as Ethiomedia.com and Nazret.com.

During the national election of 2005, there were dozens of political or quasi-political websites with multidirectional participatory platforms. This year also marked the significant growth in Ethiopian blogosphere, which the BBC described as "a small, but growing set of citizen journalists."[4] The major shift seen in due course, especially in the post 2005 period, was the birth of homeland bloggers like Urael, Ethio Zagol, Adebabay Ze'Ethiopia, Tsegasaurus unlike the pre 2005 scene dominated by the Diaspora. Developments post 2007 have seen an increase in journalists and politicians using individual and group Facebook accounts (Abiy 2011). Social media, specifically Facebook, became a forum that served beyond personal reconnection and became a new platform for staging protests against the state. Dereje (2015) has classified the "cyber protestors" into four general categories, i.e., the Ethiopian nationalists, the ethno-nationalists, the religious

4 A. Heavens, 20 December 2005. „African Bloggers Find their Voice," BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4512290.stm (accessed on January 23, 2015).

opposition and the liberal critics of Ethiopia's new political order, aka ethnic federalism and the developmental state.

The EOTC and Trends in the use of Social Media

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) is one of the non-chalcedonian oriental orthodox Christian churches around the globe. As the oldest establishment it is also one of the founding members of the World Council of Churches.[5] According to the 2007 national census results, the EOTC has a total of 32,138,126 members, making up 43 % of the overall population of the country.

Orthodox Christianity became the official established church of the state during the reign of king Ezana in the 4th century and stayed the official religion of the state up to 1974. Alexandrian jurisdiction over the Ethiopian Church lasted for about sixteen hundred years, whereby the Ethiopian church was dependent on the Coptic Church as the bishop of Ethiopia had to be compulsorily selected among Egyptian monks and was consecrated only by the Egyptian patriarch. After lengthy negotiations, the autocephaly of the Ethiopian church was completed in 1951, when an Ethiopian-born Archbishop by the name of Abune Basilios was crowned as the first patriarch of Ethiopia in 1959.[6]

The EOT church had a favourable position in Ethiopian history due to its existence as the established church. Hence orthodox Christianity went beyond being purely religious and rather played an integral role in all aspects of national life; the Church had a significant place in the cultural, political and social life receiving significant support from the state. The fall of the imperial regime and the succession of the socialist regime in 1974 brought an end to the privileged status of the EOT church. In August 1974, the provisional government, by then under the control of the army, announced the separation of the Church and

5 The Oriental Orthodox churches include the Coptic Orthodox church of Alexandria, the Armenian Apostolic church, the Syria orthodox church, the Ethiopian orthodox Tewahido church, the Eritrean orthodox Tewahido church, and the Malankara orthodox church of India, which are all "Non-Chalcedonian," and are often referred to as monophsitie believing in one nature of Christ.

6 Archbishop Yesehaq. 1997. *The Ethiopian Tewahido Church: an Integrally African Church.* Winston-Derek Publishers. Turner, John W. „Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity: Faith and practices". A Country Study: Ethiopia (Thomas P. Ofcansky and LaVerle Berry, eds.)

the State. The promulgation of the secularity of the state in August 1974 put an end to the preponderance of the Ethiopian Church in the country. Furthermore, the agrarian reform announced on March 4, 1975 resulted in an unprecedented blow to the Church's revenues as most of the property of the church, specifically land, was confiscated.

In 1991 the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) ousted the military regime (Derg) and seized state power. The new Ethiopian government led by the EPRDF endorsed secularism with a strict separation of religion and politics. A part of Article 27 of the 1995 Constitution guaranteed everyone the right to hold or adopt a religion or belief of his choice and the freedom, either individually or in community with others, in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship. The regime change in 1991 brought a liberal turn in religious identification. The 1995 Constitution instituted religious freedom and equality through various provisions. One expects from such a liberal constitution a growing sense of empowered religious citizenship. On the contrary, the Ethiopian religious landscape is fraught with tension that occasionally erupts into religious violence. Historic religious minorities, Muslims and Protestants, took advantage of the new socio-political order and have shown a remarkable growth and visibility within the Ethiopian public space (Dereje 2011). Among the several changes that came to the EOTC was the significant decline in the number of EOT Christians. As Østebø and Haustein (2011) noted, the rise of Protestantism, from 5.5% of the overall population in 1984 to 18.5% in 2007 has come at the cost of the EOC, whose share declined from 54.0% in 1984 to 43.5% in 2007.

In the post 1991 period, religious-based strains and polemical exchanges became dominant. As Abbink (2011: 253) mentions in this period, "Religious identities are becoming more dominant as people's primary public identity, and more ideological." He further noted, "This development has ramifications for the public sphere', where identities of a religious nature are currently presented and contested in a self-consciously polemical fashion" (ibid). It is in this context of post 1991 Ethiopia and the aforementioned constitutional space that Ethiopia has witnessed a growing cyber spirituality.

Various forms of ICT have proliferated among the EOT Christians, ranging from websites, blogs, Facebook, twitter to podcasts serving

as alternative participatory platforms. Non-conventional media and social networks are becoming more popular among the EOT Christian youth as among all parts of the society. The profile of people using these networks ranges from young college students, Christian intellectuals and clerics to ordinary *mimanan* (community of believers).[7]

There is an internal debate on"how modern" the church can and should be. There are groups within the church, who oppose all types of modernity and those who are in favour of the selective appropriation of modern technology, especially in the context of the new competitive religious landscape whereby the Protestant churches are actively deploying new technologies. Part of the debate on the modernisation of the Church revolves around technology, music, administrative reform and proselytisation techniques. One of the debates relate to the ongoing movements in EOTC that call for a return to the classical adherence to the earlier Orthodox Church religious practices. One of these practices involves the strict abstinence from the use of modern musical instruments for church service and rather a call to use *Yaredawi Zema* (the hymn of Yared/Jared) and the use of traditional church musical instruments such as *Kebero* (drum), *Tsinasil* (sistra), *Inzira* (a large flute), *Masinquo* (a single-stringed violin), *Begena* (a great harp) and *Mequamiya* (the standing stick).[8] These movements are neo-traditional because they are part of attempts to restore things as they were (or at least as they are perceived to have been) during the period of the sacred history. The other element becoming equally controversial is the use of modern social media for proselytisation and related missions.

One of the widely used social media among the EOT Christians is Facebook. Individual and group Facebook accounts are becoming a means of everyday communication. It has become an everyday encounter to see thousands of EOT individual and group Facebook accounts displaying profile and/or background pictures of religious

7 There are no official census results on the percentage of the total Ethiopian religious communities using social media for religious discussion. This makes it difficult to provide the demographics of the group of believers using social media for variables such as age, education, and gender.

8 This hymn of Yared plays a very important role in all church religious services, some examples being the hymn on liturgy (Holy Mass), *Mahlet* (evening prayer), *Seatat* (the Horologium), *Fithat* (prayer for the dead) and, on spiritual weddings, in the Sunday Schools programs, and during holy days or feasts.

paintings of saints and/or verses from religious scriptures. Facebook is becoming one means through which the Ethiopian orthodox Christians are connected to the global orthodox Christians through such vibrant international Facebook groups as the International Orthodox Christian Network,[9] the International Orthodox Christian Charities and Ethiopian Orthodox and Proud – EOTC Laity. Some group Facebook accounts include the *Orthodox Mels Alat* ("orthodox has response").[10]

The other popular Facebook groups include the Facebook accounts of institutions like the *Mahəbara Qədusan*,[11] and the Ethiopian orthodox Tewahido church Sunday schools. The numerous Facebook groups of *Mahəbarats*[12] (associations) like the *Dekike Nabute* and *Dejocish Ayizagu* have thousands of members and followers around the world. *Dejocish Ayizagu* is an association established with the main aim of supporting rural churches. The etymology of the name of the association *Dejocish Ayizagu* is a combination of two Amharic words meaning "the gates should not be closed" (referring to the gates of churches). a metaphor referring to the purpose of the association, which is to support and rehabilitate old rural churches. As to be presented under section 3 below these *Mahəbarats* are engaged in various activities such as the renovation of old churches, support rural churches, engage in proselytisation and in different development projects. In addition to such group accounts a few renowned church clerics have thousands of followers around the globe. The two examples of such prominent figures are Deacon Daniel Kiberet and Deacon Henok Haile, known for their active blogs and tweets.

9 This Facebook page has over 3 million followers. The group brings together orthodox Christians around the globe; thousands of Ethiopians at home and in the diaspora are followers and members of this group. The official Facebook account is: https://www.facebook.com/MyOCN.

10 The Facebook page of Orthodox Mels Alat can be accessed at: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Orthodox-Mels-ALAT/981956948489884

11 *Mahəbara Qədusan* is an association established during the military regime by Addis Ababa university students, who were sent to Blaté military training college. The association focused on supporting the religious education offered at Churches, and advancing religious education for students studying at secular universities and higher academic institution.

12 The *Mahəbara* has a long tradition in EOTC. It is an informal association, usually made up of lay people meeting monthly on specific days of a month dedicated to a saint venerated in the EOT church.

The other social media widely used by orthodox Christians is YouTube. Numerous videos of religious preachings, polemical exchanges, news, healing testimonies have been uploaded to YouTube. These YouTube audio-visual materials are being posted on the various Facebook pages being viewed, linked and shared by thousands. Furthermore, there are numerous orthodox Christian Internet chat rooms like Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido Yeselamena Yefikir bet* (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido peace and love chat room). These chat rooms are used for cyber social prayers and preaching.[13] The boom in uploads of free religiously themed applications used by the community of believers to spur their practices is another element that best shows the growing trend in the use of Internet media for religious missions.[14] Twitter has become another form of popular social media favoured as a concise medium of communication among the EOT youth and clerics. Twitter is offering the clerics a platform for real time information sharing and often-young clerics address their audiences with short written texts, whereby they provide links to graphics audio-visual materials.[15]

As to be presented in the following section, different social media is serving as a platform for protests, for proselytisation, for communication, for disseminating information and for staging polemical exchanges. As a way of substantiating the argument with empirical examples, the following section presents three of these multiple purposes the social media serves, namely: the use of the social media by EOT Christians as an alternative platform for protest, the use of social media as a platform for staging religious polemics, and its use in the mobilisation of a community of believers for diverse religious-political causes.

