

*In 'The Omnipresent Past', Bondarenko and Butovskaya have compiled a fascinating collection of papers exploring the variegated ways that the continent's rich and complex history – precolonial, colonial and postcolonial – continues to impact and sometimes to haunt the lives of contemporary Africans and persons of African descent. The volume combines phenomenological approaches that consider the ways Africans experience historical memory alongside considerations of the ways in which past modalities of power continue to structure African realities. The editors have done a remarkable job of including African contributions to scholarship. This is a thought-provoking and comprehensive set of papers.*

**Robert Launay**  
Northwestern University

*Historical Anthropology of Africa and African diaspora is increasingly gaining a world-wide attention. This volume edited by Dmitri M. Bondarenko and Marina L. Butovskaya is a particular indication of the importance of the Past as far as Africa is concerned. The main objective of the volume is to present various manifestations of how the past influences the present in African societies and diaspora communities nowadays. The editors and contributors to the volume have achieved this objective by using in a very good way a specific methodological point of view which reaffirms the manifold relations between History and Anthropology within the framework of post colonial studies. The contributors have magnificently related how the past can shape modern Africa. I hope that the texts of high quality presented in this volume will initiate a dialogue, through which we will arrive at the conclusion that solutions in shaping modern Africa and African diasporas can come from objective analysis of different contexts and different perspectives. The volume is a treasure for all of us, especially Africans and Africanists. It serves also as an indispensable reference book for all students of history, anthropology, psychology and other social sciences.*

**Jean Paulin Mengué Me Ndongo**  
University of Yaounde 1

*The colonial epoch in Africa struck the continent with many hard shocks: those shocks, however, can now be seen as just one episode in the continent's historical evolution. That evolution continues today, and is being shaped by the presence of the colonial and precolonial past in the cultural, social, and political spheres alike. Bondarenko and Butovskaya's volume brings that presence sharply into focus, both in the African continent itself and in its diaspora. External influences and pressures may play a key role in shaping Africa; it is the creative response of Africa's peoples to those pressures which will ultimately play the decisive role in the continent's future evolution. Anyone seeking to understand that evolution should read this volume.*

**David O'Kane**  
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

ISBN 978-5-907117-76-1



9 785907 117761 >

THE OMNIPRESENT PAST  
HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF AFRICA AND AFRICAN DIASPORA

# THE OMNIPRESENT PAST

## HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF AFRICA AND AFRICAN DIASPORA



**DMITRI M. BONDARENKO**  
**MARINA L. BUTOVSKAYA**  
Editors

**THE OMNIPRESENT PAST**  
HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY  
OF AFRICA AND AFRICAN DIASPORA

**DMITRI M. BONDARENKO**

**MARINA L. BUTOVSKAYA**

Editors



Moscow  
LRC Publishing House  
2019

**The Omnipresent Past. Historical Anthropology of Africa and African Diaspora.** Edited by Dmitri M. Bondarenko and Marina L. Butovskaya. – Moscow: LRC Publishing House, 2019. – 392 p., ill.

Contributors to this volume discuss a variety of ways the African past (African history) influences the present-day of Africans on the continent and in diaspora: cultural (historical) memory as a factor of public (mass) consciousness; the impact of the historical past on contemporary political, social, and cultural processes in Africa and African diaspora.

This volume is an output of a research project implemented as part of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE).

*On the cover:* The ‘Door of No Return’, the monument on the site from which the slave traders’ ships are said to depart to the New World, in the city of Ouidah on the Atlantic Coast of the Republic of Benin. Photo by Dmitri M. Bondarenko.

**ISBN 978-5-907117-76-1**

© Editors, 2019  
© Authors, 2019  
© LRC Publishing House, 2019  
© Abisheva G., design, 2019

## CONTENTS

<i>Dmitri M. Bondarenko, Marina L. Butovskaya.</i> Introduction ...	5
<b>I. Memory of the Historical Past as a Factor of Public Consciousness in Contemporary Africa</b>	
<i>Anastasia A. Banshchikova, Oxana V. Ivanchenko.</i> Historical Memory of the 19 <sup>th</sup> -Century Arab Slave Trade in Present-Day Tanzania: Between Family Trauma and State-Planted Tolerance .....	23
<i>Lorenzo D'Angelo.</i> Changing Environments, Occult Protests, and Social Memories in Sierra Leone .....	46
<i>Daria A. Zelenova.</i> Local Memories of the Anti-apartheid Struggles: Rediscovering 'People's Democracy' .....	66
<b>II. Legacy of the Past and Sociocultural Processes in Contemporary Africa</b>	
<i>Marina L. Butovskaya.</i> Transformation of Traditional Rural Communities in East Africa .....	85
<i>Cecilia Pennacini.</i> Religion, History and Society in the Great Lakes Region .....	115
<i>Pino Schirripa.</i> New Religious Movements in Africa from a Long-Term Perspective .....	134
<i>Emery Patrick Effiboley.</i> Nation Building in Contemporary Benin Republic: The Role of Art, Museums, and Cultural Heritage .....	151
<i>Asiya R. Khalitova.</i> From Socialism to Post-Socialist Trauma: 'Pioneers' and 'Newcomers' in the Guinean Film Industry	162
<b>III. Legacy of the Past and Political Processes in Contemporary Africa</b>	
<i>Jason Nkyabonaki.</i> The Influence of Indigenous Administration on Post-Independence Administration in Tanzania .....	183
<i>Jean-Claude Meledje.</i> The Impacts of Pre-Colonial and Colonial Political Tradition on Social and Political Processes in Present-Day Côte d'Ivoire .....	196

<i>Sergey V. Kostelyanets</i> . Historical and Cultural Roots of the Conflict in Sudan's Darfur Region .....	212
<i>Nicholas K. Githuku</i> . From Moral Ethnicity to Moral Anarchy: The Colonial Ideology of Order and Political Disorder in Postcolonial Kenya .....	237
<i>Everisto Benyera</i> . The Barrel of the Gun Guiding Politics or Politics Guiding the Barrel of the Gun: On the Role of the Military during Political Transitions in Zimbabwe .....	273
<b>IV. The Past in the Present: Africans outside Africa and Non-Africans in Africa</b>	
<i>Dmitri M. Bondarenko</i> . Entangled in the Web of History: Collective Historical Memory and the Relations between African Americans and First-Generation African Immigrants in the USA .....	303
<i>Olga B. Khristoforova</i> . 'All of Them Are Our Ancestors': African and European Elements in Cuban Religion .....	339
<i>Daria A. Dronova</i> . Historical Memory and Current Status of Indians in Tanzania .....	369
Contributors .....	386

## INTRODUCTION

*Dmitri M. Bondarenko*

Russian State University for the Humanities  
National Research University Higher School of Economics  
Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

*Marina L. Butovskaya*

National Research University Higher School of Economics  
Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology  
of the Russian Academy of Sciences

The aim of this volume is to study various manifestations of how the past influences the present in contemporary African societies and diaspora communities (called so irrespective of the generation of migrants to which the people that form these communities now belong). The contributors look at the role of the past in shaping modern Africa and African diasporas in different contexts – cultural, social, political – and from different perspectives: ‘subjectivist’ (through the imprints and reflections of the past in human minds) and ‘objectivist’ (through the ways by which the social, political, and cultural events of the past direct the processes in the respective spheres nowadays).

From the methodological point of view, this volume reaffirms the manifold relations between History and Anthropology within the framework of postcolonial studies. Despite some powerful trends in anthropology from Malinowski’s functionalism to postmodernism, explicitly or not, history has always been a particular reference for anthropological research (Carneiro 2002; Willford and Tagliacozzo 2009; Bondarenko et al. 2014a). First of all, anthropologists most often deal with the past not only when attempting to reconstruct past events and conditions, but rather to look at social change, innovation, and transformation. Moreover, anthropologists’ increased focus, since the late 1980s, on the affect of memory on people’s attitudes and behavior – the ‘memory boom’ (Berliner 2005; see also: Krause 2007) – signifies a new understanding of the meaning of history for anthropological research. Ways of perception, experiencing and conceptualizing social changes in different cultures has increasingly become the

come the object of study. In this context, the anthropological notion of history has shifted from a universal and objective etic content to local and subjective emic. The emic approach views history as part of cultural and symbolic universe of every community, shaped by the social processes of selection, remembering and forgetting (Tonkin et al. 1989; Fabian 2007). At the same time that the ‘memory boom’ began in anthropology, a ‘memory turn’ began in history, as many historians have focused on the concept of historical memory. These historians concentrated on the diverse ways socio-cultural events shaped a group’s historical memory, mostly over time (Klein 2000; Repina 2013; Niven and Berger 2014).

Thus, the interaction between History and Anthropology was not simple in the past and is not so today. Generally, one may distinguish three approaches or avenues of interest pertinent to contemporary anthropological research on history (Bondarenko et al. 2014b: 7–8). First, a historicist perspective, that tries to discuss actual courses of events and momentums with regard to their consequential structural changes in the respective societies. The second approach is primarily interested in revealing the modes in which historical changes are culturally represented and transmitted, in forms of narratives and codes, mnemotechnical devices, memory cultures, and notions of time. The third approach could be labeled a presentist approach, where scholars are primarily interested in the role of historical references – of history’s use and abuse – particularly in contemporary debates on African societies and African diaspora communities.

Despite all the important differences between cultures and societies of the region at any moment in history, Africa south of the Sahara represents a clear and quite distinctive ‘civilizational model’ (Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000), or ‘evolutionary stream’ (Claessen 2000). This is a manifestation of the African socio-cultural tradition as a durable modus of life that formed in pre-colonial time. The articles in the present volume particularly confirm this argument by showing how so-called African traditional cultures at one and the same time adapt to the modern globalization trends and modify, ‘Africanize’ them. For example, the pre-colonial African city formed the social-mental continuum with the village, i.e., was basically identical to it in social structure and inhabitants’ mentality (Bondarenko 1994; 1996). Today, the situation is different, yet is the urban society distinct from

rural in sub-Saharan Africa to the same extent as in other parts of the world (see Kearney 2018)?

What we regard as the basic common constant foundation of most historical and contemporary sub-Saharan African societies and cultures (and hence of the African socio-cultural tradition), is the principle of communality. To our mind, its gist is the ability of the originally and essentially communal worldview, consciousness, pattern of behavior, socio-political norms and relations to spread on all levels of societal organization, including supra- and non-communal, as well as to find manifestations beyond African societies proper – in the African diaspora communities. Thus, communality follows from, but is by no means reduced to, the fact that the local community has always – most explicitly in pre-colonial time but actually up to now – remained the basic institution in Africa, the core of social life which features have also determined the specificity of African authentic worldview and spirituality (Bondarenko 2015).

In the colonial time, despite all the corruptions it brought, the unity of sub-Saharan Africa as a culture area based on the communal socio-cultural tradition did not disappear. On the contrary, as Claude Meillassoux (1991) emphasized, the community turned out part and parcel of the colonial society without which colonial exploitation actually could not be effective or maybe even possible, at least in such a scale. However, the degree of socio-cultural diversity and hence, trajectories of changes in sub-Saharan Africa increased considerably, since the colonial borders did not reflect the preceding course of the African peoples' own political, social, economic, and cultural history. With rare exceptions, many different peoples were forcibly united within a colony. Not only kinship but also cultural affinity among those peoples was often absent. At the same time, the colonial borders divided one people or tore historically established regional systems of economic and cultural ties no less infrequently. Likewise the colonialists forcibly united peoples that had never formed regional political and economic systems, had different levels of sociocultural complexity, and sometimes did not even know about each other or were historical enemies. At the same time, historically and economically connected peoples and societies were often separated by the colonial borders. These features were supplemented by economic and cultural heterogeneity of the colonial societies. The elements of capitalism, im-



planted by the Europeans in different spheres, did not synthesize with a set of pre-capitalist features of the local societies. There also was little intersection between the autochthonous and new sectors of public life, in which basically different value systems dominated.

The postcolonial states have inherited the artificial complexity of societal composition, economic and cultural heterogeneity alongside with the colonial borders. Many problems the African nations are facing now are rooted in the pre-colonial and colonial history. Many other problems have arisen in already about seven decades of their independent history. All of them are aggravated by the still peripheral status of Africa in the global world-system (Wallerstein 2017).

The chapters in this volume are grouped into four parts. Chapters in the first part look at the ways the past influences the present from the 'subjectivist' perspective of how historical memory contributes to people's views of their lives today and tomorrow, while the second and third parts contain chapters on the legacy of the past as a factor of socio-cultural and political processes in contemporary Africa. Part IV includes studies of the role of the historical past as a factor and socio-cultural context of self-awareness, self-organization, and self-representation of diaspora communities – people of African descent outside Africa and of non-African origin in Africa.

Part I, *Memory of the Historical Past as a Factor of Public Consciousness in Contemporary Africa*, opens with the chapter by Anastasia Banshchikova and Oxana Ivanchenko which highlights the results of the field study conducted by the authors in Tanzania in 2018. The study was dedicated to the historical memory of the Arab slave trade in East Africa and the Indian Ocean in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and this memory's possible impact on modern interethnic relations in the country. Interviews were done with citizens of the historical sites related to the slave trade, such as Bagamoyo, Zanzibar, and Dar es Salaam (the latter being relevant as a mixed urbanized community, showing a 'neutral' attitude to the subject). Individual answers irrespective of location show that the red tape between intolerance and state-planted tolerance towards all the citizens including Arabs (through the ideology of 'one nation' and some school text-books in which the role of Arabs in these events is deemphasized) runs within the family history: people whose ancestors were taken as slaves are almost indifferent to the ideology of tolerance that has made Tanzania one of the most stable

post-colonial African countries. The ways of reproduction of historical memory sometimes get into contradiction with each other, and the way that caused the most severe personal trauma becomes the winner.

Lorenzo D'Angelo explores the ways in which the inhabitants of two different regions of Sierra Leone interpret in terms of the occult some unexpected and mysterious events occurring at a large-scale mining company and at a hydroelectric power dam. He shows that extractive landscapes can be places of great political contest. D'Angelo argues that through the usual weapons of the weak (e.g. sabotage, thefts, and rumors) and the idiom of the occult, people express dissatisfaction with a modernity which has always been promised but never achieved. In doing so, this chapter considers occult narratives as forms of social memory, pointing to a history of violence, terror and uncertainties inscribed in the landscape, dwelling practices, and bodies. In other words, local discourses on the occult are not just ways to make sense of the uncertainties and anxieties of a globalized modernity but also highly politicized practices that embody past experiences.

Daria Zelenova focuses on people's history of self-organization and memories concerning local struggles against apartheid in South Africa in the 1980s. The chapter is based on a series of life history interviews done by its author in 2011–2013 and on the evidence from South African archives. Different fragments of interviews are presented where respondents speak about their involvement in township activism and self-organization practices in the time under consideration. An analysis of people's memories of those struggles allows the author to argue for a more contextualized understanding of 'people's democracy' – the term introduced in the 1980s as a new way of conceptualizing the anti-apartheid struggle.

The opening chapter in Part II, *Legacy of the Past and Sociocultural Processes in Contemporary Africa*, by Marina Butovskaya, is devoted to current transformations of traditional rural communities in East Africa, mainly in Tanzania. She shows that modern tendencies in development of rural East Africa are in line with two general trends: intensification of agriculture (introduction of new modern farming technologies, more efficient varieties of plants and breeds of animals), installment of agro-industrial factories and plants for raw materials processing on the one hand, and depeasantization, commercialization and resettling of big groups of young people to urban spaces in search

of labor and in hope for better prospects for life and wellbeing, on the other hand. Currently, Tanzania is an agrarian country, inhabited largely by agriculturalists and pastoralists with a small share of commercial farmers. The government has made substantial efforts to enable the vulnerable social economic groups and individuals to enjoy land tenure security. The National Land Policy 2016 sets the basement for transforming Tanzania into a semi-industrialized nation by 2025. The depeasantization process has been currently going very fast in Tanzania and may seem to be in part inspired by the new officially announced governmental course on industrialization. All these transformations obviously affect the rural communities – their structure, everyday life and ritual activities, as well as kinship and community networks, mutual obligations of the community members. Discussing the role of traditional institutions in social life and the main trends of their transformation in the rural areas in East Africa, Butovskaya pays special attention to the current changes in social network integration associated with economic trends, labor and educational migrations, transitions in the way of farming and cattle breeding, transformations in customary ceremonial practices (birth rites, funeral rites and commemoration), the problem of AIDS, and cultural transformations.