The Social Media as an Alternative Platform for Protests

One of the central arguments of this paper is that the online advocacy by the EOT religious columnists is highly informed by the offline political context. As Kalliope (2011) argues, in authoritarian and repressive

13 See http://www.paltalk.com/g2/group/905168365/DisplayGroupDetails.wmt
14 One of such free applications is the *wudase Mariam* prayer application prepared for different operating systems.
15 One of such columnists is Daniel Kiberet, a prominent Christian deacon with a global influence who is popular for his blog and tweets. The best known and widely followed twitter accounts include that of Deacon Henok Haile.

political environments social media serves as an alternative political platform to stage frustrations. In countries like Ethiopia, where the private and independent press and medias are facing different state regulatory challenges ranging from repressive censorship to bans, social media plays a significant role in informing the wider public about socio-political developments in and around the country.

Dereje (2015) discussed how Ethiopian Muslims are using websites to stage their protest. In his discussions on online religious protests, Dereje built on the case of the Ethiopian Muslim protest that started in the summer of 2011 and presented how the activists used two strategies of an online and offline protest. In his account of the online protest, Dereje eloquently presented how iconic images of two forms of subtle resistance of the Muslim protest movement have been widely communicated through social media, i.e., the image of “the Sälät man” and the image of the “the prison wedding.”[16] In a similar manner various orthodox Christians are appropriating social media as an alternative platform to communicate their anger, frustrations and objections against different actors including the government, business firms and other stakeholders, as to be illustrated with case examples.

One of the recent developments of the online protest against the government initiated by some EOT Christians relates to the protest against the accusation of *Mahəbara Qədusan*. *Mahəbara Qədusan* is an association within the EOT church that engages in multiple activities, including support for religious education offered at Churches and the offering of religious education for students studying at secular higher academic institutions. It is an active institution within the EOT church establishments that runs hundreds of projects costing millions of dollars. The association finances churches in remote/rural areas with the money it gets from the contributions of its members

16 The first is the case whereby on 8 August 2013 a young worshiper in Addis Ababa prayed the Eid Sälät encircled by an army of riot police, earning him the revered name of the “Sälät man“ whose image has run on numerous Facebook individual and group pages as a profile and a background picture and catching the attention of international journalists. An equally intruding image popularised by the Muslim social media outlets is the prison wedding between two of the imprisoned protest leaders and their fiancée On 5 May 2013 two of the inmates detained at Qality Prison under terrorism charges, Khalid Ibrahim and Mubarak Adam, entered a marital union with Muna Sirāj and Halima Ahmed respectively.

and an income generated by various businesses it runs such as cafés, shops and its big publishing house.

This association has been accused by church officials of the Holy Synod of having ulterior political motives and in matters related to inciting religious based violence.[17] One of the grounds for labelling *Mahəbara Qədusan* a radical religious organisation partly relates to its labelling as a bastion of the *chauvinists* identified with centrist politics going against the ethno-federal political order of post 1991 Ethiopia. This development has called for a cyber-revolution whereby thousands of EOT Christians in Ethiopia and the diaspora used various social media platforms to show their sympathy and solidarity to the association, defining the allegations as a political measure. The main online protest emerged from the official webpage and Facebook account of *Mahəbara Qədusan*,defining the allegations as groundless. As a way of informing thousands of its members, *Mahəbara Qədusan* posted its official counter narrative to the allegations on its official Facebook page. A number of writings posted on this Facebook wall of the association discussed at length how the ongoing accusations are set ups by the government and its allies within the synod to control the vibrant institution. Numerous individuals and different groups have shared these articles and remarks posted on the Facebook page of the association. Furthermore, a large number of EOT Christian facebookers used the logo of the association as their profile and/or background pictures as a way of showing their sympathy for the association. One informant described this phenomenon as:

When one is confronted with such an outrageous situation whereby he/she cannot take his/her disappointment to the streets, the only option at hand is taking the protest to the web. I and other friends of mine used the logo of Mahəbara Qədusan as our profile picture for a period of two to four weeks in order to communicate the fact that we are against such groundless allegations and that we back the association that is falsely accused. Posting the logo speaks in volumes about the large support the association has among us the EOT youth. (Biniyam, 31, Addis Ababa. January 12, 2015)

17 To read more about the allegations, see http://www.dejeselam.org/2009/10/mahibere-kidusan-next-target.html

Some young orthodox informants feel that this is a balancing act intentionally done to make Muslims feel that they are not being singled out as radicals. As part of the ongoing online protest, several videos have been uploaded to YouTube and Wongeltube. One of these videos is a leaked video from a confidential and closed meeting of the EOT church synod whereby several church clergymen accused the association and made negative statements about the *Mahəbar*. This was recorded with hidden cameras and cell phones and was uploaded to YouTube.[18] These videos had several viewers and a closer reading of the numerous comments on the comment links shows the level of frustration and anger among the community of believers using social media. Others used their own personal blogs and twitter accounts to post statements objecting the accusations.[19] These YouTube videos and articles were posted and shared on several individual activists and groups Facebook pages, informing wider audiences both at home and in the diaspora.

The second example relating to such online protest as the case of the protest against the draft regulation that bans the displaying of religious symbols in public spaces, especially in secular institutions as schoolsThe main points of this draft legislation were brought to the public's attention during the summer of 2014 at a nationwide meeting held by the ministry of education with lecturers from state universities. On this occasion, different government officials heading the meetings talked about the draft manual for religious codes of conduct under preparation. One of the major issues discussed in the manual includes the ban on wearing religious symbols in secular public places.[20] This draft regulation has caused much anger and frustrations among orthodox Christians from different corners of the country and the diaspora. Accordingly, several protestors took their anger to cyberspace. Several pictures like the following were posted on different Facebook pages to communicate their reservations about the draft legislation.

18 One of the videos can be accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbbUXfbFsaU

19 One of such blogs is that of adebabay.com that can be accessed at: http://www.adebabay.com/2012/04/blog-post_20.html, see also the blog of Ahati Tewahido http://www.ahatitewahedo.com/2012/04/blog-post_19.html

20 At the Ethiopian Orthodox Church tradition *mahətab* or *kər* is a bundle of thread used as a cord of faith to symbolize baptism to the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity.

In this context the picture of the *mahiteb* displayed on the background of this picture communicates a statement of resistance. The script in the picture reads “there is no joke with my mahətab and Saint Mary,” accenting both the element of saint veneration, an important feature of the EOT church, and the central symbolic value of *mahətab*. Among Orthodox Christians, veneration of saints is a common religious practice. Saint veneration is in fact one of the major contentions between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the various Protestant denominations (Tibebe Eshete 2009: 67). The strong tradition of venerating saints in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church goes to the extent of dedicating each day of the month to a different saint venerated by the Institution. Furthermore, there were ongoing discussions on Facebook and online pal talk rooms that allude to the situation if the law were passed; the resistance should go to the extent of having the religious symbols tattooed onto their body, an instance of embodying resistance or a kind of every-day form of resistance. The scripts of the pictures posted have strong political statements of resistance against this recent draft legislation that bans displaying religious symbols in a public space.

The other example of an online protest by EOT members was against a business firm called BGI Ethiopia.[21] BGI is the leading brewery in Ethiopia with the biggest share in the domestic beer market, which is known for its beer brand St George's. This beer has been on the market since 1922. The beer and the city's main football club called Saint George F.C. are named after one of the revered veteran saints of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Saint Georg. Some EOT Christians are objecting to the fact that the saint's name is used as a trademark and branding an alcoholic drink. The logo of "ban St George" was used as a logo for this online protest and has been shared by several orthodox Christian face bookers. This is described by some informants as being "absurd" and against the basic teachings of the church that bans the consumption of alcohol:

> The main reason why I shared the logo of ban St George beer on my Facebook wall is to show my deep-seated reservation against the use of this holy name for branding an alcoholic drink. Whenever someone comes across the name St Georg displayed as a trademark on beer bottles, the person automatically relates the name of the beer to the saint, Saint George, venerated at our church. For an outsider this conveys the wrong message that consuming alcohol is tolerable at our church. As an orthodox Christian, such potential misinformation concerns me at the utmost. We were not around in the 1920's to object to its very usage as a trademark. Now that we are in a better situation to understand the potential damage such branding can do to the image of the church, we need to object to this offensive act. The Protestants can use this as one entry point to approach many fellow EOT Christians. We are not asking for the patent right or getting a share of the profit; all we are objecting to is that the company should avoid trademarks with such religious symbols. We are in a political environment where one cannot make such valuable critiques to the investor as such moves can easily be labeled as Elimatawi (anti developmentalist moves). That is why we have to appeal to the cyber community of believers through such online initiatives. (Yared Bira, 33, Addis Ababa, 13 May 2015)

21 This Facebook group has the slogan *Kidus Giyogisin silemediwew simun la msascahanat matakamun ikawamalahu*, i.e., I object to the use of the name of my patron saint for trademark. This group has a total of 6,045 members and can be accessed at www.causes.com/causes/564821-?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser.

Social Media as a Platform for Religious Polemics

Polemical exchanges between different religious groups are becoming one of the elements hinting at the growing religious-based tension in Ethiopia in recent years. Writing on the current religious polemics Jon Abbink (2011) noted that the potential effects of such polemical exchanges are leading to the redrawing of boundaries, the decline of dialogue and toleration, and deep rivalry, extending into the social and even demographic sphere.

A closer look at and analyses of the polemics in and around EOT Christians show that several orthodox Christians are engaged in intra- and inter-religious group polemical exchanges. The intra EOT polemical debates involve those exchanges between the mainline orthodox Christians and the different factions within the church, such as the *tahadəso* (reformist movement) and the recent millenarian movements of *Daqiqa Eləyasawəyan*, a splinter group interested in reforming the church and purifying it. The inter group polemical exchanges refer to the one between the EOT Christians and both Muslims and protestant groups.