The chapter by Cecilia Pennacini retraces the most important steps in the history of religion of the Great Lakes region. The author emphasizes that the religious landscape evolved here together with social and cultural processes that need to be observed in a regional scale, because single ethnic groups appear to be changing realities emerging and disappearing, overlapping and mixing together in a continuous flux of exchange. Pennacini makes the picture clear by adopting a wide geographical and temporal perspective. She argues that the emergence of kingdoms in some parts of the region, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onward, provoked a fundamental shift from a social situation previously based on patrilineal descent groups to centralized political organizations. Before this event, religious life was devoted to local natural entities – called *misambwa* in many of the interlacustine languages – and to the ancestral spirits denominated *bazimu*. When kingdoms and chiefdoms appeared, spirit possession – regionally known as *ku-bandwa* – became the centre of the religious experience. The main characters of this tradition are the spirits of deceased kings, heroes and

heroines, who can penetrate in the bodies of certain individuals thus entitled to become their mediums. The institution of spirit mediumship, regulated by an initiation, gave rise to a class of religious specialists who gained an important mystical power all around the region, used to counterbalance the political power of kings and chiefs. Islam and Evangelization, that reached the region from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, changed dramatically the religious situation as well as the political one, introducing new spiritual entities, practices and leaders. This renovated religious landscape characterized the colonies, where missionaries of different congregations became a very important factor in the new administrative organisation. After Independence, fractions built along diverse religious denominations continued to inform the political life, giving rise to a complex, fragmented situation crossed by conflicts. As a result, post-colonial societies present diversified and often conflictual religious realities, deeply affecting the political situation. At the same time, a vast revival movement is rediscovering the ancient cults, giving back dignities to the spirits of the past.

Pino Schirripa stresses that since the '60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, anthropology has been engaged from different points of view with the analysis of the new religious movements which had been flourishing in the African continent after the colonial conquest. Those researches have focused on different aspects of the complex phenomenon of the charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Africa. The main aspects which have been investigated were the syncretic forms of those churches, their healing activities, the relationships with the traditional religions and with the mainline Christian Churches. This chapter by Schirripa discusses the current trends of these churches from a long-term perspective, taking advantage of the large amount of data collected on these issues in more than 50 years of research. This allows to carry on an analysis which could take into account a long span of time, from the colony to the postcolony, trying to understand how those churches and movements have changed their practices and roles in the course of time in different political and social contexts.

Emery Patrick Effiboley emphasizes the critical role of art, museums and cultural heritage in the process of nation-building, especially in the era of postcolony. In his chapter, based on the cultural history of the territory of the current Republic of Benin, Effiboley analyzes the museum collections as well as the collecting policy from the inception

of the modern museum in the country to date. He also reviews the political contexts of production of the materials gathered in the museums. The author finally highlights the strategy to build upon local identities rooted in local cultural histories in order to achieve a cohesive national identity for the benefit of the Republic of Benin as a whole.

Asiya Khalitova's chapter is devoted to the history of Guinea's cinema from the 1960s to nowadays. Her research is based primarily on the original data collected in the field, in particular a series of interviews done in Guinea and Russia from 2015 to 2017. The author analyses the influence of two generations of Guinean filmmakers ('pioneers' and 'newcomers') on the national film industry. During the Cold War, Guinea, massively supported by the USSR, sent thousands of its nationals to study at universities of the Eastern bloc countries. The cinema and other propaganda instruments of 'Guinean socialism' were established under the influence and with support of the Soviet Union and its satellites. At the same time the Guinea's first president Ahmed Sékou Touré's paranoia and fear of plots caused the 'institutionalization' of systematic repression against new intellectuals. In the 1970s, the majority of 'pioneers' of the national film industry were accused of dozens of alleged plots and imprisoned. After Sékou Touré's death and the military coup d'état in 1984, the cinema created by 'pioneers' was almost eliminated by the new regime of General Lansana Conté. This negligence towards the cultural heritage is considered by Khalitova as *post-socialist trauma*, an attempt to bury everything connected with the socialist period in Guinea. In contrast with the 'pioneers', the post-socialist generation of Guinean filmmakers ('newcomers') are either self-educated or in the majority have graduated from Western (mostly French) universities. Today, one can also witness the increasing French cultural influence in Guinea, first of all in film industry. The author discusses the professional and identity cleavages between 'pioneers' and 'newcomers' as well as their influence on the development of the Guinean cinema.

In the first chapter in Part III, *Legacy of the Past and Political Processes in Contemporary Africa*, Jason Nkyabonaki expresses his views on the influence of indigenous administration on post-independence administration in Tanzania. He points out that on the one hand, the leveling of the administrative systems in pre-colonial

Tanzania would be to see them as systems that propagated the promotion of common good to the community. This has tempted some scholars in the recent years to meditate and gear towards the thinking of native administrative systems. Their argument is that Tanzanians had well premised themselves for self-governance before colonialism and hence, not due to its legacy. However, on the other hand, the Eurocentric scholarship propagates for modernity to be an elixir for Tanzania's administration development. Tanzania is presented within this paradigm as having dual systems in the post-independence era. This duality is counted as inefficiency for Tanzania should embrace and romance with modern administrative values. The argument is that, the two systems of administration cannot marry and when they marry the inefficiencies such as corruption and favoritism emerge. The central argument is that the hybrid system would create strong institutions as a *sine qua non* condition for administration development. The quandary of administration in Africa is not due to the compatible model but rather a Western modernist view that Tanzania's public administration has not applied *in totus* the Western values which this chapter criticizes as a myopic outlook. Tanzanian public administration post-independence reform geared towards Tanzanianization in order to promote administration efficiency. Hence, this chapter concludes with its author's general statement that administration should reflect the people's culture, norms and taboos for the administration development to be realized.

Jean-Claude Meledje traces the role of pre-colonial and colonial legacy in contemporary social and political life of Côte d'Ivoire. In particular, he concentrates on the spheres of employment and land law. Meledje points out that although the colonial period lasted for only 80 years (1880–1960), such notions as paid employment and land rights introduced by the French colonizers are irreversible and have indelibly impacted Côte d'Ivoire at the political and social levels. Despite numerous efforts made by successive governments, the standard of living of Ivorians has dropped sharply since 1980. By transforming customary rights into the so-called modern property rights, the 1998 Rural Land Act in Côte d'Ivoire intended to deal with land disputes, but it failed. As is evident, land disputes are complex, and their origins can be traced back not only to the behavior of Ivorians and actors involved but above all else to the country's sordid colonial his-

tory. Since the notion of paid work and land ownership problems appeared in Côte d'Ivoire with colonization, Meledje argues, a look at the pre-colonial period can help clarify the situation that hitherto prevailed.

Sergey Kostelyanets focuses on the historical and cultural background and causes of the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, which commenced in 2003 and has been continuing with greater or smaller intensity until present. The author finds the roots of the current confrontation in certain aspects of the policies of sultans of Darfur (the 17<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries), in the Mahdist uprising (the late 19<sup>th</sup> century), in the colonial Sudanese politics of Great Britain, and in the policies of the Sudanese governments of the postcolonial period. Kostelyanets emphasizes that the racial and tribal affiliation of Darfurians remains a powerful factor of conflict, but refutes the opinion of those researchers who believe that the conflict in Darfur is primarily a confrontation between Arabs and non-Arabs living in the region. In particular, it is noted that the majority of Arabs in the region are not genetic Arabs, but Arabized Africans, so the conflict between Arabs and Africans is artificial and is largely a product of the policy of 'divide and rule'. The author believes that the main reasons and prerequisites for the conflict include the lack of access to natural resources for many groups of the population, the economic and political marginalization of the region, the unresolved land issue, and ill-advised administrative reforms.

The chapter by Nicholas Githuku concerns itself with a range of conventions, ideas and practices governing individual responsibility and self-conduct in society by the evidence from Kenya. They include moral ethnicity, householder ideology, working class consciousness, the ideology of law and order or the tendency toward moral anarchy and subsequent political disorder characterized by runaway corruption in the absence of redistributive civic virtue and reciprocity. This chapter is dedicated to unmasking the hegemonic ideology of law and order that in the postcolony, such as Kenya, protects metropolitan economic interests and those of the wealthy and ruling elite. Githuku analyzes closely the various manifestations of this, as he argues surviving and ever-evolving, colonial ideology of order in contemporary Kenyan politics and reflects on the importance and impact of these manifestations for social and political processes in the country from the

early 1990s to 2019. The author shows that this period of the return of multiparty politics in the country is marked by the twin tyranny of the political elite on the one hand, and the masses on the other in the overlordship of, and symbiotic relationship between, political tribalism and corruption; stultification of the political party system in favor of Gramscian ‘historical blocs’ of ethnicity; and the all-pervasive culture of impunity, a *Sukuma wiki* economy of survival or ‘bandit economy’. This serves as the basis of Githuku’s conclusion that, contrary to the popular trend among political analysts and intellectual experts on Kenya that the ideology of order survived independence and has held sway since, it has not. He posits that the ideology of (law and) order is not static but, rather, dynamic. That it has, as such, like the state, transformed itself since independence into a hybrid ideology of disorder.

Everisto Benyera’s chapter shows how processes and events of already postcolonial past (though rooted in the time of anticolonial struggle) can influence the present, even in Zimbabwe that got independence more recently than most African nations. In particular, he argues that for understanding Zimbabwe’s current political transitions, it is crucially important to pin them on the relationship and balance of power between the civil and military in the political arena. This applies to the 1979, 1987, 2000, 2008 and 2017 transitions. Zimbabwe’s ruling party, ZANU PF, has always had two distinctive wings; the military and the civilian with the military fighting the war and the civilian running politics. Over time, the two converged with the military overshadowing, if not engulfing the civilian. The debate on the role of the military during political transitions in Zimbabwe reached peak levels in 2017 when Robert Mugabe was removed from office through a military facilitated (instigated?) popular uprising. The author emphasizes that incrementally dominant role of the military in Zimbabwe’s politics in the various political transitions is not a nascent development as it can be traced to the formation of ZANU PF. The military have always existed in ZANU PF’s politics, not as a professional partner but as an increasingly domineering factor. Benyera presents Zimbabwe’s 2017 militarised transition as a bottom up process of political change first occurring at party and then at state level. He argues that Zimbabwe’s political transitions are military-driven with the army also controlling the ruling party, and they must be analysed as mili-



tary-controlled processes as the army has a strong fulcrum over the government.

The first chapter in Part IV, *The Past in the Present: Africans outside Africa and Non-Africans in Africa*, by Dmitri Bondarenko, is on the role of historical memory in shaping the relations between African Americans – descendants of slaves forcibly brought from Africa to America centuries ago – and first-generation African immigrants in the USA. Basing on the first-hand evidence from the field, the author argues that they do not form a single ‘black community’ and that among the reasons explaining this disunity, an important part is played by the different reflection of the past in their historical memory. Most African Americans and African migrants do not have an integral vision of history – of their own history and even more so of each other’s. Their historical consciousness is discrete: there is no history as a process in it, but there are several isolated bright topoi – the most important events. Although all these topoi are directly or indirectly related to the socio-political and spiritual resistance of black people to the whites’ exploitation in or outside Africa, they can be different or be of different importance to African Americans and Africans. There is no concept of ‘black history’ as common history of all the people whose roots are in Africa in the minds of most African Americans and African migrants, especially poorly educated. Bondarenko shows that the key events in African American and African history (namely, the pre-slave trade and pre-colonial period in Africa, transatlantic slave trade, slavery and its abolition in the USA, colonialism and anticolonial struggle in Africa, the civil rights movement in the USA, and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa) are reflected differently and occupy different places in the historical memory and collective consciousness of African Americans and contemporary African migrants to the USA. To some extent, visions of the past promote Africans and African Americans’ rapprochement as victims of long-lasting white domination. However, a deeper analysis shows how the collective historical memory of both groups works more in the direction of separating them by generating and supporting contradictory and even negative images of each other. In general, the relations between African Americans and recent African migrants are characterized by simultaneous mutual attraction and repulsion. Among all ethnoracial communities in the country, the two groups (and also African Carib-

beans) consider themselves as the closest to each other; nevertheless, myriads of differences cause mutual repulsion.

Olga Khristoforova focuses on Cuban *Santeria* and discusses the situation of constructing a religious system from the fragments of two other systems of beliefs and practices – African cults and European Catholicism. She approaches this situation from the perspective of manifestation in *Santeria* of the mechanisms of stabilization and transformation of tradition. In particular, Khristoforova discusses the features of the religious system in Africa and the diaspora, the mechanisms of identification of Orishas (the deities of the Yoruba) and Catholic saints. Special attention is paid to the pragmatic aspects of syncretization. The very concept of syncretization, once proposed by Melville J. Herskovits, is also discussed. The author evaluates it in the light of the James Scott's theory of symbolic resistance. The chapter describes the state of the historically Yoruba religion in Cuba, its connection with political processes and public attitudes of the late 20<sup>th</sup> – early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, basing on the evidence collected by the author in Cuba in 2013–2016 and in Nigeria in 2018.

In the closing chapter, Daria Dronova writes about Africans but of non-African origin – the Tanzanian Indians. She approaches the Indian Diaspora in Tanzania as a closed self-sufficient sociocultural system. Indians live in compact groups, occupying fully apartment buildings and forming separate Indian neighborhoods. They own shops that offer goods brought from India, have their own hospitals, teach children in Indian schools. Indians practice the same religions as in South Asia, celebrate traditional Indian holidays, perform traditional life-cycle rites, wear traditional for them clothes and eat traditional Indian food. Indians speak their native languages, regularly visit their country of origin, remember their roots and maintain close ties with India. In their self-awareness, they clearly identify themselves as a separate community living next door to the local African population. Dronova analyzes how such a strong devotion to the traditional culture influences the status of the Indian community in the contemporary Tanzanian society.

### **Acknowledgements**

The research is supported by the Russian Science Foundation, grant # 18-18-00454 'Historical memory as a factor in the evolution of socio-political systems (Sub-Saharan Africa and Mesoamerica).'

## References

- Berliner, D.C. 2005. The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology. *Anthropological Quarterly* 78: 197–211.
- Bondarenko, D.M. 1994. Precolonial Benin: Personality, Authority and the Structure of Society. In Sabloff, J., and Lal, M. (eds.), *State, City & Society* (pp. 1–10). New Delhi: World Archaeological Congress-3.
- Bondarenko, D.M. 1996. Sotsial'nyj i mental'nyj kontinuitet goroda i derevni v dokolonial'nom Benine [Social-Mental Continuum of the City and the Village in Precolonial Benin]. In Sajko, E.V. (ed.), *Kul'turnyj dialog goroda vo vremeni i prostranstve istoricheskogo razvitiya [Cultural Dialogue of the City in Time and Space of Historical Development]* (pp. 136–141). Moscow: Russian Academy of Sciences Press.
- Bondarenko, D.M. 2015. Toward a Philosophy of African History: Communalism as a Foundation of Africa's Socio-Cultural Tradition. In Bedřich, A., and Retka, T. (eds.), *Knight from Komárov – To Petr Skalník for His 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (pp. 61–80). Prague: AntropoWeb.
- Bondarenko, D.M., Grätz, T., and Skalník, P. (eds.). 2014a. *Anthropology, History, and Memory in Sub-Saharan Africa*. In *Memoriam Michel Izard. Social Evolution and History* 13 (2): 5–175 (special issue).
- Bondarenko, D.M., Grätz, T., and Skalník, P. 2014b. Introduction. In Bondarenko, D.M., Grätz, T., and Skalník, P. 2014: 5–16.
- Bondarenko, D.M., and Korotayev, A.V. (eds.). 2000. *Civilizational Models of Politogenesis*. Moscow: Center for Civilizational and Regional Studies Press.
- Carneiro, R.L. 2002. *The Muse of History and the Science of Culture*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Claessen, H.J.M. 2000. *Structural Change. Evolution and Evolutionism in Cultural Anthropology*. Leiden: Leiden University Press.
- Fabian, J. 2007. *Memory against Culture: Arguments and Reminders*. Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press.
- Kearney, M. 2018. *Reconceptualizing the Peasantry: Anthropology in Global Perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Klein, K.L. 2000. On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse. *Representations* 69 (1): 127–150.
- Krause, E.L. 2007. The Turn toward Memory: From History's 'Little People' to Anthropology's 'Others'. Paper presented at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Social Science History Association. Chicago, November 16, 2007. [http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=elizabeth\\_krause](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=elizabeth_krause) (accessed 13.06.2016).
- Meillassoux, C. 1991. *Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Niven, B., and Berger, S. 2014. Introduction. In Niven, B., and Berger, S. (eds.), *Writing the History of Memory* (pp. 1–23). London: Bloomsbury.

- Repina, L.P. 2013. Pamjat' o proshlom v prostranstve kul'tury [Memory of the Past in the Space of Culture]. *Dialog so vremenem: Al'manakh intellektual'noj istorii* 43: 190–198.
- Tonkin, E., Chapman, M., and McDonald, M. (eds.). 1989. *History and Ethnicity*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Wallerstein, I. 2017. *The World-System and Africa*. New York: Diasporic Africa Press.
- Willford, A., and Tagliacozzo, E. (eds.). 2009. *Clio / Anthropos: Exploring the Boundaries between History and Anthropology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.



**I. Memory of the Historical Past  
as a Factor of Public Consciousness  
in Contemporary Africa**



**HISTORICAL MEMORY OF THE 19<sup>th</sup>-CENTURY  
ARAB SLAVE TRADE IN PRESENT-DAY TANZANIA:  
BETWEEN FAMILY TRAUMA AND STATE-PLANTED  
TOLERANCE**

*Anastasia A. Bانشchikova  
Oxana V. Ivanchenko*

Russian State University for the Humanities  
National Research University Higher School of Economics  
Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

**Introductory note**

The present chapter highlights the results of field research conducted in Tanzania in 2018, focused on the historical memory of the Arab slave trade in East Africa and the Indian Ocean in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and its influence on the interethnic relations in the country nowadays. The Arabs remain an important part of the Tanzanian nation, as their impact on the country's economy and culture is much more significant than their sheer weight in its population. For better understanding of the Arabs' current status in the Tanzanian society, it is necessary to make a brief overview of their history in the country.

**The arrival of the first Arabs in the territory of Tanzania**

Initially, pre-Islamic Arab settlements on the territory of modern Tanzania were temporary and entirely associated with trade. Arab merchants exported ivory, tortoise shells, rhino horns and coconut oil from Africa, and in return they brought tools and weapons made of iron and glassware to the local population (Bennett 1978: 6). A new significant influx of Arabs to the coast of East Africa took place after the emergence of Islam. Local Arabs (first settlers, already assimilated by local population) were also converted to Islam; over the centuries, they were followed by waves of Muslim migrants consisting of Arabian Arabs, Persians, Indians, Syrians and others. Mainly they were traders using the paths connecting African and Arabian coasts of the Indian Ocean. The spread of Islam had a positive effect on trade (since it is the only world religion perceiving trade positively), it contributed



to the emergence of urban trade communities, which later became centers of development of the Swahili civilization. The Swahili language, which became *lingua franca* and an important element of the nation-building process in modern Tanzania, formed on the basis of the Bantu languages with a great number of borrowed words from Arabic, including the most frequently used.

The next wave of migrants, according to Kilwa Chronicle, took place in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century. According to a legend, in 957CE, the Persian merchant Ali ibn al-Hassan came from Shiraz with his six sons, and each of them owned a ship. They became the founders of several settlements, including Mombasa and Kilwa; after several centuries, all of them became major trading cities (Nurse and Spear 1985; Kobishchanov 1987). Kilwa soon became the largest center of Islamic culture on the East African coast. This legend played a significant role in the relations between the Arabs and the indigenous non-Arab Islamized population (*Shirazi*), as it allowed the latter to substantiate their noble Middle Eastern origin (Nurse, Spear 1985: 70–79; Bakari 2001: 68–71; Nicolini 2004: 61–63; Demintseva 2008: 51–52; Korotayev and Khaltourina 2008: 10–11). Thus, by the 14<sup>th</sup> Century there were a number of independent city-states in the region, ruled by Arab Muslim dynasties or *Shirazi*. Moreover, by then a stratum of the Arab-Muslim population of the Middle Eastern origin emerged in East Africa as a result of several centuries of migrations.

### **Omani power, Zanzibar Sultanate and the slave trade of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The history of the slave trade in East Africa and the Indian Ocean lasted for many centuries. In the Early Modern Time, it was conducted mainly in the inland areas of the Zambezi River Basin (Mozambique) and controlled by the Portuguese. By that time, they had established their rule on Zanzibar, a number of settlements along the coastline of East Africa as well as in Oman in Arabia. All these locations formed the Portuguese colonial empire in the Indian Ocean.

In the middle – second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Oman was freed from the Portuguese rule, became an independent state and conquered Zanzibar and other Portuguese East African possessions north of Mozambique. This has led to commercial and political dominance of the Omani in the region (Alpers 2010: 41).

The Unguja Island (Zanzibar) became an important stronghold of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. In 1840, sultan Seyyid Said moved the capital from Muscat to Zanzibar, and after his death in 1856, the state was divided: Unguja and its tributary territories in East Africa formed Zanzibar Sultanate under the authority of one branch of Seyyid Said's descendants and Omani Sultanate was under the reign of another branch. Zanzibar Sultanate continued to exist under the British protectorate from 1890 before it gained independence in 1963. During the 1964 revolution sultan was dethroned, and Zanzibar became a part of united Tanzania the same year.

Historically, the Omani dynasty of Zanzibar, its elite, and Arab traders turned out deeply involved in the slave trade and slaveholding, and became the main force in the region in this regard. The slave trade itself began to expand initially due to the development of European colonial plantation economy. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the French founded sugar cane plantations in Mauritius (Île-de-France) and Reunion (Bourbon), which needed much more manpower than the local population could provide. This boosted a demand for slaves: the majority came from Mozambique, and about a quarter was provided by Kilwa (see Gerbeau 1979; Ogot 1979: 177; Klein 2005: 1384). The British who seized Mauritius, in 1821 restricted the importation of slaves to the island, and the following year a treaty with the sultan of Muscat (Moresby Treaty) prohibited the Omanis to bring slaves to British possessions in India and the Indian Ocean, as well as selling slaves to Christians of any nationality. But Bourbon, still belonging to the French, continued to receive labor force from the ports of East Africa – Zanzibar, Mombasa, Takaungu and Lamu (Ogot 1979: 177).

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, extensive plantations of cloves, coconuts and grains were established on Zanzibar and Pemba and thus they required even more labor than the plantations of Mascarene Islands. Their owners were the Hadhramaut and Omani Arabs, as well as local Swahili businesspersons from the continent. During the reign of Seyyid Said, the island became the world's leading supplier of cloves and the largest slave market in East Africa (Collins 2006: 339).

In addition to meeting the needs of Zanzibar and Pemba, slaves were taken to Arabia, the countries of the Persian Gulf, India, the islands of Reunion, Mauritius, Madagascar, the Comoros and Seychelles (Gerbeau 1979: 199; Ogot 1979: 177–178; Austen 1988: 21;

Alpers 2005: 7). In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the main export of slaves went through the port of Kilwa, and in 1866 it supplied 95% of slaves for the plantations of Zanzibar (Cooper 1977: 115–122; Ogot 1979: 178; Sheriff 1987: 226). Then the center of the slave trade shifted to the north (Collins 2006: 339; Croucher 2015: 45), and a number of small cities opposite to the Zanzibar archipelago became its important coastal points (Kake 1979: 167).

In order to capture slaves, the Arab traders traveled deep into the continent, reaching the territory of modern Congo (Wynne-Jones 2011: 317). The central route used by the slave caravans began in Ujiji, the oldest city in western Tanzania, located on the shores of lake Tanganyika (today a part of the Kigoma urban agglomeration), passed through the current areas of Kigoma, Tabora, Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro and ended in Saadani, Winde, Bagamoyo (Pwani region), Dar es Salaam and Mbwamaji (the Dar es Salaam area) (Rockel 2006: 5; see also Sheriff 1988; 2005; Wynne-Jones 2011: 318). The northern route led from Lake Victoria to the coast and ended in Mombasa (territory of modern Kenya), Tanga and Pangani (Tanga region). The southern route began at the southern boundary of Lake Malawi and ended in Kilwa (Lindi region) (Rockel 2006: 5).

Since the time of sultan Seyyid Said, the Arabs have been associated with the slave trade and perceived as slave traders, This view was supported by British abolitionists and fixed in the colonial education system (see Alpers 2010; Rhodes 2018), although many African chiefs and other administrators were also involved in the slave trade, mainly by selling people for weapon. The transfer of capital from Muscat to Zanzibar resulted in the most noticeable influx of the Arab migrants: most Omani noble families moved to the island, bringing their traditions and customs. While before that the Arabs came mainly for trading, now the Omani elite became engaged in land development and the establishment of plantations, initially holding a higher status compared to the indigenous population of the region and thus monopolizing the access to governance (Mbogoni 2012: 195).

The main reason for rapid development of the slave trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was not the significant profit gained from the sale of slaves to countries of consignment, but transformation of the economy of the region into plantation slave economy (above all, Zanzibar clove plantations). The efforts of the British to stop slave exports (the Mo-

resby Treaty of 1822 prohibited the slave trade south of Cabo Delgado, and the Hammerton Treaty of 1845 to the north of Brava) paradoxically enhanced the existing stance (Alpers 2005; Sheriff 1988: 133). In 1873, under pressure from the British, sultan Seyyid Bargash declared the slave trade illegal and closed the slave market on the island, however, slave owing was abolished on Zanzibar only in 1897 and in Tanganyika in 1922 (Sheriff 2005: 38).

By no means the history and role of the Arabs in East Africa can be reduced to their involvement in the slave trade. Nevertheless, this matter played a very important role in the perception of the Arab population by other groups. In particular, this attitude had impact on the course of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary events of 1964 and further on. It has an effect up to now (Lofchie 1965: 209; Korotayev and Khaltourina 2008: 25; for Kenya, see Kusimba 1996).

### **The Zanzibar revolution and Arab Tanzanians**

In 1890, the British signed a protectorate treaty with the sultan of Zanzibar. They retained the dominant positions for the Arabs: seats in the legislative council were reserved for them, they were given preference in employment and paid higher wages compared to Africans or Indians, children from noble Arab families were sent to Britain for getting education. In addition, the Arabs could influence the British colonial policy through different channels (Demkina 1972; Longair 2016: 18–23).

In 1957–58, liberation organizations began to appear on Zanzibar. They were focused mainly on overthrow of the Arab oppression rather than the English protectorate. In 1957, Africans and Shirazi united and created the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), the opposition to the National Party of Zanzibar (uniting the Arabs, a part of Shirazi and some Muslim Indians). This was followed by events called ‘pitfalls of a nascent democracy’ by Mbogoni: a series of elections (January and June 1961, July 1963), which resulted in the ASP’s failure to gain a majority of seats in the parliament, despite the fact that in the latter case the party received 54 per cent of the vote. The situation was heating up, mutual distrust, fueled by rumors, grew and the first outbreaks of violence followed already in 1961 (Glassman 2011; Mbogoni 2012: 189–201).

In January 1964, the ASP received considerable support from Mainland and staged a coup d'état: its representatives and supporters

seized weapons at police stations and overthrew the government and sultan (he managed to escape on a government yacht). Massacres began: a significant part of Zanzibari Arabs were murdered (the number of victims, according to various sources, is from five to ten thousand, see Petterson 2002), many others hastily fled. The ‘emotional force’ of these bloody events was, among other things, the ‘historical association’ between the Arab rule and slavery (Lofchie 1965: 209), and thus mass violence during the revolution became a ‘revenge’ for the slave trade.

The overwhelming majority of people with most pronounced Arab identity emigrated, what made it easier for others to integrate into the Tanzanian nation (Korotayev and Khaltourina 2008: 12). Earlier, many people of mixed origin identified themselves as Arabs, but since that time they preferred to be called Africans. Until the end of the 1960s, racial and confessional tensions persisted on the island. The highest governing body, the Revolutionary Council of Zanzibar, repeatedly raised the issue of the Arabs’ citizenship and their possible deportation to historical homeland.

As for today, although the Arabs are not numerous, they still occupy a noticeable position in the economy and culture of Tanzania. It is rather difficult to evaluate their specific weight: broadly speaking, the Arab Tanzanians amount to less than 1 per cent of population<sup>1</sup>. Field research of 2005 conducted by the team of the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences showed that the attitude towards the Arabs had improved significantly: respondents noted that the Arabs had integrated well into the Tanzanian nation, especially praising that they speak Swahili and marry Africans. Nevertheless, the negative attitudes triggered by the tragic events of the past still persist (Korotayev and Khaltourina 2008: 25). The evidence also showed that the Arabs are eager to integrate in the Tanzanian society more than Africans are ready to recognize them as compatriots (Korotayev and Khaltourina 2008: 15).

### **Field research**

The field research of 2018 was carried out by the authors in three cities of Tanzania, which are of considerable interest in terms of studying the historical memory of the slave trade – Dar es Salaam (30 interviews), Bagamoyo, including Kaole village (15 interviews in Ba-

gamoyo and 9 in Kaole) and Zanzibar, including Nungwi village (23 interviews in Zanzibar city and 4 in Nungwi). Structured and non-structured interviews were done both in English and Swahili. All the interviews were done with Afro-Tanzanians (Tanzanian citizens of African origin). Most interviews were in-depth; if there was no opportunity for an in-depth interview, respondents were asked only questions about the relations between Afro-Tanzanians and Arab-Tanzanians today (see also Korotayev and Demintseva 2008).

In general, it can be said that in terms of contemporary relations between Africans and Arabs in Tanzania opinions divided almost equally: 39 respondents (out of 76) are convinced that the relations are completely good; 37 respondents believe that there are some tensions. For analytical purposes, the interlocutors were divided into three groups. In the 'red' group are those who openly talked about Afro-Tanzanians' hatred and bad attitudes towards Arabs; in the 'yellow' – those who considered the situation as generally normal but indicated the presence of 'some people' who treat Arabs badly, or 'some tensions' (in fact, people from the 'yellow' group indicated the presence of opinions, expressed by people from the 'red' group); in the 'green' group are those who believe there are no problems in the interethnic relations in Tanzania, including the relations between local Arabs and Africans. Of course, such division is rather conventional and sometimes even judgmental because in most cases, we were dealing with in-depth interviews, not questionnaires. Thus, the answers cannot be interpreted univocally. We will cite several interlocutors from all the three groups to give an explicit understanding of the situation.

### ***'Red' group respondents***

1. Interview with a Gogo woman with elementary education:

O.I. (Oxana Ivanchenko): Who were the slave traders?

R. (Respondent): The Africans were the ones taken by the Arabs.

O.I.: So, the slave traders were the Arabs. In what places did they trade in slaves?

R.: Bagamoyo.

O.I.: Does the history of the slave trade influence the attitude towards Arabs today?

R.: Yes.

O.I.: So, is it common or typical just for some people?

R.: Everyone.

2. Interview with a young man, a tour guide in Bagamoyo:

R.: But for me, I don't like Arabs, I hate Arab and Indian people, because of selling and buying African people.

3. Interview with a bar owner from Bagamoyo, who grew up in Dar es Salaam:

R.: Me myself, I have negative feelings. <...> Everyone was born to be free. You know, I was not born to be slave! Tell me, I have the feeling when I see a slave master (meaning a person with an articulated Arab identity. – *O. I.*).

4. Interview with a Shirazi man from Zanzibar:

R.: [People say that] if you are going to vote for the CUF, it is the same as you are voting for Arabs! Once you are voting for them, it's same like you just want to bring back the slave trade!

This refers to voting in favor of the political party CUF, Civic United Front, supported mostly by Arabized islanders of the Zanzibar archipelago, Unguja and Pemba<sup>2</sup>. The example demonstrates that this part of historical memory is used in the present-day political struggle, including the struggle associated with strong separatist sentiments in Zanzibar (see below).

5. Interview with a teacher at the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy in Dar es Salaam:

R.: The history places Arabs as a second enemy...

O.I.: Second after whom? After *Mzungu* (sw. 'European, white person.' – *O. I.*)?

R.: Yeah, after *Mzungu* Arabs are on the second [place]... <...> If the negativity persists, it's only because of bad history.

### ***'Yellow' group respondents***

1. Interview with a Bagamoyo resident, miner by profession:

O.I.: So, in general, the relations are good.

R.: So yes, slavery in Tanzania, the way people remember, I don't think there is hard feeling, really. People might find one or two people here saying 'they enslaved us,' but let's just talk really, because it's been a long time now and Tanzania was not badly affected compared to the Congo.

2. Interview with a young woman, sociologist, Gongo-la-Mboti<sup>3</sup> resident:

R.: Currently, though the slave trade is already abolished, they took Africans in direct way, they took them into Arab countries, and some people are so into it, that they [Arabs] are not good people.

O.I.: So some people are still negative towards Arabs because of the history? And is it common? Or affects just some people?

R.: In some places. <...>

O.I.: So they think that Arabs are not good because of slave trade or because of business, something else? Or they don't go deep into it?

R.: First of all, because of slave trade and the activities that they are still doing – they take Africans, especially young ladies, to their country, and once they're there, they take their passports, and the other activities.

### 3. Interview with a high-rank Bagamoyo police officer:

A.B.: Are the relations between Tanzanians and Arabs good in general?

R.: In general, they were good, but there were tensions after the 1994 terrorist attacks at the American embassy<sup>4</sup>, perpetrated by the radicals, there was a negative attitude towards both Arabs and Islam as a whole.

### 4. Interview with a seller at Bagamoyo crafts market:

R.: <...> sometime you say 'Hi, how are you,' but sometime it's pain from the heart, when you see people of Arab origin...

Sometimes it is difficult for the respondents to describe their opinion about Arabs, the answers may be synthetic, describing at once attitudes towards Arabs in the past and in the present, and therefore contradictory.

### 5. Interview with a resident of Kaole village:

R.: I hate them [Arabs] a lot, it was not good what they were doing by torturing Africans and letting them walk naked.

O.I.: What about nowadays?

R.: As of now I am okay with them, I don't have a problem with that. Arabs are my friends.