In recent years, social media has become an alternative platform to stage such diverse polemical exchanges between contending groups. As this paper exclusively focuses on the developments around the EOT church and community of believers, it gives an example of how different EOT clerics involved in religious polemics target different contending religious groups and how the social media is serving as a platform to stage such discourses.

Numerous Ethiopian orthodox clerics and protestant pastors are engaged in religious debates of a polemical nature. One of such Ethiopian orthodox cleric known for his sentimental preachings and polemical exchanges is a young cleric named Miherete Ab Asefa. Miherete Ab's polemical preachings target Muslims, Protestants and the various reformist movements within the EOT church. A VCD entitled *protestanatwi jihad* ("jihad waged by the Protestants") based on the teachings of Miherete Ab became popular.[22] The polemics can be inferred from the provocative title of the VCD where the word *jihad*

22 A copy of this controversial video can be accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y47C_SCkjIA Protestant Vs Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido ፕሮቴስታንታዊ ጂሃድ

is used as a metaphor to refer to the proselytisation missions of various Protestant denominations. As a way of speaking about the major theological differences between the Ethiopian orthodox Christians and Protestants, the preacher passes some statements, described by Protestants as being offensive. This video is uploaded to YouTube and it has several viewers a day. Such polemical exchanges are not limited to verbal attacks on theological differences. Scandalous news, the misinterpretation of religious figures, is also used in such polemical exchanges. The latest example comes from February 2015, whereby an Ethiopian Protestant pastor and singer is alleged to have sexually assaulted a married woman, news that was shared by several orthodox Christians in various Facebook video uploads.[23]

The Facebook group founded by the EOT Christian youth, which is renowned for its provocative polemics, is named *Orthodox Mels alalt* ("orthodox has a response"). As its very name implies that this group is actively engaging in direct polemical exchanges with the Protestants, the profile picture of this Facebook group is a cartoon of a Protestant pastor sexually assaulting a girl, who approached him for prayer.[24] The posts of this group address the Protestants as *Pente*, a derogatory term often used by orthodox Christians as a gloss to the various denominations of the Protestant Churches.

Numerous audio CDs, DVDs, VCDs and MP3 files with polemical speeches, sermons, religious songs and teachings are uploaded to various social media pages being shared and viewed by orthodox Christians in Ethiopia and the diaspora. One such inter-group polemical exchange is the heated theological debate between the EOT Christians and Muslims. One example is the four volume VCD by the aforementioned Ethiopian orthodox Tewahido clerk, Miherete Ab Asefa, entitled *Tallaq Fiticha* ("The Big Confrontation").[25] This VCD is a recording of sermons of MihereteAb Ab responding to the Indian-

23 For a relevant news item, see http://addisvideo.net/protestant-gospel-singer-and-pastor-tekeste-getnet-accused-for-sexually-assaulting-a-married-woman/

24 The official page of the Orthodox Mels Alat group is: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Orthodox-Mels-ALAT/981956948489884

25 This video can be accessed on YouTube at: http://www.ethiotube.net/video/12480/Islam-vs-Ethiopian-Orthodox-Tewahedo--ታላቁ-ፍጥጫ--Part-3-of-5. At the time this paper was written the video had 261,009 viewers.

Muslim *da'wa* preacher Dr Zakir Naik.[26] These videos are shared by numerous orthodox Facebookers and are posted on various websites.

The intra EOT polemics involve various fractions of the EOT Christians. The main targets of such online polemical attacks are the reformist movements within the Orthodox Church such as the *Tahadəso*. The *Tahadəso* are groups of orthodox Christians interested in reforming the church, as it features in the very name, *Tahadəso* (meaning reform). The 16 parts of video clips, entitled *Ethiopian orthodox Tewahido vs. Tahadəso*,with preachings about this splinter group within the EOT church were uploaded to YouTube.[27] These videos are shared on Facebook walls of several orthodox Christians. Some orthodox Christians have twitted about the controversy surrounding the *Tahadəso*.[28] The *Tahadəso* movement that is denounced by the Orthodox Church as a heretical group has become the target of online movements.

The other group that has faced equal resistance is the movement of *Daqiqa Eləyasawəyan*, followers of the prophet Elias. This is a splinter group preaching about the coming of the biblical prophet Elias in 2007. Prophet Elias's ministry during his second coming as explained by the *Daqiqa Eləyasawəyan* includes recolouring the Ethiopian orthodox Tewahido church.[29] The *Mahəbara Qədusan*, who has extensively published and made public denouncements of this sect, forwarded one of the major reactions to this group. These publications and the statements were shared by numerous Facebookers and hence had a wider web presence. Young EOT clerics and activists uploaded their preaching against this group on various social media pages.[30] The videos are shared by several Facebook groups and are uploaded on active blogs of religious activists.

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26 Some of the teachings of Zakir Naik and debates include his controversial preaching about the nature of Christ see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5TBPBj4Z5k

27 New Ethiopian Orthodox Answer to Protestant and Tahadəso የተኩላውለምድሲገፈፍ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7FpYEI1a0c At the time this paper was written the video had 183,737 viewers. The other polemical video between the EOT and Tahadəso can be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BntmKfpeYOM

28 See https://twitter.com/yonasseyoum2/status/524820313524019203

29 For more on the Daqiqa Elias movement, see Dereje Feyissa 2015

30 *Mels Le Eliasawiyan* is a response to the *Eliasawiyan* by Miherete Asefa - Ethiopian Orthodox Preaching: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWh5FTgN4eE At the time this paper was written the video had 183,730.

As the cases of polemical exchanges with the Protestants, Muslims and reformist movements presented above illustrate, social media is becoming one of the alternative platforms for orthodox Christians to stage their difference. Moreover, social media is also serving as a platform to mediate the different factions of the church. The best example for such reconciliatory initiatives is the EOT blog of "Abba Selama," named after the first EOC pope, Abba Selama aka Kesate Berhan/Friminatos.[31]

Social Media as a Means of Mobilisation

Social media is being widely used for mobilising the community of believers in Ethiopia and beyond. The purposes of such mobilisations vary to a large extent as can be seen by the examples provided in this section.

In some cases, social media is being used as a way of informing the community of believers around the globe about the challenges orthodox Christians are facing in Ethiopia, as in the case of incidents of faith-based tensions and conflicts. The intention in passing on this information is to generate sympathy and to show solidarity to co-religionists affected in faith-based conflicts. One recent example is the petrifying pictures of dead bodies of Christians in Nigeria and Syria posted by the orthodox Christian network as a way of informing Christians about such religious-based conflicts happening in different parts of the globe.[32] Such graphic pictures and live videos of attacks on Christians posted on YouTube[33] and on the Facebook walls of several Ethiopian orthodox Christians around the world, is described by many as an act of informing one another about situations of fellow religionists and as an act of showing sympathy to the victims. This further demonstrates the growing pattern of inscribing global issues into Ethiopia's religious landscape.

In addition to sharing this global news, some Facebookers emphasise the victim's narratives in the context of the growing inter-faith conflict in post 2006 Ethiopia. Ethiopia in the post 2006 period has

31 The official page of the group can be accessed at: http://www.abaselama.org/
32 For more on this, see: https://www.facebook.com/MyOCN/posts/10153111956695330?pnref=story
33 The video can be accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwSYIHlQ5ZI

witnessed major religious conflicts, which defined the terms of the political debate. In the past decade various incidents were reported from clashes in different parts of the country, including those incidents of religious-based conflicts in Addis Ababa, Harar, Jimma, Gonder, Agarro, Alaba and Wolenkomi towns (Zelalem 2009). One of these incidents happened in Jimma town in western Ethiopia, whereby the gruesome depiction of religious violence was circulated nationwide and beyond by means of audio-visual materials. Several days of violence between Muslims and Christians swept through the area, ending with causalities and significant damage to property (Zelalem 2009). The repugnant aftermath of the massacre of worshipers in the church was captured with videotape and uploaded to YouTube. Soon bootlegged copies including an edited version superimposed with such phrases as "*Look at what they are doing to us*" began showing up across the country and being posted in various Ethiopian websites.[34] The graphic videos were uploaded to YouTube, having several viewers and being shared by thousands of Facebookers. This was used as a mobilisation strategy to draw sympathy with the victims and show the solidarity of orthodox and non-orthodox Christians both at home and in the diaspora. Many have posted these graphic pictures or at least communicated their sympathy by sharing the videos or pictures on their Facebook walls. One young Ethiopian orthodox Christian explained this phenomenon by saying:

> The graphic pictures are efficient in generating sympathy and drawing the attention of believers to the seriousness of the matter. Social media is offering us the platform to inform one another about such deadly attacks targeting thousands of fellow Christians both in Ethiopia and beyond. In situations where there are no free independent media outlets to discuss such issues, social media acts as an alternative to forums to communicate about such horrific incidents. By watching the video one can only admit the fact that as orthodox Christians we are confronted with a dreadful threat. (Nesanet Yamiru, 28, June 25, 2015, Addis Ababa)

A similar incident of the torching of and attack on an EOT church happenedin Silte Zone in SNNPR, in the neighbourhood of Qoto Baloso, in November 2011. A live picture of the incident, whereby a

34 For a copy of this video, see the following two links: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwSYIHlQ5ZI and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX9gILYFLkg

mob torched a church, was caught on video and uploaded to YouTube and Wongeltube. As in the case of the 2006 incident, this generated anger, frustration and discussions amongst orthodox Christians. As a result, a number of Christian networks around the globe posted on their respective websites the video clip showing live pictures of the churches being burnt down.[35] Renowned clerics took the theme as one of their main agendas of preaching. Very controversial songs by renowned orthodox Christian singers subtly addressed the topic, communicating the concerns about growing faith-based conflicts in the country. Videos of these preachings and songs were posted and shared by a number of Facebook groups. Similarly, several Ethiopian Muslims countered this by posting Christian violence against Muslims in Burma.Thus, by highlighting Christian violence in another part of the globe, Ethiopian Muslims seek to show that there is nothing inherently violent about Islam.