### ***'Green' group respondents***

Opinions of the 'green' group informants, those who do not see problems in relations between African Tanzanians and Arabs nowadays, are based on several main ideas. Firstly, the past must remain in the past, there is no point in returning to it. Secondly, Arabs have been



living in Tanzania for many generations side by side with Africans, marrying them, integrating into society and even defining themselves either as Swahili or some specific local ‘tribes’ (although sometimes dressing and language give out their roots). In Zanzibar, many people mention that Arab countries provide significant assistance to the island and can always be counted on in case of problems.

1. Interview with a Dar es Salaam citizen, who was educated in Moscow, at the Dmitri Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia:

R.: Generations change – history remains, but a new generation has no that feeling of hate of that happened before, and it’s already become like a system. We are living our life. So what happened before – even if it affected us – we are leaving it now. So we take the good and the bad and the life is going on. <...> Past is the past. We are not there, you cannot hate or something, we care about our families and generation at the moment. They can’t do it again, it’s already done, it could never repeat again. Some things happen during lifetime.

2. Interview with a young lady graduating from high school, a Gongo-la-Mbotto resident:

R.: I think, it is left in past, because those people took part in these events and it’s passed and we live in present. So they left things in past, being past, and present as present. As in Tanzania nowadays – many Arabs are here, they do business, they also cooperate with Tanzanians.

O.I.: So the relations are good.

R.: Yes.

3. Interview with a Luguru man, hotel manager:

O.I.: What do you think about today’s relations? The relations between Tanzanian people, Arabs and the European people – are they good?

R.: I can just speak for myself, because I don’t know what you think, what other people think... <...> I can’t blame you because of the mistake of your grandma, your granddad, for mistake of my ancestors. So now we’re moving on. We live in a different world. We treat people, we treat each other as equals. So, I can go to Europe, I can go to Arab [countries], you can come to Africa, you can go to Arab [countries]. <...> We need each other, yeah, now we need each other. So for me, it’s good to know our history, but what’s the importance of that in this

time when we are moving forward? What the important thing is just... to break the friendship we have now? Or to strengthen the friendship? So for me, we should move on. What has happened, has happened, and it's ended. Sure.

4. Interview with a young man, tour guide from Bagamoyo:

O.I.: So today, the relations are good.

R.: Very good. Honestly, hundred percent good. Not deceive, I can say in general. Yeah, 'cause I must have much experience about, 'cause I was born here. No, I've never seen people hating people that much and even if some few people, just they think about it, but in more positive way, like 'this thing they did was not good,' but [it] doesn't mean like they hate people coming here, or Arabs, because they did slave trade, no. We have a lot of Arabs actually, friends, Arab friends, a lot. In Bagamoyo in other street, there, I have one of my friends, he is Arab, but he is my good friend. [In] my hometown (Mtwara. – *A. B.*) as well, a lot. And they are living in normal streets, they don't have any protection area. So, this love thing, I think, is something existing, and you can feel [it] even yourself, no need even to ask. The people from Tanzania are very social.

5. Interview with a man from Dar es Salaam, with higher education:

O.I.: How do you think, do these events [the slave trade] influence the attitude towards Arabs today? <...> Or it was long ago, so people don't really remember?

R.: No, of course some people remember, those who have been affected. But we have a lot of changes (in society. – *O. I.*), and we have lots of relations with Arabs, for example, even the language we are using, Swahili, we have some common ways. Swahili and Arabic – very close, and even our culture is much affected by Arabs. So, a lot of things, we go together with Arabs, changing our attitude, maybe... During the colonialism, because what we considered during colonialism... for example during colonialism, that one was bad – it was the Germans, Germans were colonizing this land after the Arabs.

O.I.: You mean the Europeans, who went after the...

R.: Yeah.

O.I.: So you mean that people remember more about the European colonialism than about the Arab slave trade?

R.: Yeah.

O.I.: And today, the relations between Tanzanians and Arabs are good.

R.: Of course, good.

### **Respondents' conceptualization of the possible negative attitudes towards Arabs**

One of the most interesting aspects related to the modern interethnic relations in Tanzania is the conceptualization of negative attitudes towards Arabs, suggested by several respondents. In other words, our interlocutors gave several explanations why some people have negative feelings towards Arabs. The first reason is the level of education: it is believed that undereducated people tend to treat Arabs negatively, while the higher the education level, the more tolerant the person will be.

The Director of the school in Taveta district of Zanzibar City clarified this idea by the example of attitudes towards Europeans and white people in general:

Because of the nature of our society, we have gaps for literates and illiterates; means the number of illiterates is high from the number of literates. If you take the number of illiterates, you can say, that they will build something in their mind that Europeans, white men, they did something wrong to us, so when they visit that are taken as our enemies for those who are uneducated. But for the educated men, they see the life that you are experiencing with a number of things passing through a number of things, the matter is not like we have been colonized, slaves... For the Tanzanian I can say, that is less educated, so I believe they can't perceive the whites and Europeans like good friends because of what happened. But for the educated people they can take it as normal and forget about it and focus on the technological part. You see, that is something that is experienced though I haven't done much research on that.

He also commented on the current attitudes towards Arabs:

For here in Tanzania we have Arabs, but educationally we were told that Arabs were not the indigenous people, they were colonizers, so they made us slaves. <...> We take Arabs like the colonizers, while they were the ones who did bad things, indeed we take the whites as the people who cause a number of problems, that they made us undeveloped and used our resources like minerals, cheap labor, we can still say the relationship between Africans and Arabs, and Africans and whites is still a kind of tension, it's a kind of unfaithful relationship.

We have supposed that the region of the informant's origin could be another reason for bad attitude towards Arabs: those people, whose native regions were more affected by the slave trade, tend to have more negative feelings than people from regions not so much affected. As an elderly Tanzanian from Dodoma said,

Zanzibar, they are copies of Arabs. Arabs left their stamps, so like if you go to Pemba, Pemba is a stamp of Arab. <...> If you talk about Zanzibar and Arabs, most people in Zanzibar and Pemba believe Arabs are brothers. So you can't say anything about them, even [though] the slave trade happened... Everything in Zanzibar, like spices, started with Arabs. We've been slaved by Arabs, but if we are copies of Arabs, we cannot hate ourselves. <...> But to where people crossed like Tabora, Mwanza, Shinyanga, some part of Dodoma people don't like Arabs that much. People have bad memories with Arabs.

The third explanation of negative feelings is the age: the older generation tends to keep negative feelings towards Arabs, because they are closer to these tragic events, they have heard a lot of stories from relatives of those, who were captured by the traders. 'Many old people don't like Arabs,' said a young woman from Dar es Salaam. Such an explanation was given at once and independently from each other by three respondents (all other versions were heard 'in a unique copy').

The fourth explanation was mentioned by two respondents, but it was confirmed by the stories of people, whose families and ancestors were directly affected by the slave trade. In other words, if there was a trauma in the family or its immediate environment, then with a high probability it would result in a negative attitude towards Arabs today. Below we quote fragments of two interviews.

One respondent said that he had a friend who had a grandfather. When the grandfather was a child, his friend was taken by the Arabs:

He was a kid, his friend was twelve, they were playing, but Arabs just came with the gun, they grabbed him and he disappeared since then. <...> But he is talking being enemy with Arabs, he hated Arabs, I think, he died when he didn't like even seeing Arabs. He always said 'Why people are going to Oman, Muscat or Arab countries??? Why do people invite Arabs to come to Zanzibar, Tanzania, Africa? Because they used to sell us and now you invite them.' He used to be completely against Arabs, that was his opinion.

Another informant, whose granddad was enslaved, told about his attitude towards Arabs:

But we (Tanzanians. – *A. B.*) are not much friends with the Arabs; yes, we are not in deep friendship with them. We take them in (the country. – *A. B.*), but we are not in deep friendship with them because of these pasts and even this generation, I am a new generation and I know, what happened before. So I can't work in the same apartment with the Arab people much time, because I know that even now they have something in the heart. Like you know that is appearance to them to do bad things [i.e., Arabs are accustomed to do harm to others. – *editors*], so when I work with them, I must see something, which they can do to some people, bad things, so I can remember my mind must refuse to remember the beginning. So, it is hard, very hard.

### **Conceptualization of the possible negative attitudes towards Arabs in accordance with the field study results**

After generalizing our field evidence, we have distinguished several patterns concerning interethnic relations in contemporary Tanzania:

1. The level of education does affect the attitude of Afro-Tanzanians towards Arab-Tanzanians: although in both, the 'red-yellow' and 'green', groups there are enough students and graduates of colleges and universities, there are many more people with primary education in the first group.

2. The region of person's origin brings to bear influence. Thus, all the respondents originating from Dodoma (territory of the Gogo people and an important center of the slave trade in Mainland) were in the 'red-yellow' group; at the same time, the overwhelming majority of Zanzibarians (by origin and self-identification) turned out to be 'green.' The latter is not surprising (see below); however, the question of the influence of a person's region of origin on the attitude towards Arabs in continental Tanzania requires a more careful study, which we plan to conduct during the second field research season.

3. In full conformity with the words of Tanzanians, age matters, as the older generation treats Arabs much less tolerantly: 16 people, being over 45 years old, turned out to be in the 'red-yellow' group, and only 7 in 'green' (be reminded that the groups are approximately equal, 37 and 39 people respectively).

4. Family history also proved to be an important factor determining Afro-Tanzanians' attitudes towards Arab-Tanzanians: the majority

of respondents with family trauma were in the ‘red-yellow’ group, as well as bearers of the oral tradition about the slave trade, whose ancestors were not affected by the slave trade directly.

5. Unexpectedly, it turned out that there is a great difference in the opinions expressed by adherents of different religions. In the ‘green’ group, there are both Christians and Muslims; at the same time the ‘red-yellow’ group is formed mainly by Christians. It should be noted specifically that for Zanzibarian Muslims the determinative factor is the overall view on the history of the Mainland, not religion. This goes in line with the words of the Christian respondents that Tanzanian Muslims in general are much more loyal to Arabs, because the latter introduced the culture of Islam (the quotation already cited: ‘We’ve been slaved by Arabs, but if we are copies of Arabs, we cannot hate ourselves’). Moreover, the very fact that Arabs brought Islam to Tanzania was positively emphasized by many informants regardless of their religious affiliation.

Summarizing the above: worse attitude towards Arabs is mainly expressed by people with low education level; from the most affected by the slave trade regions of the country; from the senior age group; with a family trauma; and Christians. Two of these five factors – education level and religious affiliation – may not be directly attributed to the slave trade issue: the influence of education level on ethnic and religious tolerance is fixed in many societies regardless of the initial research topic (see, e.g., Bondarenko 2008). There are also some tensions between Christians and Muslims in Tanzania, not directly related to the slave trade (see Savateev 2005; Korotayev and Demintseva 2008; however, the historical memories are used as an additional argument to the already existing tensions).

The fact that people with family trauma or those originating from the most affected by the slave trade regions (which can be considered as indirect family trauma) are less tolerant is psychologically understandable and does not need any special explanation. We believe that people of older age often demonstrated negative feelings for Arabs because they heard much more oral histories and memories than younger people (our informants clearly stated that the evening gatherings of old people with children, during which they used to tell the stories of their lives, are now passing off and the entire oral tradition is fading away).

At the same time, young and middle-aged people demonstrated more friendly attitudes due to several factors.

### **Arab slave trade of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as a part of Tanzania's colonial history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

We have paid attention to the fact that many people from the 'green' group did not only say that the relations between Afro-Tanzanians and Arab-Tanzanians were good, but also gave specific arguments: joint business activities, friendship, marriages between Africans and Arabs (although respondents that spoke about negative attitudes denied this fact and blamed Arabs for their unwillingness to create families with Africans) and so on. Additionally, many informants made general statements about the unity of the nation, Tanzanian society, about the friendship and good relations between all groups of the population: 'Arabs are our people. These are our people' (freelancer from Dar es Salaam with higher education); 'We are together, no conflict until now' (water seller on the beach in Bagamayo); 'So after that revolution, after union, all people of Tanzania were connected and be as one family. <...> From my side... there is no doubts, there is no problems, all people live together in love and happiness' (police officer in Bagamoyo).

Moreover, respondents spoke of unity and good attitude as a result of the efforts of the father of Tanzanian nation, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, either mentioning his name directly or sometimes more generally, for example: 'If we were hating other people from other countries, we are not being together with them. That's because we are not told to hate people, we are told that there is a story that we have passed, so we know the story has passed and something, which has passed, is just a story!' (young man with primary education, teaches tourists to play djembe drums); 'We passed to the father of the nation, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, one of the persons who lighted Tanzania and at the end of the day we see each other, even if you're different with another person, it's very hard to show it because the other person is going to say "What's happened? We're all Tanzanian!" We're all African, we're all one world, we don't see the difference, even if we feel the difference, we can't show it openly. He contributed so much reputation, you see other human being as a part of yourself' (a young lady, Chagga living in Gongo-la-Mboto), 'After Mwalimu Nyerere

took this country, he made that everybody is equal, so... So far, we come like forget all the bad memories' (a young engineer, Maasai).

In the course of his political activities Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, repeatedly stressed the necessity to move to a civic understanding of belonging to the Tanzanian community instead of ethnic and racial, the need to treat Tanzanian citizens as one nation. The scale of this heritage, demonstrated in the answers of our respondents, is impressive indeed: many of them sincerely said they did not treat anyone badly, they perceived all people in Tanzania as fellow citizens and brothers, because that was what Mwalimu ('The Teacher') Nyerere had taught them.

At the same time, nationalist politicians of the Julius Nyerere generation tried to present the slave trade as part of a longer process of external domination, which also included European colonialism. Even in the modern school history textbook history of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Arab slave trade is paradoxically presented as part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century colonial history of Tanzania. In this textbook, the Arabs are not mentioned as the main actors of the slave trade, instead it is said that the very reason for slavery is the industrial development of Europe (thus, they needed manpower). Consequently, Europeans are fully responsible for these events. Regarding the final destination to which slaves were taken, among other historically accurate places the textbook also mentions Europe.

Exactly the same information, completely contradictory to historical reality, was obtained in the course of our field research. A considerable part of interlocutors, including people with higher education, said that:

1. The British and Germans (main colonial powers in the region), more rarely the Portuguese and French, were the slave traders, while the Arabs were mentioned either as a part of 'European slave traders' or after a directive question.

Interview with a Gongo-la-Mboto resident:

O.I.: So they were catching people and selling them as slaves, yes? And who were the first?

R.: The first were Germans.

Interview with a young woman from Gongo-la-Mboto, sociologist:

O.I.: Okay, and who took the African people? Who were the slave traders?



R.: Slave traders were... German, British... yes. Germans came first to Africa, yeah, British came after Germans. And somewhere Arabs also.

Interview with a footballer:

O.I.: What about Arabs, were they involved in the slave trade?

R.: No.

O.I.: Just Europeans, British?

R.: Yes, British, German, France...

Sometimes the connection between Arabs and Europeans was emphasized; in other words, Arabs sold slaves to Europeans and the latter were the main beneficiaries of human trafficking: 'So Arab people, they bought people and sold them to the Germans. <...> The Germans were waiting while the Arabs were doing the searching, finding people from different places when they get them, they take them straight to the German people', a middle-aged Tanzanian said. 'These are two peoples – European, Arab middlemen, the middlemen were Arabs, who were going around searching for the slave and then... Selling them to white people. But you don't see white people doing that. They just came in selling. They just buying the people,' a young Luguru man from the Morogoro region in the depth of Mainland said. The group of respondents who immediately and without slightest hesitation called the Arabs the main slave traders was formed by the people with family trauma and connoisseurs of the oral tradition.

2. Among other places, slaves were taken to Europe.

'Trade that involved actually taking people from Africa to America, and sometimes to Europe. Africa as the source (of manpower. – *A. B.*); America, Europe were the user places,' a Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy employee said. 'I remember that slave trade connected African coast, it's connected with Europe,' a man with higher education said. 'Most of the slaves were taken from the Coastal region and some were from Kigoma, Mwanza, from Mwera, Nyamwezi... Then they went to Dar es Salaam, and from Dar to Bagamoyo, then from Bagamoyo they were deported to Zanzibar by water, by ship. And from Zanzibar – I don't know where they went, maybe it was out to Europe,' a Tanzanian who got higher education in Russia said.

We believe that such contradictory representation of history in the textbook and respective opinions, expressed by the respondents, are a continuation of nation-building policy started by Julius Nyerere. Given that Arabs came to Tanganyika in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, they have

been a part of the country's population for a long time and thus occupied a certain position in the society. At the same moment, Europeans have never been a part of the community, they were always perceived as representatives of an alien culture. Politically, from the moment Tanzanians gained independence, they have opposed themselves to the European political and cultural pressure; this opposition is still relevant.

For this reason, the Arab slave trade receives little attention compared to the prominence of European colonialism in modern textbooks. Europeans can be 'blamed for any sins' that should have been attributed to the real offenders, or their descendants, modern Tanzanian Arabs (though, they cannot be responsible for the actions of their ancestors; many respondents repeatedly emphasized this fact). The second reason is the specific cultural status of Zanzibar, which was the capital of Oman Sultanate and is still somehow a part of the Arab world. From the point of view of the national politics, it would be extremely reckless to draw special attention to the island's slave trade past, although it was the largest slave market in the Indian Ocean and even now there are monuments of world importance associated with this sad page of history.