Furthermore, social media is being used for the purpose of mobilising the community of believers for different missions, i.e., supporting rural churches, engaging in the rehabilitation of churches and monasteries. Associations like *Mahəbara Qədusan. Dekike Nabute* and *Dejocish Ayizagu*, mentioned in section 2 above, capitalise on social media for mobilising the community to engage in such initiatives and volunteer for numerous projects. Such *Mahəbarats* as *Dejocish Ayizagu, Dekike Nabute* and *Mahəbara Qədusan* use their Facebook pages to reach out to the millions of orthodox Christians around the world.

An example of a giant project, advertised on social media, is the online fund-raising event held to raise funds for the construction of a Theology College in the Muslim-dominated and conflict-ridden part of the Jimma zone. This is a project run by the *Dekike Nabute* association. As Jimma is one of the epicentres of conflicts between orthodox Christians and Muslims (Zelalem 2009), and an area where several churches were attacked at different times, the construction of such a spiritual college in this very area was a project supported by millions of orthodox Christians. Both the advertisement of the fund raising and the inauguration of the college in December 2014 were posted on several websites, YouTube and official Facebook accounts of various EOT associations, individuals and groups. By posting pictures

35 See http://pamelageller.com/2011/03/ethiopia-muslims-burn-down-five-churches-while-screaming-their-war-cry-allah-akbar-falsely-accuse-ch.html/

of old ruined and impoverished churches on Facebook pages by these associations, the different groups mobilise the community of believers and donors to engage in the rehabilitation projects of rural churches and monasteries.[36]

The third example relates to the case of an online anti-homo movement.[37] Several EOT and non-EOT Christians opposing homosexuality and LGBT shared the call for an anti-gay demonstration planned in April 2014 on their Facebook walls, while others communicated their support by posting anti-gay symbols. There are several anti-LGBT Facebook accounts in Ethiopia such as *Ethiopia says NO to Homosexuality* and the Facebook account "Stop the LGBT! Movement."[38] This Facebook group critised President Obama's latest trip to Africa, how he abstained from making any remarks about gay rights, which he had made in Kenya, although he had clearly stated that he planned to do so right before he left for his trip to Africa.[39]

Conclusion

Based on an in-depth analysis of the case of orthodox Christians, this paper argues that, despite the poor proliferation of the Internet in the global south, there is a growing trend of appropriate Internet forms of communication media among the religious communities.

The signification of social media by different EOT actors shows a growing cyber spirituality in Ethiopia. The large-scale use of such alternative media has boosted the power of spiritual celebrities, who are renowned for their powerful preaching, polemical exchanges and critical take on the government and the Holy Synod. Social media is seen as offering alternative platforms for expressing opinions in a highly censored political environment. This element relates to Kalliope Kiriakopoulos' view. As has been elucidated with the cases of resistance against the legislation on religious codes of conduct in public spaces, social media is being used to stage protests. The solidarity with

36 One such posts can be accessed on: http://dekikenabute.blogspot.de/2013/01/blog-post_8936.html

37 For more on this, see: http://www.thereporterethiopia.com/index.php/news-headlines/item/1682-youth-forum-awaits-permission-to-hold-mass-demo-against-lgbt

38 See https://www.facebook.com/stop.LGBT.0?hc_location=ufi

39 See https://www.facebook.com/NOTOINETHIOPIA

Mahəbara Qədusan shows how this alternative media is used by the religious community to stage protests against various stakeholders.

In the context of growing inter-religious competition, and the felt need to reclaim the public space in the post 1991 political landscape of Ethiopia, social media is used to stage polemical exchanges, disseminatie information and generate sympathy from co-religionists. As the case material presented shows, the communication technologies are creating new transnational religious communities, which are mobilised for different causes. Social media is playing a quintessential role in the creation of such transnational religious communities (i.e., the community of orthodox Christians) regardless of differences, as is manifested in the case of the orthodox Christian network.

This paper argues that social media plays a quintessential role in enhancing local religious activism linked to transnational groups. By going beyond such generic arguments, linking the religious activism of youth to the effects of globalisation, the substantial issues often raised by these youth are often informed by domestic socio-political developments. By looking beyond this flow of ideas from the outside and by addressing the link between global and local religious activism it is equally important to see the agency of local religious actors in appropriating and making use of social media and other technologies, evident in their sense of mission to protect the interest of their religious community. Furthermore, as the experiences from Ethiopia discussed in this paper show, online discussions are extensions of the offsite everyday politics at home. Hence, as a way of understanding the debates on social media, one needs to contemplate relevant developments beyond cyberspace.

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REPORTS

9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN STUDIES "VIVA AFRICA", PRAGUE, OCTOBER 22-23, 2015

Petr Skalník

The Viva Africa conference has been a representative undertaking of the Czech Association for African Studies. Originally it was organized yearly in Plzeň (Pilsen) in the west of the Czech Republic from 2006 on. After three initial gatherings in Plzeň the organisation moved to Hradec Králové in Eastern Bohemia. The last conference again took place in Plzeň in 2013. There the Czech Association for African Studies was founded and it was decided that the conference will forthwith be organized biennially. Most of the previous conferences were followed by publication of proceedings or carefully edited collective monographs. Some of them were published and distributed by Lit Verlag.

Yet the first Viva Africa took place in Prague, where African studies started in 1961, but after more than forty years of existence ceased to exist not long ago. This year the conference was organized by the Metropolitan University Prague. The next conference, in 2017, will return to Hradec Králové. The topic of the conference under review was 'Knowledge Production On and Within Africa'. The format of Viva Africa conferences has been international, there have been no registration fees, papers are presented and discussed in English. The face-to-face size of the meeting allowed for plenary sessions throughout the conference. Obviously, Viva Africa has been an opportunity for Czech and Central European Africanists to discuss their findings with participants from other parts of Europe, from Africa and further afield.

This year's Viva Africa had a packed programme. After the opening speech by the Rector Magnificus of the Metropolitan University of Prague and the keynote address by Daniel Bach of Bordeaux (see

summary of his speech below), there followed five panels in one and a half day, originally comprising 26 papers. That would have been too much, given mere 90 minutes per panel. 'Luckily' in four out of five panels some participants did not arrive while at least one apologized just because there was not enough time space for his paper. The papers were grouped into panels according to the topics dealt with.

The panel 1 heading was 'Contemporary State and Politics' and diverse papers dealt with the generation of knowledge about models of political and social organization in the north of Mali and Niger (Georg Klute of Bayreuth University), indigenous gardening as a way to demonstrate belonging by non-Africans (Mvuselelo Ngcoya and Narendran Kumarakulasingam of the University of Kwazulu-Natal), Somalia as a failed state and at the same time improving (Victor Marsai of Budapest's National University of Public Service), Boko Haram as a logical result of socio-economic conditions in Northeastern Nigeria (Vladimír Klíma, emeritus of the Oriental Institute, Prague).

Panel 2 on 'Representation and the Study of Africa' was also full of diversity. Petr Skalník (University of Hradec Králové) reported on his experience with knowledge production while carrying out fieldwork in West Africa while Getnet Tamene (University of A. Dubček in Trenčín, Slovakia) discussed problems of inequities regarding knowledge and knowledge production in Africa. Veronika Danielová of Trnava's University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius critically looked at images about the 'dark continent' then and now and Marta Nowakowska of Wroclaw's Gen. T. Kościuszko Military Academy submitted to merciless critique images of Africa in Polish printed and online media. The fifth paper in this panel dealth with African Christianity as a hybrid between world views (Anna Niedźwiedź, Jagiellonian University, Cracow).

Panel 3 on 'International Engagement with Africa' opened with a powerful critique of the 'Africa rising' slogan by Ian Taylor (University of St. Andrews, Scotland), followed by a discussion of the controversial involvement of China and the United States in the African petroleum sector (Dominik Kopiński of the University of Wroclaw). Alžběta Šváblová of Bayreuth University spoke about her research on reconciliation in Liberia. The last paper in this panel was on the politics of representation of contemporary African literature (Dorota Pucherová of the Slovak Academy of Sciences).

Panel 4 was entitled 'African Histories' and was the only where all scheduled participants were actually present. It was introduced by Viera Pawliková-Vilhanová of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, who sketched the 20tcentury historiography of Africa and pointed to trends in the present 21st century. More concretely Jarmila Švihranová of the Danubius University showed in her paper how Africans were represented in German imperial documents on German Southwest Africa, today's Namibia. The symbolism of colonial Omdurman was shown on archival photographs (Maciej Kurcz of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius at Trnava, Slovakia). Alemayehu Kumsa of Charles University Prague presented a study of the historical development of Boko Haram. Finally Silvester Trnovec of the Slovak Academy of Sciences showed how the history of West Africa was influenced by French colonial historical concepts. A lively discussion had to be cut short because of time restraints.

Panel 5 entitled 'Cultural Issues' was in contrast to previous panels shorter because only two out of five speakers arrived. Vít Zdrálek of Charles University Prague discussed bio-ethnography as applied to South African music research. Kateřina Mildnerová of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius illustrated the Eurocentrism of the Christian missionary conceptualization of *vodun* on the basis of her field data from southern Benin.

The conference was complemented by cultural programmes in the evening of the first day and two book launches of recent publications by Kateřina Mildnerová, *From Where Does the Bad Wind Blow? Spiritual Healing and Witchcraft in Lusaka* (2015), and *Global Challenges, Local Reactions: Czech Republic and South Africa*, (2014), edited by Hana Horáková and Stephanie. Rudwick . Both were published by Lit Verlag in Berlin. The latest issue of *Modern Africa* (3-1-2015) was distributed for free to the participants.

The 9th International Conference on African Studies has successfully carried on a fine tradition of Central European conferences that is now firmly anchored in the international calendar of African Studies. Remarkable was the number of papers from Slovakia. It was decided to publish a selection of the conference papers under the editorship of Hana Horáková and Kateřina Werkman. It is hoped that in the coming

years Viva Africa will continue to contribute to the scholarly exchange within Europe and especially with African Africanists.

AFRICA IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: THE FRONTIER AS CONCEPT AND METAPHOR[1]

Daniel C. Bach

Frontiers, like the spaces and territories they delineate, are about geographic transcription as much as about social spaces and mental maps that shape and define 'otherness'. The frontier, as a concept and metaphor, provides valuable insight into the recent evolution and ambiguities associated with representations of Africa within international relations. Three broad threads may be identified: the metaphor of a ‚distant abroad', historically rooted in depictions of Africa as the dark continent; new humanitarianism and its emphasis on Africa as a ‚significant other', and the new global frontier narratives, strongly evocative of Jackson Turner's interpretation of 19th century US history. This last thread relates in practice to two sets of scenarios: the intensification of Africa's international integration as a provider of commodities, or alternatively insertion through the diversification of African economies away from commodities, in conjunction with innovative initiatives and processes. Depictions of Africa also point to a fault line that permeates the study of Africa in International Relations: the propensity to focus on the ideas and impact of exogenous actors as opposed to Africa's role and impact on the latter

Africa as a ‚distant abroad': the Dark continent syndrome

In the wake of the end of the cold war, the dissemination of depreciated representations of Africa coincided with perceptions of the continent as strategically insignificant to Europe and North America, economically marginalized and unlikely to seize the opportunities that the dynamics of globalisation could offer.

1 Summary of the keynote address given at the 9th International Conference on African Studies "Viva Africa" held at Prague, October 22-23, 2015. Adapted from Daniel C. Bach. 2015. *Regionalism in Africa: Genealogies, Institutions and Trans-State networks*. Abingdon: Routledge.

The idea of a 'marginalisation' of Africa gained currency during these years. The notion originally drew its meaning from scholars like Bill Warren who, in the 1980s, interpreted marginalisation as 'an anarchic, chaotic, unplanned, sometimes brutal, but nevertheless vigorous ... process' of increasing integration (Warren 1980: 223). This legacy was increasingly overlooked as marginalisation became a rallying point for the study of the restructuring of core-periphery relations within the international system (Clapham 1996; Boone 2012: 623–626). The marginalisation of Africa, Claude Ake perceptively observed in 1993, amounted to a process of 'vulnerable incorporation' of the African continent into a highly integrated and forever shrinking world' (Ake 1996: 9). The metaphor, he added, also served as a vehicle for a 'highly visible negative image [whereby] Africa is being construed as the ideal of how not to be'.

The dissemination of marginalisation narratives stimulated the revival of old Eurocentric images and racial stereotypes. These, initially popularised by Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, were no longer the exclusive preserve of Western popular culture. Old Victorian clichés also converged with neo-Hegelian representations of Africa as a continent of barbarians, devoid of any history and culture.

Africa as a ‚significant other': new humanitarianism

The first decade of the 21st century inaugurated a succession of readjustments in international perceptions of and interactions with Africa. New forms of multilateral initiatives, such as the Millenium Development goals, combined with fresh African diplomatic moves. crafted an alternative path to the Africa fatigue and disengagement mantras. The expression of humanitarian concerns towards Africa simultaneously became an issue prone to global consensus at a time when the Europeans and North Americans were bitterly divided, both domestically and between them, over the US intervention in Iraq. The momentum, fuelled by perceptions of Africa as a continent devoid of much strategic relevance, culminated in 2005, the year of Africa.

Africa's build-up into an emblematic expression of global morality reached it apex during 2005, as Britain's presidency of the EU and G8 offered additional leverage to capitalise on this trend. Blair's parting shot came with the release, in March 2005, of the

recommendations for a global action plan prepared by his 19 member-strong Commission for Africa which, through a combination of 'moral exhortation ... argument and ... analysis' undertook to clarify the UK's approach to politics and development in Africa (Porteus 2008: 62). The Make Poverty History Coalition, established in 2003 to mobilise public opinion around the G8 summit, was also particularly active. Spearheaded by 540 religious groups, trade unions and non-governmental organisations, it was committed to a broad agenda on social justice for the global poor, but was in effect primarily associated with Africa (Harrison 2010: 391–392). An unprecedented rise of transnational ‚celebrity humanitarianism' also contributed to public opinion mobilisation through media interviews, concerts, rallies, and a heavy moralizing discourse on debt forgiveness and increased aid (Njorge 2011: 239-41). Mobilization climaxed during the Live 8 concerts that were made to coincide with the G8 summit in Gleneagles and attracted over two million participants in Europe, North America, Russia and South Africa.

Africa as a global frontier

Descriptions of Africa as the 'world's last frontier', the 'untapped' or 'overlooked' continent are not new. They are a reminder of the days when explorers, soldiers, traders and settlers claimed, each in their own way, to have 'discovered' Africa and its people.

Fresh interest for the African ‚frontier' was prompted by the discovery of substantial new oil reserves in the 1990s. By the turn of the 21st century the combination of technological progress and a favourable business environment accounted for West Africa's depiction as 'the last large unexplored energy frontier'. The development of new technology made it possible to tap deep and ultra-deep offshore oilfields, prompting a reappraisal of the reserves and production potential of the Gulf of Guinea. Extremely favourable business terms were negotiated with African states, thanks to depressed oil prices.

By the mid-2000s already, the engagement of China and the BRICS in general operated as a key driver in the process of the deepening and broadening of Africa's integration in the global economy. The BRICS' quest for resources, markets and global alliances contributed to redefining the concept of a ‚new frontier' beyond the realm

of commodities. The potential of African domestic markets was rediscovered by private investors across the world, now lured by the solvency of new ‚middle' classes and the assumption that the rise of the active population, unparalleled in other world regions, were more an opportunity than a burden.

The dynamism of the African ‚frontier' was, then as now, as much about foreign engagement as about intra-societal dynamics and innovations associated with enhanced connectivity and the defragmentation of markets. The processes at play challenge conventional wisdoms and images, including the idea of a new scramble that would leave Africans as mere bystanders. Driven by commodities and supported by the massive engagement of Chinese firms and migrants, the ‚go out' strategy of the Chinese has contributed to transform Africa into a global arena where new strategies and paradigms are being tested. China's demand for energy and raw materials has terms of trade between manufactures and raw materials that, in spite of a brief downturn in 2008–2009, are unprecedented in the history of the African continent. Trade flows, greenfield investment and infrastructural development underscore strategies that revolve around investment as much as they relate to deep transformations in the aid-business nexus.

The financial crisis of 2008–2009 was a first challenge to the rising Africa narratives. By January 2009 Africa's equity markets, save for South Africa, had suffered a dramatic outflow of liquidity within a few months. Five years later, as investors were again eyeing stock markets in sub-Saharan Africa, the continent was more modestly presented as offering ‚the ultimate in risk versus return' ratios, thanks to the combination of ‚some of the world's riskiest markets' with opportunities for hefty profits (Wigglesworth 2013).

With the collapse of global oil and commodity prices since 2013, the embedded limitations of the African frontier ‚thesis' have been highlighted. This also invites to draw comparisons with the West frontier thesis of Jackson Turner. For the American historian and his followers the ‚Western frontier' was both a moving space and a force for integration, owing to the development of individual rights, self-reliance and ultimately a distinctive American identity (Mikesell 1960: 62–74). Turner, however, overlooked the dark side of a process that

also involved the destruction of ecosystems and the extermination, or marginalisation, of the indigenous American-Indian people.

The related notion of pioneer front (front pionnier), as developed by French geographers, similarly focuses on territorial expansion, without endorsing the teleological assumptions of the Western frontier thesis. Pioneer fronts merely refer to the penetration and appropriation of new spaces for mining or agriculture, along with the building of infrastructure and the establishment of new communities. Field studies conducted in Brazil and other countries in Latin America, but also in Indonesia and southwest Côte d'Ivoire, have come to the conclusion that they involve a high risk of marginalisation for local communities. They also carry high environmental risks, whenever agricultural expansion and the quest for natural resources target hitherto uncharted territories and ecosystems. The study of the pioneer front also calls attention to the expansion of the control exercised by a core over its periphery, a process that has contributed to revive the metaphor of a new ‚scramble' for Africa based, this time, on 'the extraction of Africa's resources [through] renewed exploitation, accumulation, marginalisation of African economic actors ... and the corruption of African elites'(Southall and Melber 2009: 404). With the dramatic fall of Africa's mineral commodity prices during 2015, such a debate is more relevant than ever...

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REVIEWS

Hana Horáková and Stephanie Rudwick, eds. 2014. *Global Challenges and Local Reactions: Czech Republic and South Africa*. Berlin: Lit Verlag. 243 pages. ISBN 978-3-643-90591-8.

The book under review presents an interdisciplinary evaluation of the political transitions in the Czech Republic and South Africa. The comparative perspective is founded on the effects that globalisation and the hegemony of neo-liberalism had on the move towards liberal democracy in both countries. Because of the timeframe when the two case studies occurred the book is able to point out that a number of common features and parallels in the two transitions can be identified, as well as the post-transition environment and how this has played out in South Africa and the Czech Republic.

In both countries elements within the "democratisation" movements represented a nascent congregation of individuals who saw themselves as the heir-apparents to the new dispensation. The cause of an aspirant elite, a discomfort with socialism and the undue influence of external actors advocating liberalism were the hallmarks of this tendency. The constraints of globalisation and the collapse of communism in the Eastern bloc meant that in both countries the global uncertainties that affected all socialists at the time seemed to suggest that there were no apparent alternatives to capitalist democracy. This then served the interests of those fractions advocating neo-liberalism. It must be remembered that the two transitions took place at a time when the principal ideological resource available to actors' advocating a neo-liberal economic programme was the rise to hegemony of market ideology. The collapse of communism ensured that there was no alternative economic discourse to that of the market and the market was celebrated as the only rational mechanism for the efficient production and allocation of goods within and among societies. The legitimisation of market discourse was clearly evident in both Czecho-slovakia and in South Africa. Though this discourse rightly critiqued the tendency to bureaucratism and the lack of tangible democracy in

the Soviet-style centrally planned economies, the practical effects were to undermine confidence in socialism per se and promote a rightward shift in both countries. Closely following the Gramscian understanding of how common sense is promoted, media interventions simply rubbished alterna-tives to the orthodoxy.