A very vivid and indicative example is the memorial tablet on the house of the major slave trader, Hamad bin Muhammad bin Juma bin Rajab el Murjebi in Zanzibar, commonly known as Tippu Tip (the nickname is associated with the sound of pulling back on the bolt before releasing, he was very cruel). The tablet says Tippu Tip was the creator of a trading empire in Eastern Congo in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, which was destroyed after the beginning of Belgian colonization. This is absolutely the same scheme of shifting the discourse from slavery to colonialism, as in the above-mentioned textbook: firstly, it is silenced that Tippu Tip's empire was actually a slave trading empire (although trade in ivory brought him profits too), and secondly, Europeans are once again mentioned as 'scapegoats.'

### **Concluding remarks**

Thus, for each individual in contemporary Tanzania the history of the Arab slave trade lies between family trauma on the one hand, and tolerance, non-discrimination, imposed by the state, on the other. If a family was affected, if one's ancestors became victims of the slave traders, it is quite unlikely that this person will treat Arabs with toler-

ance. Such people are not very sensitive to state propaganda and attempts to smooth things over. Two ways of reproducing the historical memory of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Arab slave trade largely oppose each other: the school system lays the blame on Europeans, promoting peaceful interethnic relations in the country, presenting the slave trade as an essential part of colonialism, and after that emphasizing the story of overcoming the colonial past, while the oral tradition censors nothing and tells the history of the ancestors' sufferings in its entirety, consequently awakening negative feelings in the descendants. Thus, connoisseurs of the oral tradition with a low level of education turn to be the most vulnerable category: they keep the family trauma and at the same time do not get a sufficient 'textbook vaccination' as well as a broader and less politically motivated view of life education provides. As a result, they become the least tolerant to Arab-Tanzanians part of the country's population.

### **Acknowledgements**

The research is supported by the Russian Science Foundation, grant # 18-18-00454 'Historical memory as a factor in the evolution of socio-political systems (Sub-Saharan Africa and Mesoamerica).'

The authors are very grateful to Edward Alpers and Benigna Zimba for supplying them with a copy of extremely valuable 'Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa' edited by them with A.F. Isaacman and printed in Maputo, Mozambique, in 2005, which is unavailable from Russian libraries or on the Internet.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> According to Joshua Project, a non-commercial missionary organization gathering data on ethnic groups around the world (<https://joshuaproject.net/countries/TZ>, accessed 08.06.2019). Unfortunately, the official statistics on the ethnic composition of the country's population is not available for the public.

<sup>2</sup> CUF, is also supported by a part of Muslims in Mainland. Although religion-based political parties are prohibited in Tanzania, many citizens, both CUF's supporters and non-supporters, associate Civic United Front with the Muslim agenda (editors' note).

<sup>3</sup> Gongo-la-Mboto is one of Dar es Salaam poor neighborhoods (editors' note).

<sup>4</sup> In reality, the US embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi were attacked by terrorists in 1998, on August 7 (editors' note).

## References

- Alpers, E. 2005. Introduction: Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa. In Zimba, B., Alpers, E.A., and Isaacman, A.F. (eds.), *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa* (pp. 1–12). Maputo: Folsom Entertainment.
- Austen, R.A. 1988. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Islamic Slave Trade from East Africa (Swahili and Red Sea Coasts): A Tentative Census. *Slavery and Abolition* 9 (3): 21–44.
- Bakari, M.A. 2001. *The Democratisation Process in Zanzibar: A Retarded Transition*. Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde.
- Bennett, N.R. 1978. *A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar*. London: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Bondarenko, D.M. 2008. Obrazovanie i tolerantnost' v sovremennoj Tanzanii: etnorasovyy i konfessional'nyj aspekty [Education and Tolerance in Contemporary Tanzania: Ethno-racial and Religious Aspects]. In Korotayev, A.V., and Demintseva, E.B. (eds.), *Mezhrasovye i mezhetnicheskie otnosheniya v sovremennoj Tanzanii. Trudy Rossijskoj kompleksnoj ekspedicii v Ob'edinennoj Respublike Tanzaniya (sezon 2005 g.)* [Interracial and Interethnic Relations in Contemporary Tanzania. Publications of the Russian Complex Expedition to the United Republic of Tanzania (2005 Field Season)]. Moscow: LENAND. P. 94–121.
- Collins, R.O. 2006. The African Slave Trade to Asia and the Indian Ocean Islands. *African and Asian Studies* 5 (3–4): 325–346.
- Croucher, S.K. 2015. *Capitalism and Cloves, an Archaeology of Plantation Life on Nineteenth-Century Zanzibar*. New York: Springer.
- Demintseva, E.B. 2008. Mezhetnicheskie otnosheniya na Zanzibare [Interethnic Relations in Zanzibar]. In Korotayev, A.V., and Demintseva, E.B. (eds.), *Mezhrasovye i mezhetnicheskie otnosheniya v sovremennoj Tanzanii. Trudy Rossijskoj kompleksnoj ekspedicii v Ob'edinennoj Respublike Tanzaniya (sezon 2005 g.)* [Interracial and Interethnic Relations in Contemporary Tanzania. Publications of the Russian Complex Expedition to the United Republic of Tanzania (2005 Field Season)]. Moscow: LENAND. P. 45–56.
- Demkina, L.A. 1972. *Nacional'nye men'shinstva v stranah Vostochnoj Afriki* [Ethnic Minorities in Western Africa]. Moscow: Science.
- Gerbeau, H. 1979. The Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean: Problems Facing the Historian and Research to be Undertaken. In *The African Slave Trade from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century. Reports and papers of the meeting of experts organized by UNESCO at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 31 January to 4 February 1978* (pp. 184–207). Paris: Imprimeries Réunies de Chambéry.

- Glassman, J. 2011. *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*. Bloomington; Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Kake, I.B. 1979. The Slave Trade and the Population Drain from Black Africa to North Africa and the Middle East. In *The African Slave Trade from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century. Reports and papers of the meeting of experts organized by UNESCO at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 31 January to 4 February 1978* (pp. 164–174). Paris: Imprimeries Réunies de Chambéry.
- Klein, M.A. 2005. Slavery: Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean. In: Shillington K. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of African History* (pp. 1382–1384). New York; London: Fitzroy Dearborn.
- Kobishchanov, Yu.M. 1987. *Istoriya rasprostraneniya islama v Afrike* [The History of Spread of Islam in Africa]. Moscow: Science.
- Korotayev, A.V., and Demintseva, E.B. (eds.). 2008. *Mezhrasovoye i mezhetnicheskie otnosheniya v sovremennoj Tanzanii. Trudy Rossijskoj kompleksnoj ekspedicii v Ob"edinennoj Respublike Tanzaniya (sezon 2005 g.)* [Interracial and Interethnic Relations in Contemporary Tanzania. Publications of the Russian Complex Expedition to the United Republic of Tanzania (2005 Field Season)]. Moscow: LENAND.
- Korotayev, A.V., and Khaltourina, D.A. 2008. Araby v Tanzanii [Arabs in Tanzania]. In Korotayev, A.V., and Demintseva, E.B. (eds.), *Mezhrasovoye i mezhetnicheskie otnosheniya v sovremennoj Tanzanii. Trudy Rossijskoj kompleksnoj ekspedicii v Ob'edinennoj Respublike Tanzaniya (sezon 2005 g.)* [Interracial and Interethnic Relations in Contemporary Tanzania. Publications of the Russian Complex Expedition to the United Republic of Tanzania (2005 Field Season)]. Moscow: LENAND. P. 8–27.
- Kusimba, C.M. 1996. Kenya's Destruction of the Swahili Cultural Heritage. In Schmidt, P.R., and McIntosh, R.J. (eds.), *Plundering Africa's Past* (pp. 201–224). Bloomington; Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press; London: James Currey.
- Lofchie, M.F. 1965. *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Longair, S. 2016. *Cracks in the Dome: Fractured Histories of Empire in the Zanzibar Museum, 1897–1964*. New York: Routledge.
- Mbogoni, L.E.Y. 2012. *Aspects of Colonial Tanzania History*. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers.
- Nicolini, B. 2004. *Makran, Oman and Zanzibar: Three-Terminal Cultural Corridor in the Western Indian Ocean, 1799–1856*. Leiden: Brill.
- Nurse, D., and Spear, T. 1985. *The Swahili. Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Ogot, B.A. 1979. Population Movements between East Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Neighbouring Countries. In *The African Slave Trade from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century. Reports and papers of the meeting of experts organized by UNESCO at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 31 January to 4 February 1978* (pp. 175–182). Paris: Imprimeries Réunies de Chambéry.
- Petterson, D. 2002. *Revolution in Zanzibar*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Rhodes, D.T. 2018. Materialization, and Presentation of Slavery in Tanzania. *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* 7 (2): 165–191.
- Rockel, S.J. 2006. Forgotten Caravan Towns in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Tanzania: Mbwamaji and Mpwapwa. *AZANIA: Journal of the British Institute in Eastern Africa* 41 (1): 1–25.
- Savateev, A.D. (ed.). 2005. *Musul'mane i hristiane v sovremennoj Tanzanii. Trudy uchastnikov rossijskoj ekspedicii* [Muslims and Christians in Modern Tanzania. Publications of the Russian Expedition]. Moscow: Institute for African Studies.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices, and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East Africa Commercial Empire in the World Economy, 1770–1873*. London: James Currey.
- Sheriff, A. 1988. Localisation and Social Composition of the East African Slave Trade, 1858–1873. *Slavery and Abolition* 9 (3): 131–145.
- Sheriff, A. 2005. Slave Trade and Slave Routes of the East African Coast. In Zimba, B., Alpers, E.A., and Isaacman, A.F. (eds.), *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa* (pp. 13–38). Maputo: Folsom Entertainment.
- Wynne-Jones, S. 2011. Recovering and Remembering a Slave Route in Central Tanzania. In: Lane, P., and MacDonald, K.S. (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Archaeology and Memory* (pp. 317–342). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS, OCCULT PROTESTS, AND SOCIAL MEMORIES IN SIERRA LEONE

*Lorenzo D'Angelo*

University of Milan-Bicocca

## **Introduction**

Since the end of the Civil War (1991–2002), Sierra Leone has faced a period of rapid socio-economic changes. Numerous projects have been started or completed in the following decade, for example, the upgrading of some of the main roads in the capital and major highways across the country, the exploration and discovery of new mineral deposits, and the completion of the Bumbuna hydroelectric power station. With the support and consultancy of leading international agencies and NGOs, the government of Sierra Leone was able to create the conditions to attract foreign investments. Thanks to generous mining concessions (NACE 2009), the attention of foreign investors has been focused above all on mineral resources, particularly on diamond, gold, iron, rutile and bauxite. Contracts for several hundred million dollars were signed with international mining companies (Gberie 2010). Thus, the mining sector continues to be, as in the past, the main source of economic wealth for Sierra Leone.

The former president of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma heavily emphasised the results achieved by his government between 2007–2017, and thus created high expectations for future national goals such as becoming a middle-income country by 2035. This, in turn, fuelled expectations of a material well-being that would be shared by all, not only by a privileged wealthy urban élite. While politicians and local and foreign businessmen indeed gained more prestige and power – and, some, in a short time, accumulated extraordinary wealth – a large part of the population has continued to face the same old difficulties and uncertainties. In a decade, Sierra Leone timidly rose from the very bottom of the United Nations' development index – where it had been at the end of the civil war –, however, the ambitious aim of halving the number of people living below the poverty threshold by 2015 fell short by a long way. As for 2012, about two-third of Sierra Leone's population still lived on about one dollar a day (UNDP 2012).

Subsistence agriculture and artisanal mining remain the main sources of employment. Despite all the contracts for the building of infrastructure, and the agreements signed with the government for small and large-scale mineral exploitation, unemployment continues to be high, especially among young people (Awareness Times 2012). Those who have found a job – for example, in large-scale mining – have to fight to obtain better contract and salary conditions. Therefore, discontent among the people has grown and found expression in various ways. The reaction of the government, however, has been harsh. In some public protests the police intervened by shooting on the crowds, killing or wounding some of the demonstrators.<sup>1</sup>

In this context of high expectations and unevenly distributed opportunities, of discontent with labour exploitation and violent repression of open forms of protest, the concern with the role played by the occult in the daily lives of Sierra Leoneans seems to have increased. Rumours of ritual killings (Mansaray 2008; Awoko 2009; Kai 2009; Peep Reporter 2009b; Moiguah 2011), news of mysterious accidents (Fonti 2009, 2011), and findings of ritual material in unexpected places (Awareness Times 2010; Koroma 2010, 2011; Moriba 2011; Samura 2011)<sup>2</sup> attracted the attention of the local media, confirming and reproducing suspicions, fears and feelings of anxiety and epistemological and ontological insecurity.

The hidden forces mentioned by the people of Sierra Leone to explain these occult phenomena often include the so-called ‘devils’ [krio: *debul* (sing.); *debul dem* (pl.)]. These invisible entities, which are not necessarily evil, were made accountable for accidents to people, the breakdown of machinery owned by mining companies, the theft of machinery, or actual sabotage, targeting above all the main works of ‘modernization’, (e.g., dams, railway lines, and electricity lines). In other cases, these same entities were consulted by ritual specialists in order to identify the humans responsible for those acts of sabotage or theft (Awoko 2011a; Peep Reporter 2009a).

The underlying question to be asked here is: Why was all this happening then, in Sierra Leone? What did all these phenomena have in common? President Koroma saw a link between the acts of sabotage aimed at the mining companies, the demonstrations of the workers and the rumours about the *debul dem* infesting the main mining areas in the country.<sup>3</sup> On several official occasions, President Koroma



stated that the rumours about *debul dem* served simply to deceive ordinary people, to mask the true reality of thefts and damage caused by saboteurs, or unscrupulous people who, for personal gain or political rivalry, ‘are bent on seeing the downfall of the country’ (Turay 2011; cf. Awoko 2011b).

In this paper, I put forward a different interpretation. Criminalizing what lies ‘behind’ the *debul dem*’s actions or considering them as mere ‘superstitions’ has a triple effect at least: 1) hiding or underestimating the importance of the historical and socio-political contexts in which such occult narratives arise; 2) underestimating the potential political significance of the actions generically grouped together under the label of *debul* and, in particular, their capacity to open up negotiations between unequal subjects; and 3) tacit justifying of the use of force to put down or repress dissent.

My aim is to show the multiple levels of meaning and action necessary to understand the discourses and practices related to the *debul dem*. On the one hand, narratives on this invisible presence make use of images and symbols that incorporate a memory of violence and exploitation which, from the past has prolonged its effects onto the present. On the other hand, a historical-anthropological analysis of these accounts should not underestimate their political aims. Here, symbols and metaphors are not simply ways of expressing and making sense of the uncertainties and anxieties produced by globalized modernity (see Marshall 2009). These meanings act in the world. Hence, they are *active symbols* composing the weave of ‘fantasies of agency’ that mediate the (post- or neo-) colonial encounter with the extractive industries (Wardlow 2004: 50).

What I suggest is that occult mining narratives can be analysed as forms of social memory drawing from a kaleidoscopic local repertoire of the imaginary. By pointing to a particular history of violence, terror and uncertainties that are inscribed in the landscape and dwelling practices, these narratives are practical ways to do things and achieve tangible results; they are ‘forms of political practice, modes of action on the world’ (Marshall 2009: 28).

### **Mining, environments and the occult**

In anthropology, when we speak of miners or mining populations entering into relationships with ‘devils’ or invisible local spirits, a refer-

ence to *The Devil and the Commodity Fetishism in South America* by Michael Taussig (1980) seems to be unavoidable (see Sanders 2008). Whether we are dealing with the gold, silver or tin mines in South America (e.g., Harris 1989; Sallnow 1989; Salazar-Soler 2006), the diamond and gold mines in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Bryceson et al. 2010; De Boeck 1998), those in Papua New Guinea (e.g., Clark 1993; Jorgensen 1998), or in the remote deposits of New Caledonia (e.g., Horowitz 2001), Taussig's analysis is an important reference point when considering the relationship between ideology and production processes (Gross 1983; Godoy 1985) and is a way to bridge the gap between interpretative and politico-economic analysis (Marcus and Fischer 1986).

One of the central theses in Taussig's book is that the devil with which the peasants in the Cauca Valley in Colombia and the Bolivian tin miners make a pact is a symbol of the alienation experienced by the proletarianized workers (Taussig 1980: xi). For Taussig, the proletarianized Colombian peasants and Bolivian miners act as symbolic mediators between two distinct and irreconcilable spheres of exchange: on the one hand, the values and organization of a pre-capitalist society and, on the other, the principles and values of a capitalist economy. The magic-religious rituals and beliefs hinging on the figure of the devil can be interpreted as an oblique criticism of modern forms of capitalist production (Taussig 1980: 10).