The involvement in the transitions by two of the most powerful international financial institutions was remarkable. Throughout the transition period, leaderships within both countries came under relentless pressure from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in favour of more "realistic" economic strategies. Throughout the transition period, a plethora of research projects funded by the IMF and World Bank corresponded with and refined the same project. Equally, passion for the norms of neo-liberalism pervaded the press, with analysts openly recommending the implementation of IMF-style structural adjustment programmes. This factor considerably strengthened the hand of pro-capitalist organic intellectuals, who relatively easily embarked on a concentrated political and ideological struggle to promote the hegemonic norms which they subscribed to. By doing so, the policies that should not be pursued were comprehensively rejected, very often at nominally technical levels. In doing so, such actors were quite effective in their ideological propaganda about economic policies that should not be implemented on the grounds that they may damage vested economic interests. Henceforth, those fractions that opposed the neo-liberal agenda were cast from the terrain of the debate as lacking any serious and rigorous contribution to be made.

The results, as the book shows, means that it has been very hard to locate equity as an explicit policy goal in either Pretoria or Prague post-transition. Instead, the pathologies associated with trickle-down economics are clearly evident. For example, the Gini coefficient in the Czech Republic has risen quite considerably since 1990 whilst the gap between rich and poor regions of the Czech Republic has grown exponentially. Whereas Prague was only 29 percent richer than the average region in 1990 it is now well over 100 percent higher. Equally, among OECD countries, the Czech Republic has the lowest minimum wage based on the median national wage. The economic problems that South Africa faces are well-known and hardly need any comment.

The book has a number of chapters that are set out to compare the two countries, with contributions on them as emerging donors, nationalist discourse, language policies, and regional strategies drawing together evidence from both case studies. There are then stand-alone chapters on the role of women in the respective countries as well as a commentary on the HIV/AIDS situation in South Africa. A chapter on transitional justice and reconciliation efforts in both countries is particularly interesting, examining how both states have dealt with the traumas of the past.

Overall, the book is an interesting treatment of two countries that though are in very different parts of the world exhibit some similarities as a result of the timing of their transitions to liberalism. As a project that brings together Czech and South African academics it is a success and further evidence of the healthy state of affairs regarding academic engagement with Africa in the Czech Republic. In this sense, the book may also be seen as part of the wider renaissance in Central and Eastern Europe of African Studies as a discipline.

Ian Taylor

Viera Pawliková-Vilhanová. 2013. *The Production of History and Culture in Africa Revisited: Problems, Methods, Sources*. Studia Orientalia Monographica, Volume 4. Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied, Ústav orientalistiky. 119 pages. ISBN 978-80-8095-085-9.

It is a highly ambitious if not impossible task to make a thorough revision of the hitherto world historiography concerning Africa, primary and secondary sources, to evaluate approaches, production and results achieved within that vast area of academic research and amateur endeavour. The success in outlining and digesting the theme is based on the wide experience and extraordinary skills of the author who has been dealing with African topics for decades.

An ample bibliography (pp. VII-XXXII) commences a little unusual, but adds to the fully adequate composition of the study. The Introduction (pp. 1-4) mentions the essential changes in the conception of African history, which occurred after the WWII. The author also mentions her

previous research in the field of African historical production. Part I, "The Emergence of African Historical Studies: Problems and Methods" (pp. 9-71), is the core of the book. Eurocentric ideas were abandoned in the 1960s to open space for many emerging themes of African history seen from the African point of view, but European and African authors were meeting with innumerable difficulties when looking for sufficient sources and proper methods for elaborating the contemporary topics in books and/or specialised journals. Since the 1970s, the crisis has been overcome thanks to, above all, African authors, be they white or black. The proof for it is not only the *UNESCO General History of Africa,* but also a rich production of individual historians interconnected by means of several global networks.

Part II, called "Production of Historical Knowledge in Africa: Sources, Edition of Sources and Projects" (pp. 77-103), is of extreme value for any Africanist. Various oral, Arabic, Ajami sources, historical texts written by African amateur historians and European sources related to all the important periods are reviewed here with the indication of important titles. Also the most useful projects (e. g. *Fontes Historiae Africanae*, *The Endangered Archives Programme* etc.) are evaluated and characterised as a space for gathering new information, concepts and approaches.

The Appendix offers A List of all Fontes Historiae Africanae Publications (pp. 105-111), the closing Index (pp. 113-119) enables the reader a better orientation in names and notions introduced. A short, but useful portrait of the author appears on the last but one page of the book jacket.

The above-mentioned overview of African historiography is firmly rooted in the anglophone and francophone production. Although some Russian, German, Czech and other authors are indicated, the significant contribution by Portuguese-writing authors has almost been omitted. In our opinion, such works as *Guia de fontes portuguesas para a história de África* (I-II, Lisbon: Instituto Português de Arquivos 1991, 1993) or studies explaining the important phases of the African decolonisation (e.g., Portuguese eye-witness Pedro Pezarat Correia. 1991. *Descolonização de Angola, a jóia da coroa do Império Português.* Luanda-Lisbon: Ler&Escrever) or of the specific regional development (Eduardo da Costa Medeiros, for instance, who perfectly connects the

European and African written and oral sources in his *História de Cabo Delgado e do Niassa /c. 1836-1929/.* Maputo: UEM, 1997) would also be indispensable for completing a full- colour picture of the historical production concerning Africa. Some Spanish authors should also be taken into consideration because of their irreplaceable works (e.g., Josep Sánchez Cervelló. 1998. *El último imperio occidental: La descolonización portuguesa /1974-1975/.* Mérida: UNED). Many times only modifications or abbreviations of the Portuguese and Spanish/ Catalan works appear in English. I fully understand, however, that the limited volume of the book on African historiography does not allow the author to mention all works ever created, but the contemporary stabilising position of the PALOPs *(Países Africanos da Língua Oficial Portuguesa)* advocates some key examples, at least, to be added to the historical production in English and French.

Generally speaking, the work of Viera Pawliková-Vilhanová, quoting many significant and noted authors, deserves both attention and admiration by all Africanists and persons interested in African history. It sketches the ways for the contemporary and future approach to the complicated synthesis of methods and views when studying and presenting the development of the African continent.

Jan Klíma

Léonce Ndikumana and James K. Boyce. 2011. *Africa's Odious Debts: How Foreign Loans and Capital Flight Bled a Continent*. London and New York: Zed Books. 135 pages. ISBN 978-1-84813-459-1.

The publication under review is authored by two scholars in the field of economics. In the book, the authors deal with revealing the intimate links between foreign loans and capital flight with emphasis on Africa, its future and its uneasy relationship with the West. Basically, the book is a product of collaboration of two authors, who come from developing regions with nearly similar experiences of foreign loan and capital flight in their specific regions, Africa and Asia. On top of this, the fact that both authors were teaching at the University of Massachusetts during the mid-1990s has enhanced their cooperation.

Boyce has observed the case of the Philippines during the Marcos era. His investigations led to confirm that one dollar of additional foreign borrowing was associated with 45 cents of additional capital flight in the same year. He thus concluded that “a revolving door” has linked debt to capital flight in the Philippines, and that a substantial fraction of borrowed funds had quickly exited the country. Royce also cited precedents in international law for the repudiation of “odious debts”, and suggested that the government should adopt a strategy that would enable it to ease its debt burden substantially. But the government failed to accept it.

Ndikumana has observed the African case since the mid-1980s while witnessing the unfolding historic changes in his own country Burundi as well as in neighbouring Zaire and across Africa. This was a period of time, in which the disintegration of the bipolar system and the influence of the West was invigorating long-standing popular demands for democratic openings in the region. Ndikumana was concerned about the relations between development and politics in African countries as well as their uneasy relationships with the West. In this process of investigation he paid more attention to Zaire. He analysed the role of the western powers in Africa’s economy and politics, which is still a major area of fierce debate. Above all, he addressed the question why the people of countries like Zaire, a darling of western aid donors, could remain so poor and amidst conflict, while their country was so rich with natural resources. Generally, he was interested in investigating the issues of African development challenges.

Both authors focused their attention on elaborating challenges of developing countries through publishing extensive materials. For instance, they investigated the relationship between Zaire’s debt and the capital flight the country had experienced under Mobutu’s rule. They explored that the capital flight from Zaire during the Mobutu regime amounted to $12 billion, while providing evidence, a fact the creditors should have been aware of, that a large chunk of their loans had gone into the pockets of Mobutu and his coterie rather than benefit the Congolese people. Expanding their investigation of capital flight to other sub-Saharan African countries, they found that capital flight from twenty-five low-income African countries over the 1976-78 period alone amounted to $193 billion, while comparably the external debt of the same set of countries amounted to $178 billion, which meant that

Africa was a net creditor to the rest of the world, since the external assets of these countries exceeded their external debts.

Here, the assets remain in the hands of private individuals, whereas the debts are public, a liability of the African people through their governments. The authors further extended their estimates to thirty African countries and came up with the result that for every dollar of loan inflows, as much as 80 cent is said to flow back out as capital flight in the same year. The findings suggested that, to a substantial extent, African capital flight has been debt fuelled. Based on a similar analysis, the authors made the case that African countries have compelling ethical, economic and legal grounds for invoking the doctrine of odious debt and repudiating liabilities that cannot be demonstrated to have benefited the populace. Their analysis is based on the experience of sub-Saharan Africa during the last four decades, but the issues they address in the present book are not exclusive to Africa. The parallels between the Philippines under Marcos and Zaire under Mobutu are just a vivid example to confirm how the issues are intimately related to most developing countries and not solely to Africa.