As Sanders notes (2008), *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism* proposes a 'seductive anthropological analytic' which has the merit of showing that certain popular beliefs or folklore – apparently anachronistic and of little interest for an anthropology of contemporary societies – can be interpreted as sophisticated cultural forms of resistance to and criticism of industrial capitalism (Marcus and Fischer 1986) or of any other form of exploitation and violent oppression brought by colonialism and economic globalization. However, Taussig's arguments have been subjected to criticism of both a theoretical, methodological, and empirical nature (e.g., Austen 1993; Edelman 1994; Sanders 2008), which puts into question their applicability to the Sierra Leonean context. On the basis of my ethnographical experience in Sierra Leone (2007-2012), I consider that the *debul dem* are neither deceptive images of the true reality of economic exploitation underlying production relations, nor simply generalized metaphors for these same

relations of exploitation and oppression (cf. Masquelier 2000: 88; White 1993).

The approach recently put forward by the Comaroffs on occult economies (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, 2000, 2003) to explain the dramatic increase ‘in the deployment, real or imagined, of magical means for material ends’ (Idem 1999: 279) is not a wholly convincing alternative (see Moore and Sanders 2001: 13; Ranger 2007; Marshall 2009). From the point of view of the occult economy approach, the reference to invisible beings or mysterious forces is a way to give meaning to what would otherwise remain inexplicable or meaningless to those who are excluded from the benefits (reserved for a few) of the neoliberal economy: the production and accumulation of wealth (apparently) created from nothing and without working. In line with this idea, Comaroffs’ propose to endorse a comparative view which they define as ‘on an awkward scale’ – a view which is ‘neither unambiguously “local” nor obviously “global” – but on a scale in between that, somehow, captures their mutual determinations. And their indeterminacies’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999: 282; 2003).

As inspiring as this view is, my aim is to pinpoint the historical and cultural *specificity* of the narratives on the *debul dem* widespread in Sierra Leone after the end of the civil war, and at the same time to show the possible ‘family resemblances’ (Wittgenstein 1953) between the various (but limited) cases examined here. Thus, in general, my approach does not misrecognize ‘the global forces that (...) are besetting the “little guys”’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003: 155). Yet, it tries to personalize these same large impersonal forces by pointing to specific social actors – visible or invisible, present or past, individual or collective – that have the power to produce certain effects, to define what is ‘religion’ and ‘superstition’, what is ‘legal and illegal’, and so on. In other words, this approach does not give up to the anthropological comparative project; if anything, it has ‘a serious regard (...) for contexts’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 12) and it poses once again the question of the relationship between ethnography, history, and imagination.

Central to the understanding of the relationship between history and ethnography is the concept of historical imagination, that is, ‘the imagination (...) of both those who make history and those who write it’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: xi). Through the interstices and the

conjunctures of these imaginaries we can recover a kind of ‘synoptic illusion’ – to use an expression of Pierre Bourdieu’s mentioned by the Comaroffs (1992: 6), – a consciously partial sense of wholeness or unity from an otherwise (so often) fragmented and (at times) alienated and contingent ethnographic experience.

While I was in Kono and Bo Districts, between 2007 and 2011, having limited access to mass media and being focused on my daily life routines, I was not fully aware of the possible connections between what was happening in my field and what was going on in other extractive areas of the country. My proximity to the field and my ethnographic myopic focus on very specific micro-local events, twisted my anthropological analysis. Consequently, I was not fully aware that episodes that seemed disconnected or unrelated to each other could instead be significantly linkable. Only in the following months and years, when I started to sort out the interviews recorded in the mines, did the incoherent fragments of speech caught in the streets and on local radio, the images, the silences and the sounds of the mining landscapes, as well as the many newspaper clippings collected as fetishes of my being there, only then, did these heterogeneous materials begin to display the contours of a living mosaic with different entangled scenes.

The first scene or case considered here is set in the Bonthe and Moyamba Districts, where rutile, a mineral from which titanium is obtained, is extracted. It involves an accident as well as several occult portends. This case of large-scale mining implicitly questions the idea that the occult idiom only emerges in situations of conflict between different spheres of exchange or production. The occult narratives are transversal to the modes of production as they are to the kind of minerals mined.

The second case does not concern a site where minerals are mined but where energy is ‘extracted’ by exploiting the water resources in the region. It focuses on the voices of a *debul* which was supposed to have impeded the completion of the Bumbuna hydroelectric station in the Tonkolili District. This case shows that the question of the *debul* is not a purely ‘mining’ one. The accounts of the *debul* seem instead to have to do with a complex game played around environmental exploitation and drastic landscape changes, the failure to compensate people, and their protests and discontent strategically and obliquely expressed by using the idiom of the occult.

As with the members of a family, in these two cases we note similarities, or rather, ‘we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail’ (Wittgenstein 1953: 32).

### **The Sierra Rutile incident**

In January 2008, the Sierra Rutile mining company completed the production of a sophisticated dredge to sieve and extract minerals such as ilmenite, zircon, and rutile, in the Moyamba and Bonthe districts. The colossal machinery, worth 27 million dollars, was symbolically baptized with the name of Solondo, a powerful legendary warrior who lived around the second half of the nineteenth century (Alie 2001; cit. in Akiwumi 2012). In July of that year, however, the hugely expensive structure collapsed due to a technical fault, killing two and injuring several more employees (Koroma and Hill 2008).

From the newspaper accounts, it appears that the incident did not take the inhabitants of this mining region entirely by surprise. In the previous months, there had been signs of a growing tension between residents of Moyamba District and the management of the company to the point that, in late February 2008, a large number of residents were planning a demonstration (Life Herald 2008). The residents complained mainly about the environmental damage caused by the dredges, the massive consumption of palm oil (which was used by the company for its machinery), and the lack of adequate compensation paid to the land owners (Awareness Times 2008a; Life Herald 2008). This tension was also reflected in the escalation of rumours about occult activities in the region. The inhabitants’ dreams began to be populated with spirits of their ancestors or invisible beings, generically described as *debul dem* demanding greater respect for their dwelling places. Through the medium of the inhabitants of the mining areas, these spirits warned the company directors to make sacrifices to compensate them for the trouble caused (Awareness Times 2008d).

When rumours of attacks by witches and ritual killings among the residents spread, fear and indignation also grew. One month before the accident, for example, the inhabitants of Moyamba District demanded the investigation of the suspected ‘secret killing’ of a local trader which – it was rumoured – involved some unspecified employees of the mining company (Awareness Times 2008c). The Paramount Chief of

Imperi (Bonthe District), Madam Hawa Kpanobom Sokan IV, also stated that the very day before the collapse of the dredge, the company's director was approached by a young woman predicting what was about to happen in the mine (Awareness Times 2008d; Massaquoi and Hill 2008). It was subsequently discovered that on the day of the disaster – in a coincidence described by the local newspapers as 'mysterious' – Sierra Rutile's head geologist, on vacation in Australia, had died of a heart attack (Awareness Times 2008d). Furthermore, a group of workers declared that they saw a 'strange giant viper snake' near the Solondo dredge few days after the accident, at the very place where the structure collapsed (Sierra Express 2008). This event also contributed to increasing the anxiety and mystery around what had happened because, in particular circumstances, the sighting of a snake (e.g., cobra) can be interpreted as a bad omen and its presence as an epitome of an angry *debul*. For all these reasons the Imperi Paramount Chief declared that the tragic event had been caused by the negligence of the Sierra Rutile directors, who had not allowed the carrying out of a traditional ceremony to placate the anger of the 'ancestor spirits' (Massaquoi and Hill 2008). Thus, in August 2008, about a month after the Solondo disaster, the Sierra Rutile Company decided to provide the communities of Imperi Chieftdom with 20 bags of rice, four bulls, and other ritual materials for preparing libations and sacrifices (Standard Times 2008).

It must be stressed that these 'occult phenomena' are not simply part of 'myths' or 'religious belief' (cf. Rahall 2008), that is, appendixes of something more 'real'. As Comaroff's note: 'it is never possible simply to prize apart the cultural from the material' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 235). Hence, we are not surprised that these concerns arose in the context of a subsistence farming economy with widespread poverty affecting 72 per cent (Moyamba District) and 85 per cent (Bonthe District) of the local population, a lack of asphalted roads, access to electricity, healthcare, and teaching materials in schools (NACE 2009: 24). In contrast, the roads linking the Sierra Rutile mines to the rest of the country are well maintained and the expatriates live in 'prefabricated enclosures' which, equipped with all the modern comforts, appear to the local people to be happy isles set in the middle of the savanna (cf. Ferme 2001: 39; Akiwumi 2012: 66).

Moreover, the company's mining activity has profoundly modified the biophysical and cultural order of the environment. The enormous

inconvenience created for the population at the environmental, economic and cultural level (Akiwumi 2012), does not, however, seem to have been adequately compensated. The loss of farming land and sacred places, the relocation of entire villages, and the poor compensation for the economic damage caused by the controlled flooding of vast mining areas, are but a few of the main concerns of the local population (Akiwumi 2006, 2012). Such concerns are not new for these communities, which have experienced the impact of rutile mining on local agricultural production, gender relationships, and family subsistence dating back to before the civil war (Williams Ntiri 1992). Although the company now maintains that it is working ‘for a better Sierra Leone’ and helping the communities in many different ways (Standard Times 2008), the National Advocacy Coalition on Extractives (NACE) analysts note that in this country: ‘Companies are working in, and local communities are living in, a legal vacuum’ in which the companies’ obligations are not clear regarding what extent of reparation or compensation for the mining populations is voluntary, how much they earn and how much they must pay the government in taxes to enable the latter to construct infrastructure, refurbish the schools, create work and reduce poverty (NACE 2009: 23–30).

As was mentioned above, a few days after the accident on the Sierra Rutile premises, the Government of Sierra Leone announced that, in collaboration with the British Department for International Development (DFID), it had set up a task force to review the agreements with the main mining companies operating in the country and in particular with Koidu Holdings, African Minerals and Sierra Rutile (Kargbo 2008). The task force concluded its work in a few months. The consultations led to the drawing up of the Mines and Mineral Act 2009, replacing the previous 1994 Act.

### **The Bumbuna *debul***

In October 2007, the newly elected President Ernest Bai Koroma visited the Bumbuna dam for his first official visit outside the capital. On that occasion, before an international delegation made up of donors and exponents of civil society, he declared in the Krio language that he would eliminate ‘the bad spiritual devil’ which for several years had prevented the completion of the Bumbuna Hydroelectric Project (BHP): ‘I made meself come see for meself de *debul* that holds this

project. We go kill am' (Manson 2007). As far as we know, this was the first time that the President had referred to this invisible being on an official occasion.

In any case, the President sought to keep his promise in March 2008 when he returned to the Bumbuna hydroelectric station and activated the device to flood the dam's reservoir with water from the River Seli. A large green area where, shortly before, homes, commercial trees, sacred places and agricultural land had existed, gradually turned blue. As a local Sierra Leonean journalist commented: 'The word on the lips of Tonkolili indigenes was that indeed the President and his team had overcome the mysterious Bumbuna Devil that had long inhibited the realization of the wonderful dream' (Awareness Times 2008b).

There are no ethnographic investigations into the Bumbuna *debul*. We do not know exactly how this rumour arose and spread. We only know that an invisible being, generically described as *debul*, had for years been opposing the construction of the Bumbuna hydroelectric station, and the flooding of its reservoir. It is clear that through the official speeches and local media the Bumbuna *debul* had become a reality, a social actor that was part of a complex game played between foreign construction companies, local and national politicians and the local populations. To avoid misunderstandings, whether the President and his team truly believe in the *debul*'s existence does not concern us here. The evidence points to the contrary. What count are the 'effects of truth' which the rumours about the *debul* produce on local political life. For this reason, it is interesting here to shed light on the recent historical context acting as a background to the rumours about the Bumbuna *debul*.

The BHP feasibility studies were financed by the UNDP in the early seventies when President Siaka Stevens was still in power and the APC was the only party in government. Out of 22 potential sites identified by the experts, the stretch of the River Seli near the village of Bumbuna was considered the most suitable for the construction of a hydroelectric power station to supply the capital and the north of the country with electricity. The first preparatory work on the dam, however, started only in the 1980s, after the World Bank consultants advised downsizing the initial project due to the country's precarious political and economic situation (Mazzei and Scuppa 2006).



Since then, various politicians and leaders alternating in power in Sierra Leone have in turn promised the rapid completion of the hydroelectric power station. The main construction work on the dam, however, started only in 1990, when the Italian government – among the main international donors of this project – decided to make a loan of 138 billion Italian liras (about 110 million dollars). This financial support was joined by that of the African Development Bank which in 1993 decided to co-finance the project. Despite the Civil War beginning in 1991, the Italian company in charge of the construction of the power station predicted the completion of the works by 1998. Between 1995 and 1997, however, the situation in the north of the country drastically deteriorated. The area around the dam was the centre of clashes between the various armed groups involved in the conflict. The village of Bumbuna was sacked by the combatants and the dam became a strategic target. The construction company's directors therefore decided to hire mercenary troops to protect their staff and prevent further theft and destruction of equipment and machinery. Despite these measures, the safety conditions did not improve. The constructors decided to suspend work in May 1997, when 85 per cent of the building had already been completed (Mazzei and Scuppa 2006). The site was abandoned and subsequently repeatedly pillaged. In particular, the pylons and precious copper cables which were to convey electricity to the capital began to disappear.

With the end of the war and the consolidation of peace, the completion of the Bumbuna power station once more became a national priority. At that point, the World Bank also decided to support the project financially. The power station was considered one of the necessary infrastructures to industrialize the country and reduce poverty, and to supply renewable, low cost energy to business and the citizens in general.

For all these reasons, in 2003 the representatives of the Italian government, the African Development Bank and the World Bank decided to finance the completion of the works, which therefore resumed in 2005, with completion forecast for the end of 2007 (Mazzei and Scuppa 2006). After trials and the solving of a few technical problems, the 50 MW turbines of the power station started up in November 2009. Since then, however, technical problems and polemics due to the frequent interruption of the station's supply have continued to

plague the dam. Despite this, the second phase of the project is planned to increase the supply from 50 MW to 350 MW by 2017.

As mentioned above, over the years the BHP construction work went on, accompanied by a series of promises made by the politicians in power: jobs for everyone and free electricity, tourism and economic prosperity, monetary compensation for the damage incurred by the flooding of the dam's reservoir and the expropriation of land, and so on. As we have seen, for a long time the Bumbuna dam risked remaining only a collective fantasy, at most an unfinished colossus exposed to the erosion of time. For the people of Sierra Leone, the word 'Bumbuna' thus became a synonym of 'a never-ending story' (cf. Mazzei and Scuppa 2006: 15). 'Bumbuna', sang the well-known Sierra Leonean singer Emerson Bockarie in the years immediately following the end of the war, 'will be finished only at the end of the world' (Awareness Times 2008b).

The disappointment over the actual benefits obtained from this project has become mixed with mistrust and suspicion. According to an enquiry undertaken by the World Bank, there was a widespread opinion among the inhabitants of the Tonkolili District that the works to complete the power station had been deliberately slowed down by the Italian constructors themselves (Mazzei and Scuppa 2006) in order to have more time to secretly mine and smuggle out the gold and diamonds found during the construction of the dam. Moreover, the local population was convinced that the dam belonged to the company constructing it. As Mazzei and Scuppa observe (2006), over the years the latter had sought to build up a relationship of 'good neighbourliness' with the inhabitants of the villages near the dam, making gifts of various kinds. However, this developed into a paternalistic relationship in which the local communities 'were begging the constructor instead of asking for their rights, of which they were not fully aware' (Mazzei and Scuppa 2006: 16). Tensions and suspicion also spread among the owners of lands and homes situated along the route where the high tension pylons had been built to connect the power station with the capital. In 2009, for example, word spread about some 176 homes to be demolished along this route. To gain support for this operation, the authorities explained that there was a high health risk. But a local satirical newspaper questioned the scientific grounds for this explanation, describing it as an urban myth. Since the owners of the houses

affected by the demolition order had obtained permission to build from the Ministry of Lands, the journalist wondered who was actually responsible for this problem. Hence, the doubt arose that the medical reason for demolishing the houses might only be an excuse to ‘disturb, harry and terrorize other people’ (Kamara 2009). Once again, the Bumbuna *debul* was recalled as a narrative used to deceive common people: ‘There are those who seem determined to ensure that Bumbuna cannot be opened without a ritual sacrifice of some people’s dwelling places. Such people should enter the twenty-first century. No devils or demons demand that we cannot have light unless our fellow citizens suffer’ (Kamara 2009).

As in the previous case, however, a crucial issue raised by narratives of invisible entities is the moral relationship by which the local population seeks to construct forms of exchange and reciprocity with powerful local and international social actors.

## **Discussion**

The memory of the past is not necessarily expressed through public monuments or explicit verbal forms. According to Rosalind Shaw (2002), in Sierra Leone the memory of the Atlantic slave trade has not been lost, as might appear when talking to ordinary people or seeking evident traces of that period in the landscape. There are objects, images and ritual processes which have incorporated the local memory of the transcontinental predatory flows of the past. There are, in short, various ways to remember (or forget) (Shaw 2002: 3–5).

Mariane Ferme enriches this perspective on the ethnographical level, analysing the material and immaterial culture of the Mende in Sierra Leone (Ferme 2001). In this cultural context, discourses, daily practices and social relations are contextual elements. Or rather, they are embodied in an environment: they make sense in relation to a landscape in which an ancient colonial history of violence, terror and exploitation is tacitly written. Analysing the traces of memory of the past disseminated in the forests (e.g., fruit trees, remains of homes, railway lines and abandoned roads), Ferme (2001) reminds us that landscapes are not neutral places. They bear the traces of their previous uses; they tell stories, using the environmental elements as words. In this way, holes in the ground bear witness to the mining past activity of illegal miners; fruit trees planted to a geometric plan point to the work of generations

of expert farmers producing for regional and transregional markets, and so on. Thus, modifying an environment means participating in a collective history of practices which has a language of its own, made up of specific metaphors, ways of doing, saying and confuting. Those who have the power to leave a mark or to modify this environmental grammar have the power to re-design and impress a new socio-cultural order. For this reason, mining sites are obvious places for economic and political, but also for symbolic dispute (Ballard and Banks 2003; Bridge 2004; Werthmann and Grätz 2012).

The textual metaphor of the environment or the landscape as written history has limitations, however. As the *debul dem*'s actions testify, the environment is not a passive element, a blank sheet of paper on which human activity traces its indelible drawings. It acts and interacts with the multiple social actors dwelling in it and who contend for its resources. The idiom on the occult is rich in images and narrations which lend themselves to iconizing the risks and the contradictory possibilities of extracting value from human labour and from the environment; it points to an 'agrarian order' that, as Peters and Richards remind us, 'emerged from the West African social world shaped by the Atlantic slave trade' (Peters and Richards 2011: 377; see also Richards 2012). With their invisible presence, the *debul dem* indicate the existence of a hidden world supporting the order of things and regulating access to the wealth.

It would be reductive to consider the *debul dem* as simple projections of individual or collective anxieties or personifications of features of the natural landscape enacting these same anxieties. It is true that these active symbols enter the individual imaginary, enacting personal worries, but they have above all a shared, that is, a collective political and social meaning. The *debul dem* accounts are, in fact, highly politicized moral discourses, able to reflect, and to cause reflection, on the responsibility of human actions as well as on the principles governing the distribution of resources. Moreover, they are not only moral commentaries or ways to give meaning to the world; they represent practical forms of politics, ways to act in the world.

What therefore do the *debul dem* do? A link which joins the stories and situations involving the *debul dem* mentioned in this paper is the sabotage or damage to the machinery of the miners or of those transforming the landscape to take possession of its wealth. The *debul dem*

also act as mediators for communities worried and angry about what is happening in the spaces they inhabit. The disturbances enacted by the *debul dem* thus seem inspired by a vengeful justice based on a criticism of the predatory extractive practices. These are predatory because they greedily enrich a few without respecting the principles of the distribution of the wealth which are clearly present in local ideology.

In short, it is the *debul dem*'s very action of invisible disturbance which reveals the occult nature of the forces governing the visible world. Paradoxically, the occult reveals what is occulted. In other words, the occult phenomena remind us that reality is not always what it seems. Only by questioning what is taken for granted can we overturn the ideological character of the reasons justifying human exploitation, unequal distribution and environmental degradation.

### **Acknowledgments**

This paper is a shortened and partially revised version of an article published in *Social Evolution & History* (2012) with the same title. I am grateful to Dmitri Bondarenko, Petr Skalník, the anonymous reviewers of SE&H, and my colleagues Michele Parodi and Mauro Van Aken for their useful comments and suggestions on earlier versions. None of those mentioned here is responsible for the views the article expresses or for whatever errors or inaccuracy it contains.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International (2018) denounced several of these violent episodes.

<sup>2</sup> According to some journalists, the Lungi Airport and the Queen Elizabeth II Quay in Freetown were cleared by some ritual specialists who found several witch tools in these sites (Awareness Times 2010; Koroma 2011).

<sup>3</sup> During the inauguration ceremony of the Euros Bio Energy factory, in 2011, Koroma stated that: 'We had a terrible experience of people undermining investment programs within the community through sabotage, through connivance, through labour disturbance and through stealing of equipment (...). Anybody who destroys the property of an investor or undermines their activity is a criminal and will be sent to the cells that we have reserved for criminals' (Awoko 2011b).

### **References**

Alie, J.A.D. 2001. *A Historical White Paper on Communities in Sierra Rutile Operational Areas, South-Western Sierra Leone*. Freetown: Consultancy Report.

- Amnesty International. 2018. *A Force for Good? Restrictions on Peaceful Assembly and Impunity for Excessive Use of Force by the Sierra Leone Police*. London: Amnesty International.
- Akiwumi, F.A. 2006. Limitations to 'Indigenous People Participation': Conflict in Water Use in an African Economy. In Tvedt, T., and Ostigaard, T. (eds.), *The World of Water*. Vol. 3 (pp. 49–77). London: IB Taurus.
- Akiwumi, F.A. 2012. Acqua, Cultura e Conflitti nelle Aree Minerarie della Sierra Leone. In Rossi, A., and D'Angelo, L. (eds.), *Antropologia, Risorse Naturali e Conflitti Ambientali* (pp. 51–78). Milano: Mimesis.
- Austen, R.A. 1993. The Moral Economy of Witchcraft: An Essay in Comparative History. In Comaroff, J., and Comaroff, J. (eds.), *Modernity and Its Malcontents. Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa* (pp. 89–110). Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Awareness Times. 2008a. Sierra Rutile to Be Taken to Task. *Awareness Times*. February 28, 2008.
- Awareness Times. 2008b. President Ernest Koroma, Afsatu & Co. Overcome The Bumbuna Devil in Sierra Leone. *Awareness Times*. March 31, 2008.
- Awareness Times. 2008c. Secret Killings at Sierra Rutile. *Awareness Times*. July 01, 2008.
- Awareness Times. 2008d. Questions on Sierra Rutile and Diamond Fields. *Awareness Times*. July 30, 2008.
- Awareness Times. 2009. Witchery Uncovered at Residence of Sierra Leone President. *Awareness Times*. August 28, 2009.
- Awareness Times. 2010. Witchcraft Materials Removed from Queen Elizabeth II Quay. *Awareness Times*. October 01, 2010.
- Awareness Times. 2012. Massive Investments in 2011 yet very Few Jobs for Sierra Leone! *Awareness Times*. October 12, 2011.
- Awoko. 2009. In Kailahun Two Year-old Boy Killed in Ritual Murder. *Awoko*. July 28, 2009.
- Awoko. 2011a. As parts are stolen from engine ... Darkness looms over Bo Town. *Awoko*. March 07, 2011.
- Awoko. 2011b. My Govt. Knows How to Catch These Devils. *Awoko*. November 12, 2011.
- Ballard, C., and Banks, G. 2003. Resource Wars: The Anthropology of Mining. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32: 287–313.
- Bridge, G. 2004. Contested Terrain: Mining and the Environment. *Annual Review of Environmental Resources* 29: 205–259.
- Bryceson, D.F., Johnson, J.B., and Sherrington, R. 2010. Miners' Magic: Artisanal Mining, the Albino Fetish and Murder in Tanzania. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48 (3): 353–382.

- Clark, J. 1993. Gold, Sex, and Pollution: Male Illness and Myth at Mt. Kare, Papua New Guinea. *American Anthropologist* 20 (4): 742–757.
- Comaroff, J.L., and Comaroff, J. 1992. *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Comaroff, J.L., and Comaroff, J. 1999. Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony. *American Ethnologist* 26 (2): 279–303.
- Comaroff, J.L., and Comaroff, J. 2000. Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming. *Public Culture* 12 (2): 291–343.
- Comaroff, J.L., and Comaroff, J. 2003. Ethnography on an Awkward Scale: Postcolonial Anthropology and the Violence of Abstraction. *Ethnography* 4 (2): 147–179.
- De Boeck, F. 1998. Domesticating Diamonds and Dollars: Identity, Expenditure and Sharing in Southwestern Zaire (1984–1997). *Development and Change* 29 (4): 777–810.
- Edelman, M. 1994. Landlords and the Devil: Class, Ethnic, and Gender Dimensions of Central American Peasant Narratives. *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1): 58–93.
- Ferne, M.C. 1999. Staging Politisi: The Dialogics of Publicity and Secrecy in Sierra Leone. In Comaroff, J.L., and Comaroff, J. (eds.), *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa* (pp. 160–191). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ferne, M.C. 2001. *The Underneath of Things: Violence, History and the Everyday in Sierra Leone*. Berkeley, CA; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press.
- Fonti, A. 2009. In Sierra Leone, Mysterious Deaths in Freetown. *Awareness Times*. September 22, 2009.
- Fonti, A. 2011. Mysterious Events and Accidents Rock Freetown, Sierra Leone. *Awareness Times*. March 21, 2011.
- Gberie, L. 2010. Sierra Leone Situation Report. *The Patriotic Vanguard*. November 07, 2010.
- Godoy, R. 1985. Mining: Anthropological Perspectives. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 14: 199–217.
- Gross, D.R. 1983. Fetishism and Functionalism: The Political Economy of Capitalist Development in Latin America. *Comparative Study of Society and History* 25 (4): 694–702.
- Harris, O. 1989. The Earth and the State: The Sources and Meanings of Money in Northern Potosi, Bolivia. In Parry, J., and Bloch, M. (eds.), *Money and the Morality of Exchange* (pp. 232–268). Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Horowitz, L.S. 2001. Perceptions of Nature and Responses to Environmental Degradation in New Caledonia. *Ethnology* 40 (3): 237–250.

- Jorgensen, D. 1998. Whose Nature? Invading Bush Spirits, Travelling Ancestors, and Mining in Telefolmin. *Social Analysis* 42 (3): 100–116.
- Kai, C.J. 2009. Police Investigating Ritual Killings. *The Sierra Leone News*. February 20, 2009.
- Kamara, S. 2009. Bumbuna Debul does not Need Sacrifice of These Houses! *Peep!* June 24, 2009.
- Kargbo, M. 2008. Aftermath of Sierra Rutile Accident: Government to Review Mining Agreements. *Cocorioko Newspaper*. July 31, 2008.
- Koroma, D.M. 2010. Crackdown on Black Magic Sorcerers Intensifies in Sierra Leone... As Over Hundreds of Witch ‘Paw Paw’ Guns Confiscated. *Standard Times*. February 03, 2010.
- Koroma, D.M. 2011. In Sierra Leone, 53 Witch Guns Discovered at Airport. *Awareness Times*. January 07, 2011.
- Koroma, P., and Hill, K. 2008. Rutile Disaster... Dozens Injured, Two Feared Dead. *Concord Times*. July 28, 2008.
- Life Herald. 2008. ‘Close Sierra Rutile Now!’ – Residents Cry. *Life Herald*. March 06, 2008.
- Mansaray, A. 2008. Ritual Murder at Koya. *Independent Observer*. February 14, 2008.
- Manson, K. 2007. Sierra Leone President Vows Dam will Bring Power. *Reuters*. October 21, 2007.
- Marcus, G.E., and Fischer, M.M.J. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique. An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Marshall, R. 2009. *Political Spiritualities. The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Masquelier, A. 2000. Of Headhunters and Cannibals: Migrancy, Labor, and Consumption in the Mawri Imagination. *Cultural Anthropology* 15 (1): 84–126.
- Massaquoi, M., and Hill, K. 2008. Rutile Disaster Blamed on ‘Neglect’. *Concord Times*. August 1, 2008.
- Mazzei, L., and Scuppa, G. 2006. *The Role of Communication in Large Infrastructure. The Bumbuna Hydroelectric Project in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone*. World Bank Working Paper 84. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Moiguah, E. 2011. Ritual Murder Scare Grips Bo as 5 Corpses Go Missing. *Awoko*. October 06, 2011.
- Moore, H.L. and Sanders, T. (eds.) 2001. *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities. Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Moriba, S. 2011. Second ‘Witch Pot’ Surfaces in Kenema. *Awoko*. September 25, 2011.



- NACE – National Advocacy Coalition on Extractives. 2009. Sierra Leone at the Crossroads: Seizing the Chance to Benefit from Mining. URL: [www.nacesl.org](http://www.nacesl.org). (accessed July 4, 2019).
- PAC – Partnership Africa Canada. 2009. *Diamonds and Human Security Annual Review 2009*. Ottawa: Partnership Africa Canada and Network Movement for Justice and Development.
- Peep Reporter. 2009a. State House ‘Witches’ Need Ariogbo! *Peep!* August 28, 2009.
- Peep Reporter. 2009b. Ritual Murder Alleged at Moyamba. *Peep!* August 28, 2009.
- Peters, K., and Richards, P. 2011. Rebellion and Agrarian Tensions in Sierra Leone. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11 (3): 377–395.
- Rahall, J. 2008. *Perception Assessment of Host Communities of Sierra Rutile Mine After Dredge Solondo Capsized*. Freetown: Green Scenery.
- Ranger, T. 2007. Scotland Yard in the Bush: Medicine Murders, Child Witches and the Construction of the Occult: A Literature Review. *Africa* 77 (2): 272–283.
- Reno, W. 1995. *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, P. 2012. Mining and the Messiah: War and the Masterless Classes in Sierra Leone. In Werthmann, K., and Grätz, T. (eds.), *Mining Frontiers in Africa. Anthropological and Historical Perspectives* (pp. 97–118). Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Salazar-Soler, C. 2006. *Supay Muqui, Dios del Socavón. Vida y Mentalidad Mineras*. Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú.
- Sallnow, M.J. 1989. Precious Metals in the Andean Moral Economy. In Parry, J., and Bloch, M. (eds.), *Money and the Morality of Exchange* (pp. 209–231). Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Samura, I. 2011. Juju Society Enjoys Presidential Protection. *Sierra Express Media*. February 09, 2011.
- Sanders, T. 2008. Buses in Bongoland. Seductive Analytics and the Occult. *Anthropological Theory* 8 (2): 107–132.
- Schure, J., Ingram, V., Tieguhong, J.C., and Ndikumagenge, C. 2011. Is the God of Diamonds Alone? The Role of Institutions in Artisanal Mining in Forest Landscapes, Congo Basin. *Resources Policy* 36 (4): 363–371.
- Shaw, R. 1992. Dreaming as Accomplishment: Power, the Individual and Temne Divination. In Jedrej, M. C., and Shaw, R. (eds.), *Dreaming, Religion and Society in Africa* (pp. 36–54). Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill.
- Shaw, R. 2002. *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

- Shaw, R. 2009. Mami Wata and the Sierra Leone Diamonds: Wealth and Enslavement in Men's Dreams and the State Economy. In Drewal, H.J. (ed.), *Sacred Waters: Arts for Mami Wata and other Water Spirits in Africa and the Afro-Atlantic World*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Sierra Express. 2008. Giant Snake Threatens Rutile Workers. *Sierra Express*. August 10, 2008.
- Standard Times. 2008. Sierra Rutile Limited: Working for a Better Sierra Leone. *Standard Times*. October 17, 2008.
- Strathern, P.J., and Stewart, A. 2008. Introduction: Aligning Words, Aligning Worlds. In Stewart, P.J., and Strathern, A. (eds.), *Exchange and Sacrifice* (pp. x–xxxvi). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Taussig, M.T. 1980. *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Turay, A. 2011. President Koroma Cautions Unscrupulous 'Devils'. *Awareness Times*. November 14, 2011.
- UNDP –United Nations Development Program. 2012. *Human Development Report 2011*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van der Laan, H.L. 1965. *The Sierra Leone Diamonds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wardlow, H. 2004. The Mount Kare Python: Huli Myths and Gendered Fantasies of Agency. In Rumsey, A., and Weiner, J. (eds.), *Mining and Indigenous Lifeworlds in Australia and Papua New Guinea* (pp. 31–67). Wantage: Sean Kingston Publishing.
- Werthmann, K., and Grätz, T. (eds.). 2012. *Mining Frontiers in Africa. Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- White, L. 1993 Cars Out of Place: Vampires, Technology and Labor in East and Central Africa. *Representations* 43: 27–50.
- Williams Ntiri, D. 1992. The Impact of Rutile Mining on Family Life, Subsistence, Land Ownership and Female Roles among the Mendes of Southern Sierra Leone. *International Journal of Sociology of Family* 22 (1): 83–95.
- Wittgenstein, L. 1953. *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Zack-Williams, A. 1995. *Tributors, Supporters and Merchant Capital. Mining and Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone*. Aldershot; Brookfield, VT; Hong Kong; Singapore; Sydney: Avebury.