The authors have effectively framed their efforts to make a complex subject understandable to all types of readers in just 135 pages. The book is divided into five chapters. In Chapter 1, the authors provide examples that illustrate the role of foreign banks, both as lenders of funds diverted abroad and as safe havens for light capital. Here, they examine the parallel between foreign loans in Africa and the “liar loans” in US mortgage markets that precipitated the 2008 financial meltdown. Chapter 2 presents statistics that measure capital flight and provides relevant evidence that Africa is a net creditor to the rest of the world in that its external assets exceed its external debts. In Chapter 3 the authors examine the linkages between foreign loans and capital flight with quantitative evidence, which confirms that much of Africa’s capital flight has been debt fuelled. This means that loans from foreign creditors to African governments wound up as private assets held abroad by wealthy individual Africans. The African people as a whole hold the debt through their governments. Chapter 4 documents some of the human cost in relation to the odious debt, the impact of debt service payments on public health expenditures and such outcomes like infant mortality. In the final Chapter, the authors suggest some solutions that range from introducing new

policies and institutions, building upon the legal doctrine of odious debt, that would lift the currently existing burden of servicing debts from which the public has no benefit, up to conducting major changes in the international financial architecture to help the promotion of responsible behaviour with regard to both lenders and borrowers. The authors emphasise that the diversion of foreign borrowing into capital flight does not have much to do with a few corrupt officials and a few complacent or complicit bankers. It is rather the product of systemic flaws in the international financial arrangements that govern borrowing and lending; therefore, the solution requires a fundamental reform. Concerning the crucial question of how to bring about this uneasy reform, there is no workable offer the authors are ready to sell. Generally, the book is a progress in the sense of explaining the African debt problems; however, the realisation of some of the solutions it has suggested demands more elucidation.

Getnet Tamene

Jeremy Silvester, ed. 2015. *Re-Viewing Resistance in Namibian History*. Windhoek: University of Namibia. 315 pages. ISBN 978-99916-42-27-7.

The experienced expert in Namibian history, Jeremy Silvester (let us remember, at least, his work *My Heart Tells Me That I Have Done Nothing Wrong: The Fall of Mandume,* 1992, and the annotated 1918 *Blue Book* reprinted and commented, this time together with Jan-Bart Gewald, 2003), gathered 19 articles and papers (20 with one commentary) dealing with the Namibian resistance. Contributions of diverse size and contentscover various aspects and time periods of several types of resistance. Historians present important themes from the precolonial period through the period of German and South African administration until contemporary efforts to venerate and glorify the resistance against the colonial oppression of various African ethnic groups, chieftains, regions and communities. A pleasant fact consists in the participation of many young Namibian scholars and researchers, largely from the University of Namibia, producing high level scholarly work.

Transforming the Traumatic Life Experiences of Women in Post-Apartheid Namibian Historical Narratives (pp. 22-37) by Ellen Ndeshi Namhila (University of Namibia) is primarily an instruction how to find and elaborate archival sources in order to complete the oral history concerning "everyday" history. As the author personally knows how burdensome the exile and resistance is for a woman, her details on the tragic life of some Namibian families and women are an important contribution to the understanding of "internal" or "private" forms of resistance.

Hendrik Witbooi and Samuel Maharero: The Ambiguity of Heroes (pp. 38-54) by Werner Hillebrecht (the former Head of the National Archives of Namibia) goes back to the precolonial and German period. The paper supports with newly published documents all forms of mutual hostility and/or alliance of the two most important Namibian chiefs as well as their resistance to and/or co-operation with the colonial power.

The Vagciriku-Lishora Massacre of 1894 Revisited (pp. 55-70) by Shampapi Shiremo (Hochland High School, Windhoek) stresses the anti-colonial character of events occurring in Kavango in 1892-94. This almost forgotten conflict between the BaTawana and Vagciriku people in the Angola-Botswana-Namibia border region illustrates how deeply the European "cutting of the African cake" affected some African communities.

Revolutionary Songs as a Response to Colonialism in Namibia (pp. 71-88) by Petrus Angula Mbenzi (University of Namibia) deals with the use of a typical African source divided into political, anti-propagandist, SWAPO leaders glorifying, unifying and incitement songs. The theoretical background and many examples are connected to the archive of Namibian liberation songs currently under construction.

Of Storying and Storing: 'Reading' Lichtenecker's Voice Recordings (pp. 89-104) by Anette Hoffmann (University of Cape Town) offers another interesting primary source thus far hardly exploited by historians: voice-recordings made by Hans Lichtenecker from 1931 on among diverse population groups in Southern Namibia, which reflect the oppression and resistance frame of mind.

Colonialism and the Development of the Contract Labour System in Kavango (pp. 105-126) by Kletus Muhena Likuwa (University of Namibia) contributes to researching the labour recruitment among the Kavango people by German, South African and international agencies. A new approach makes it possible to elucidate, among others, the role of missionaries and, particularly, of native recruiters or local labour headmen, who co-operated with OMEG, NLO and SWANLA recruiters.

Liberals and Non-Racism in Namibia's Settler Society? Advocate Israel Goldblatt's Engagement with Namibian Nationalists in the 1960s (pp. 127-147) by Dag Henrichsen (Namibia Resource Centre) analyses Goldblatt's vision for an independent Namibia and his encounters with Namibian nationalists. By introducing substantial parts of the book on Goldblatt published in 2010 (Henrichsen-Jacobson-Marshall eds.) and by presenting many quotations the paper emphasizes a very minor (?) tradition of advocating non-racism in Namibia's white settler society and the impossibility of an alliance across racial lines despite the moderate activity of Goldblatt.

The Caprivi African National Union (CANU) 1962-1964: Forms of Resistance (pp. 148-159) by Bennett Kangumu Kangumu (University of Namibia) examines why the administration of the then South West Africa enforced a harsh clampdown of CANU activities and activists, preventing the movement from operating freely within the Caprivi region. In contrast to the historical mainstream the author argues that CANU played a central role in Namibia's liberation struggle.

Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye: A Journey of 'Internal Exile' (pp. 160-169). The same author provides a historical study of the life of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye (born in 1934), the founding President of CANU, between 1964, when he was arrested, and 1972, when he presumably disappeared without a trace in the east of the Caprivi Strip.

The Kavango Legislative Council (pp. 170-177) by Aaron Nambadi (City of Windhoek Museum) is a history of the tribal body created in 1970 as a consequence of the Report of the Odendaal Commission (1964) for the Kavango homeland. Some schools in Kavango East and Kavango West still bear the names of tribal chiefs, who were members

of the Council. Contemporary Regional Councils followed with almost the same powers.

The 1978 Election in Namibia (pp. 178-191) by Timoteus Mashuna (New Era newspaper) is an analysis of the first multiparty election organised in "a festival mood" under the South African administration. SWAPO, however, did not participate because South Africa had refused to allow the United Nations to supervise and control the elections.

Waking the Dead: Civilian Casualties in the Namibian Liberation Struggle (pp. 192-206) by Jeremy Silvester (Museums Association of Namibia) and Martha Akawa (University of Namibia) is perhaps the most important contribution. As the victims of the Namibian Liberation Struggle were mostly civilians, the Civilian Casualties Project, based on exhaustive archival research, corrects the official interpretation of the war presented, e. g., by the construction of the Heroes' Acre near Windhoek.

Okongo: Case Study of the Impact of the Liberation Struggle in the Ohangwena Region (pp. 207-220) by Lovisa Tegelela Nampala (Uukelo School) is a history of the Okongo village affected by wars against the Portuguese, and, above all, by the clashes between SWAPO's guerrilla fighters and the South African Defence Force. After using many oral history sources the author recommends her domicile to become a heritage site commemorating the period of the liberation struggle.

The Liberation Struggle Inside Namibia 1966-1989: A Regional Perspective from the Kavango Regions (pp. 221-239) by Herbert Kandjimi Karapo (Mupini School) gives important information on the uKwangali District affected by the liberation struggle, militarisation and activities of the South African Security Forces within the period stipulated.

The Gendered Politics of the SWAPO Camps during the Namibian Liberation Struggle (pp. 240-251) by Martha Akawa (University of Namibia) analyses the shift of the gender patterns in Namibia from traditional ceremonies and conditions of migrant labour in the colonial state to the SWAPO "Laws Governing the Namibian People's Revolution".

Solidarity with Liberation in Namibia: An Analytical Eyewitness Account from a West German Perspective (pp. 252-265) by Reinhart Kössler (University of Freiburg) compares the approach of both German states for supporting the SWAPO movement and struggle, and explains attitudes of the unified Germany in favour of Namibia, including the apology for the 1904-1908 genocide.

Finnish Solidarity with the Liberation Struggle of Namibia: A Documentation Project (pp. 266-275) by Pekka Peltola (University of Helsinki) explains, first of all, profound Finnish historical motives for supporting the SWAPO endeavour. Then, the paper focuses on a large documentation project of gathering archival materials, microfilms, private photographs and oral sources.

Colonial Monuments in a Post-Colonial Era: A Case Study of the Equestrian Monument (pp. 276-292) by Helvi Inotila Elago (University of Kent) describes manoeuvres with the "hot potato" among historical objects, the infamous German *Reiterdenkmal* in Windhoek. The dilemma whether to maintain or to remove ideologically unwelcome monuments from the colonial past (like, e. g., the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria and other iconic statues) is made clear by the ***Comment: Colonial Monuments – Heritage or Heresy?*** (pp. 292-297) by André du Pisani (University of Cape Town). This expert on Namibian history stresses, above all, the necessity of a well-considered cultural policy.

Heritage Education in the School Curriculum: A Critical Reflection (pp. 298-306) by Gilbert Likando (University of Namibia) discusses the main topics and notions in the school curriculum that are used in the heritage education in Namibia.

For any Africanist the new wave of Namibian historians participating in this inspiring book offers new information, an overview of new sources and new approaches well based on heuristic preparation. Resistance as the main theme has diverse faces covered mostly in an impartial way. However, new forms of resistance appear: the internet sites of the Rehoboth Basters proclaim the period 1979-89 to be the most free in their history – Is this not a sign of resistance against the contemporary solution of the political representation of some minor Namibian communities? Perhaps Namibian historians will have to

distinguish more clearly between contributing and/or destructive forms of resistance in order to avoid a non-realistic picture of overall glorifying armed resistance as a unique *raison d'être* of national liberation. The annotated book edited by Jeremy Silvester offers a responsible and professional collection of mature and promising contributions that demonstrate, at the same time, the high level of Namibian historiography.

Jan Klíma

Christian Thibon, Marie-Aude Fouéré, Lidred Ndeda and Susan Mwangi, eds. 2014. *Kenya's Past as Prologue: Voters, Violence and the 2013 General Election*. Nairobi: Twaweza Communications. 264 pages.

The East African state of Kenya has always attracted a great deal of attention from experts on Africa. One of the largest economies in the region as well as a popular tourist destination, Kenya has in recent years featured on the front pages of international news not only due to frequent, bloody attacks by Somali terrorist militias connected to Al-Qaeda, but also to ethnic violence, which has occurred regularly in Kenyan society since the implementation of the democratic process and the return to the multiparty system in 1991. Ever since colonial times Kenya has struggled with peacefully integrating more than 40 ethnic groups, with the largest of these groups, the Kikuyu, only comprising 22 % of the total population according to estimates.

In the period of British colonial rule, a one-party state led by president and KANU chairman Jomo Kenyatta managed to keep these conflicts more or less under control, however, after 1992 they flared up again in full force. Ethnic violence then regularly emerged during election periods, particularly during election campaigns of individual political parties and their candidates, at voting booths and most of all after the announcement of election results. Practically all elections have been affected, whether presidential, parliamentary, regional or local. Violent clashes even took place due to non-ethnic conflict between candidates from the same political party in primaries to determine the party‘s list of candidates.

As such, the most recent general elections in Kenya, held on 4 March, 2013, were awaited with concern by many, especially because these elections appeared to be a major test of the country's ability to move beyond election-related violence – particularly that of the 2007-2008 elections, which resulted in the death of 1,300 citizens and the displacement of more than 600,000. Would the 2013 elections confirm the success of political institutional reforms which had been put in place previously, or would the country explode into violent conflict between discontent ethnic groups again, as it had in recent years?

Ethnic and non-ethnic conflict had already surfaced in 2011-2012, long before the commencement of the 2013 election, primarily in connection with voter registration and political parties' primaries. Clashes between communities in several regions of the country resulted in more than 500 dead and nearly 120,000 displaced (International Crisis Group 2013). Similar events had taken place before practically every Kenyan election, and thus most observers feared that the March 2013 general elections and particularly the announcement of the election results would be accompanied by increased violence.

This underlying threat of escalating ethnic violence was something representatives of all Kenyan political parties and movements were aware of. The majority of presidential candidates, politicians, political activists and representatives of a diverse range of citizens' groups attempted to forestall electoral violence, appealing to their supporters for non-confrontational conduct, calm and tolerance during the election campaigns. The causes of ethnic violence, particularly those that have fueled its increase since 1992, became taboo topics in pre-election discussions and debates.

So the lack of the usual post-election crisis, particularly in light of the extremely narrow victory of presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta (50.07 % of the vote) in the first round and the subsequent vote recount in selected voter precincts, surprised all experts on Kenyan politics and the Kenyan electoral process. Research focused on the course of the March 2013 general election. The election campaign, its results, the activities of election institutes, and the causes of the previous conflicts were published in practically all well-known African magazines. It was only a matter of time until the first serious monograph on this unusual phenomenon for Kenya emerged.

One of the first such publications is the book under review here, with a relatively extensive collection of authors under the leadership of the French Institute for Research in Africa (Institut français de recherche en Afrique – IFRA), including political scientists, historians and anthropologists, who explored various aspects of the electoral process to contribute in-depth analyses of the last Kenyan elections.

This book is a collection of 17 studies by different authors who focus on various aspects of the Kenyan electoral process, such as structural factors underlying the election process and voting in Kenya, including the political system, culture and political transition. The authors have also provided specific case studies, analyzed contemporary and past situations and contexts in Kenya, as well as trends and issues that influenced the 2013 Kenyan elections.

The monograph commences with an introduction co-authored by the four editors, in which the authors present the main goal of the combined research and its methodology. According to this introduction, the monograph presents two different types of texts. The first could be described as "impressionist", in that they take stock of general or topical issues and highlight the structural factors underlying elections and voting in Kenya, as well as Kenya's political system, culture and political transition process. The second type of text could be, according to the authors, thought of as "pointillist", and these essays offer detailed insights into specific case studies, situations and contexts, bringing these into focus against the background of more systemic analyses in the "impressionist" texts (p.9).

The individual studies present interesting perspectives on various aspects of Kenya's politics, especially in relation to its election process. Christian Thibon, in the chapter "*Kenyan Elections: When Does History Repeat Itself and Does Not Repeat Itself*?", introduces readers to a short history of the Kenyan election process; nevertheless the main focus is on an analysis of the last election, evaluating the new voting system and explaining its impact on the behavior of Kenyan political parties with ethnic roots. Authors George O. Okoth and Gordon O. Omenya concentrate on aspects of the new constitution and internal democracy in the Orange Democratic Movement in the chapter "*New Constitution, Odingaism and the State of Internal Democracy in ODM and its Effects on the 2013 Elections in Keny*a".

A number of studies are devoted to the roles of selected institutions and their influence on the election process. The first essay of Hervé Maupeu, "*Kenyan Elections: The ICC, God and the 2013 Kenyan General Elections*", examines the function of the International Criminal Court in regard to post-election violence in 2007-2008 and its influence on the rather violent character of the previous election. Marie Wolfrom focuses on the function of the Election Commission and the Supreme Court in the chapter "*The Election Commission and the Supreme Court: Two new institutions put to the test by Elections*". To this category could be added the noteworthy if not extensive study by Thomas P. Wolf in the chapter "*Getting it 'Wrong', Again? Wahojiwa vs. Wapiga Kura in the 2013 Kenyan Election*", which focuses on public opinion polls and how accurate they are in predicting election results.

Mathieu Mérino (in the chapter "*The 4 March 2013 General Elections in Kenya: From Latent Tension to Contained Violence*") mostly concentrates on the causes of election violence after the 2007 elections and in the lead-up to the most recent election (2012-2013). His research is supported with clear maps showing election violence in individual Kenyan regions, including numbers of dead and displaced people.

The publication contains a number of studies on the election process, campaigns and results in selected voting precincts. Lisa Fuchs in the chapter "*Political Integration of Minority Communities: The Ogiek of Eastern Mau Forest in the 2013 Elections*" examines the voting behaviour of the Ogiek ethnic minority. A case study of Kisii County is the subject of Eric Rosana Masese's contribution "*Negotiating History for Negotiated Democracy: The Case of Kisii County in 2013 Kenya Elections*". Issues connected with the selection of a new political elite in the South Rift region are explored in Joseph Mistai Akuma's paper "*The Quest for New Political Leadership in the South Rift, Kenya*". The problematic voting behavior of *Luo Women voters in the Siaya and Kisumu counties* is dealt with by Mildred A. J. Ndeda. *Issues of grassroots movements, marginalization and the origins of the alternative Authority in the Kenyan Coas*t are covered by Ngala Chome.

Issues connected to the function of local and international election observers are explored in Mwanela Kamencu's "*Role of Election Observers: Diplomatic Bias and the Findings of the Kenyan 2013 Election*". Separate sub-chapters focus on an analysis of the activities and

findings of the regional observation missions AU, EAC, IGAD and COMESA, the observation mission of the EU and The Carter Center International Observation Mission.

A very interesting contribution is the analysis of the voting behaviour of the middle class, which Patrick Mbataru undertook in the course of his research, in the chapter "*Twitting Votes: The Middle Class and the 2013 Elections in Kenya*", along with another paper which centers on the election campaign of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, authored by Yonatan Gez and Tanya Alvis.

One of the biggest surprises in the lead-up to the elections was the creation of a coalition of political parties representing the political interests of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic groups, which Susan Mwangi thoroughly analyses in her study "*Kikuyu-Kalenjin Relations in IDP Camps and the 2013 Elections: An Invitation to 'The' Conversation*". Political mobilization strategies in Kisii County are addressed by Wycliffe Nyachoti Otiso in his chapter "*An Evaluation of Political Mobilization Strategies Employed by Vigilante Groups in Kisii County during the 2013 Kenyan Elections*".

One of the shortcomings of the editors is their failure to organize the studies into logical groupings. As is evident from the overview given above, the publication contains a number of different types of studies, the first type featuring an overview of the general character of Kenyan elections and a history of the Kenyan electoral process (Christian Thibon et all, Christian Thibon, Mathieu Mérino etc.), while we also find pieces analyzing elections and voting behavior in selected voting precincts (Tom Wolf, Lisa Fuchs, Eric Rosana Masese, etc.). Furthermore, there are analyses of the activities of various Kenyan institutions (e.g. Election Commission, Supreme Court) and their influence on the election process. Not even non-Kenyan institutions (e.g. International Criminal Court, the role of various election observers) are lacking from the pages, while studies focusing on the behavior of various social classes (e.g. Luo Women Voters, The Middle Class) also appear, and finally a number of papers dedicated to election strategy, not forgetting of course further studies on problems with election violence.

A glaring oversight is that the book lacks a formal conclusion, in which the authors summarize the results of the individual studies and attempt to formulate some general conclusions, an analysis and the general characteristics of the 2013 Kenyan general elections. The lack of a conclusion greatly detracts from an otherwise high quality collection of studies, which on the whole present thought-provoking new perspectives on modern Kenyan politics and the most recent elections.

In conclusion, the book contains a compelling analysis of the most varied facets of Kenyan modern political history, recent elections, the election process, the election campaigns, the causes of election violence, the election platforms of political parties and above all a detailed analysis of the results of the March 2013 Kenyan general election, not only at a national level but also in individual voting precincts. The book is recommended to all experts on Kenya and Africa, students of African studies and political science as an valuable source of information and thorough analysis, shedding light on the election process from various points of view in one of the most important East African nations.

Vlastimil Fiala

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