# LOCAL MEMORIES OF THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLES: REDISCOVERING 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY'

*Daria A. Zelenova*

National Research University Higher School of Economics  
Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

## **Introduction**

South Africa is well known for its vibrant history of powerful and militant community-based social movements. The period of the 1980s is marked as a time when the apartheid state was fundamentally challenged by the rise of black township activism across the country (Seekings 2000; Sapire 2013) and the mass diffusion of a radical democratic culture (Neocosmos 1996; Buhlungu 2001; Gibson 2011). As noted by South African writer and political thinker Professor Raymond Suttner, a former member of the ANC in exile, the 1980s saw the “notions of ‘popular democracy,’ ‘people’s power,’ ‘self-empowerment’ and ‘democracy from below’ all introduced as new ideas and practices into South African politics” (Suttner 2012). The key feature of the 1980s revolt was “the development of street committees, informal courts and civic organizations which arose in part from the need to provide a means of regulating the disorder that had been unleashed with the collapse of township administration” (Sapire 2013: 16). Known as ‘organs of people’s power’, these community-based structures operated independently across the country from the late 1970s and gained strength in the mid-1980s when the whole country was rebelling.

Referring to Sapire, who defined township culture as ‘a complex variety of protest idioms, forms of consciousness and ideas’ (Sapire 2013: 20), I believe that to understand the phenomena of contemporary urban protest in South Africa, it is important to consider the locally produced knowledge about people’s resistance in the townships. How do people describe their participation in the anti-apartheid struggles in their community? What made them join the new forms of self-organization and self-rule? How do they evaluate this experience?

It is noteworthy that the township protests of the 1980s are known largely through studies focusing on institutionalized anti-apartheid forces such as the United Democratic Front (Seekings 2000; Van Kes-

sel 2005) and such political movements of those years as the Pan Africanist Congress, the Black Consciousness Movement, the Azanian Peoples' Organization, and the South African Communist Party, while the voices of those people who were not included in these large organizations but who nevertheless did participate in struggles in the communities have been left behind the scenes.

The United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched in 1983 as a flat umbrella structure to unite these autonomous organizations and groups into a consolidated liberation movement. After its establishment, the UDF became the main representative body of the 'people's struggle', simultaneously providing support for the ANC and ensuring its symbolic presence in the townships (Simpson 2017). However, a careful contextualization of the liberation movement reveals a mixture of diverse actors who were united by a desire to dismantle apartheid. The everyday politics of their struggle in many cases went beyond the frameworks set by political movements.

Archival research shows that the democratic culture of the 1980s produced different narratives surrounding the liberation struggle which have tended to be misrepresented in recent studies. For example, the issues of domestic violence and crime, stress and psychological help for the victims of police violence were all openly discussed by township residents in community newspapers (see, e.g., various issues of *Grassroots and Speak*, the OASSA Counselling Manual on Repression and Stress) as well as issues of gender inequality and even sexual orientation (Gibson 2011). And while South African urban social history has been extensively surveyed (Bonner and Segal 1998; Bonner and Niefertgoodien 2008), it remains rather fragmented, as noted by Sapire (Sapire 2013). In particular, there are few studies discussing the participation of female township residents in local initiatives, nor has the resistance of squatters during those years been studied sufficiently (Gibson 2011). The present study constitutes an attempt to partially fill this gap.

### **The research and its methodology**

In the following chapter I would like to present some of the findings of the research project conducted in South Africa from 2011–2013, which was aimed at rediscovering people's memories of township struggles of the 1980s. The research analyzed life stories and memo-

ries of direct involvement in community structures and self-rule in townships. This paper is limited to the analysis of 'people's democracy' and understandings of peoples' self-organization.

The research project included both a historical part and field work. The historical research was carried out in two major South African archives: The Wits Historical Papers at the University of the Witwatersrand, and the South African History Archive in Johannesburg (SAHA). The archival study comprised analysis of the material on the mass self-organization of township residents of the 1980s. Over the course of the study, various different categories of sources were used: leaflets, brochures, posters and community newspapers of the 1980s, and the meeting minutes of community-based organizations. During the field research, 30 long semi-structured interviews were conducted with former anti-apartheid activists in the cities of Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Durban and Cape Town. Many of the former anti-apartheid activists interviewed for this research were part of social movements with an active presence in communities. Besides these, interviews were also held with random people in their 40s (residents of Soweto and Alexandra townships) who were selected using a snowball method (30 respondents). All respondents were asked to remember their participation and direct involvement in their community's struggle against apartheid during the 1980s.

### **Experiments with 'people's power' and 'people's democracy'**

In the 1980s, South Africa's townships faced 'arguably the most significant, intensive and people-led protest against apartheid' (Neocosmos 1996: 2). One of the conventional explanations of the intensification of township struggles underlines the significance of the "urban crisis" that most of the townships were facing by the 1980s (Sithole and Ndlovu, 2006). Amid conditions of growing unemployment, rising prices, and low-quality education and municipal services, issues such as employment, housing and services naturally became part of the activist's agenda. In many townships, there was little access to electricity, or to indoor plumbing, sewerage systems often involved public toilets or the bucket system, and there were massive housing backlogs. In this situation, women and children often played a key role in struggles.

One of our respondents, ex-Secretary of the Valhalla Park United Front Civic Organization,<sup>1</sup> describes the situation thus:

I grew up in poverty and I used to live here, and there, and all around. As my father was working, he wasn't able to look after me as a child; I had to go to school and I lived with one auntie, and then with another auntie, and so I travelled around as a child. And at the age of, I think, 10 to 11 my father got married to another woman and ... then I went to live with the stepmother and she [wasn't] kind to me. I grew up, there was nobody I could have gone to and say, 'My [eye] is sore,' so I grew up very independently... And in the 1980s I became a single mother: I gave birth to my son and wasn't married; and then a daughter, and then another daughter; and then I had three children. ... And yes, there was nobody to go to: I just had to find my own way, with the little money I earned... Through that I came into the struggle... I was evicted by the City of Cape Town. [due to non-payment. – D. Z.] Not twice but thrice. That is how I became involved in the civic organization...

Another ex-member of the Valhalla Park United Front Civic Organization describes her involvement in the struggles as an outburst of local residents' anger against electricity and water cut offs implemented by the apartheid state:

In that time in the 1980s they put electricity from the people, you didn't buy electricity, they put electricity from the people. If you can't afford it, they cut it off. And water cuttings started also in Valhalla Park in the 1980s, if you can't afford it, they cut it off. And then we see what's happened to the people in the 1980s. Then I went to meetings with them, community meetings and they decided to make meetings with the people, to tell people – this is what happened in Valhalla Park. It was the police who evicted people out of the houses, without a court order, they were heavy and strong. If they cut off your water, as committees we came and put it again, we have some guys to do the job, we have that ... to cut and they reconnected the water again, this is what we did. If they evicted you from the house, we put you again in the house.

Thus, housing activism and anti-eviction struggles of the poor formed most of the agenda for the newly formed community-based organizations known as civics. In many cases the civics, as formally established organizations with constitutions and a simple structure (a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer), emerged on the basis of more localized forms of self-organization such as the block, yard and street committees that operated in the townships.

As one of the respondents who was active in Soweto in the late 1970's remembered:

We met in people's houses, we had one meeting a week... We would rotate, this time in this house, and this time in this... For example, we would hold a meeting in a priest's place, because he's respected, or in a teacher's place, or in a trade unionist's house. And then there was no membership, and the issues we discussed were problems in the townships, the lights. We talked about the end of apartheid, we talked about children's education, or if someone died and they didn't have anybody to bury him [about raising funds].

The call for such meetings was often made door-to-door, meeting neighbors in person, or writing small notes and leaving them under the front door. In some areas people used to call them *isolomuzi* (in Zulu), meaning 'the eye of the community'. The *isolomuzi* organized life in the community without involving the outside authorities. This could take the form either of crime patrols or help for families in need, or resolution of local conflicts.

As archival sources indicate, before the civics, street and block committees were formed in many townships in the late 1970s to tackle specific problems such as high rentals, poor electrification, bad housing, the bucket system and crime. And yet, in contrast to the civics, where leadership sometimes tended to be dominated by more educated people, fluent in English or Afrikaans and with some political background, these local committees centered on ordinary township residents who often had no political experience or previous organizing and facilitating skills. In some cases, these committees were more independent from the civics and more spontaneous in their actions. As one of the respondents put it:

Some of the committees were formed out of frustration. You know, burning issues such as evictions; people would say 'Oh no, let's resist', maybe one or two people would be initiating it and asking people to start people building a committee, but most of the committees were formed by the victims supported by people showing solidarity – solidarity with the victims, you would find lawyers, priests, an individual volunteering. They voluntarily served in the committees, and it's open. Anyone within the community could join. Because they were not formed out of political ideology, it was about solving local problems and then people started to build up committees not knowing anything about ANC politics or PAC politics, they were just joining.

The strongest and most democratic civics, however, were built on a solid foundation of yard, block and street committees. In such cases,

the civic was actually composed of the committees operating in the township communities. An interesting example of such interactions comes from the Belville township (Cape Town) in the early 1980s:

The people of Belville realized that they needed a strong organization to fight for their rights. This meant that the organization had to represent everyone in Belville. So, house meetings were held in all streets. And the people from each street elected a street representative. These are some of the duties of a street representative: 1. The street representative must know all the problems of the people in the street. 2. They must represent the needs of the street at representative committee meetings. 3. They must report all representative committee meetings to their street. 4. The representative committee is building unity in the area because it represents all the streets. 5. The street reps must not work alone, but with the help of all the people in the street. So, the street rep is the link between the rep committee. In this way the people are working together to build a strong organization. (Grassroots 1985).

In this case, which is not atypical compared with other sources found in the archives, the street representatives in Belville started their organization from below by joining the larger Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC), which covered a number of neighborhoods and townships. Creating a flat and accountable structure from the beginning and joining a larger civic group made the Belville committee strong enough to do more than simply fight bad housing conditions in its own area. By coming together in the CAHAC, people could share their experiences and find solutions to common problems and work together in common political actions. And through street committees, set up by township residents with mandated delegates, ordinary people could control the civic organization.

Protest against all levels of structural inequality manifested in the formation of parents' and schoolchildren's committees among township residents to tackle the issues of equal education and inequality at schools. An experience of such involvement is shared by Bricks Mokolo, an activist from an Orange farm community who started to get involved in the struggle in the late 1970s. In 1985, he was elected as chairperson of the Vaal parents' Education Crisis Committee. As Bricks explained it:

The aim was to support the demands of our children at school because the civic association [the Vaal Civic Association formed in 1984. – *D. Z.*<sup>2</sup>] had a lot of other work to do. While we faced a lot of problems – houses, edu-



cation, labor. Now we looked at the education problems and we said we need parents to get involved in supporting our children at school and fighting for or demanding the education right for our children, and there were demands that were put forward – one of the demands was free education and one department for free education for all, including blacks.

The committee that Bricks was part of set up alternative classes in the community for those having difficulties with the curriculum, and the whole committee worked as a mediation mechanism between children and their parents. In his interview, Bricks mentions various different dimensions of the struggle and shows that even within individual families there were divisions and quarrels about involvement in the struggle which was always associated with the threat of surveillance and arrest:

The structure that we developed was to try to mobilize teachers, principals, workers to work together. And the parents. Because of the gap that we realized that children are organized from the distance by their own. You find parents were involved in the labor movement, your child is involved in the student movement but you're not sharing at home. And you don't know if your child is active at school, and a child doesn't know if his parent is active at work. You know there were school activists, labor activists and there were communities' struggles. It was a mess; it was not easy, some people tried to keep it a secret. A child doesn't want his parents to know, but he's active. Because parents were turning hard on their children. When a child is arrested, parents start crying, 'we sent him to school, not into politics'. Even a husband and a wife – they could get into a fight; instead of working for your children you get into politics, what are we going to eat? You are fighting against the system and family is fighting against you.

Focusing on immediate problems led easily to an attack on the system as a whole. The delegitimization of the apartheid state was not in question, and the politicization of everyday life became one of the prominent features of that period of the anti-apartheid struggle. As was noted by Moses Mayekiso, a factory worker from the Eastern Cape and a leader of the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC) in the 1980s: 'The conditions that caused the formation of these organizations were bread and butter issues but addressing these bread and butter issues automatically drives you to politics. Why the streets are dirty? Why we are not getting houses?'

Through these issues people became politicized. Effective township organizations enabled extremely effective protest actions with high degrees of popular support. The formation of strong self-organized bodies made it possible to run massive campaigns such as school stay-aways, rent and consumer boycotts.

Dinga Sikwebu, now a leader of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), remembers his participation in the first mass school boycott: It was the summer of 1977, when his school in Langa (a township on the outskirts of Cape Town) was deciding on how to organize a protest:

...The students from all the high schools would meet every day in an open field inside the high school, the same day they would go to school, and they would elect a chair for that one day. When you close the meeting your role as a chair is finished. The next day, another chair; his role was only to facilitate the meeting and put an agenda and when you close the meeting his role is finished. We did it from August to January 1977. All the decisions were taken at mass meetings.

Moses Mayekiso describes how in the Alexandra township in the mid-1980s, despite the fact that mass meetings ran the risk of being intervened with by the police, people ‘defied and met’:

Not only the structure itself, the committees, but the actual meetings were the organs of people’s power... General meetings, firstly, is where the grassroots democracy belongs, it’s actual people’s power; that’s the main basic organ of people’s power, therefore the main decisions comes from there, like the boycotts: the decision of boycotts would arise out of those meetings, from the grassroots... ‘We’re not happy with the bus fares’... the decision to protest and to march is made there. If the committees can’t decide by themselves they have to send the idea to the general meeting.

The politicization that Moses Mayekiso was talking about occurred through direct participation in the committees and in the open meetings, when they were held. However, in many cases this politicization was hidden and embedded in the daily life of the township residents. Some of our respondents referred to this process as *umhabulo* (in Zulu), this special word used by township residents to mean the political conscientization of a new person. According to the recollections of Thulani Ndlazi:

Everything was considered a political opportunity; memorial services, even the school cleaning campaign. We thought a night vigil was the opportunity for us. We will read the Bible, but we will choose the scriptures that were relevant to the liberation struggle. The scriptures that say God is against oppression. So, we will read the Bible, but the whole night vigil will be dominated not by church songs, but by liberation songs; it won't be dominated by preaching by the Bible but by political preaching. So, each of the activists will take turns the whole night long, saying something, making public speeches about political ideologies, for example one will talk about communism, or socialism, democracy, capitalism. So, people take turns giving this information because there will be people at these night vigils who were not politically conscientized, so it's the opportunity to conscientize them.

As the protests grew, including attacks on state representatives, many townships became no-go areas for the police, and when the army was sent in it faced resistance. The Black Local Authorities imposed by the apartheid government often collapsed, while councils in Colored and Indian areas lacked credibility. By 1985 the whole country was on fire. One of the most militant and autonomous outburst of people's power was in Alexandra township, 'where apartheid rule was displaced street by street by our own forms of self-government' (Mayekiso, 1996: 74)<sup>3</sup>.

Moses Mayekiso remembers how the Alexandra committees operated:

The people in the yard would get together in one yard and create a yard committee to regulate living conditions so that there would be no conflict in the yard. Also, that yard committee comes together to create a block committee: you put many yards ... from that street and that street and that's the block committee. Then from the block committee, there will be a street committee, then an area committee – up to the civic. People would come together to elect their leader, every street, democratically raise their hand and people would decide on their leadership.

Although Alexandra is considered a hotbed of political emancipation and people's direct democracy, there were other townships like Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, where self-organization reached a peak when 'widely representative community elements took control of important aspects of township life and the fleeing of government officials left a vacuum, which the civic structures and street committees

filled' (Grassroots 1985; Speak 1986). The democracy of these structures was secured by the flat structure of organization described above, but naturally it did not remain so egalitarian. The power dynamics shifted over time and people spoke in the interviews about the limitations to popular participation.

People's courts became a highly debated thing. Known also as 'popular justice', these bodies were set up by township residents in order to the absence of the police, but as participants recall the courts sometimes turned into 'kangaroo courts' or mob justice (Dinga Sikwebu 2011; Moses Mayekiso 2011). However, the township residents were trying to mobilize against criminality. As noted by our respondents, many of these courts emerged from vigilante groups, which basically meant men patrolling the streets, especially on Friday nights. The people's courts dealt with different issues (people breaking boycotts, robbery, stealing). The punishment was lashings and in many cases, this led to violence. Moses Mayekiso introduced a more optimistic understanding of a people's court as being a mediation platform to resolve community disputes: 'People's courts evolved out of people who had a problem. There are so many in the yard – disputes will arise out of sharing these facilities, who is washing first, some regulations – and then people – someone stealing peoples' clothes – you need a structure to discuss disputes. The communities' courts discussed petty issues of misunderstanding and solving conflicts and did it successfully'.

In Alexandra as elsewhere, crime was rife in the township and during the people's self-rule in the mid-1980s the community made crime disappear according to various evidence (Bonner and Niefertgoodien 2008). As some of our respondents argued, the gangsters that stayed in the community were mobilized and conscientized for struggle.

### **The decline of community activism**

The apartheid state responded to rebellions with repression, using extra-legal forces such as vigilantes and hit squads, and the mobilization of the army, leading to an expansion of the police and the auxiliary forces of the homeland regimes. The second State of Emergency in 1986 led to the arrest of more than 20,000 people and involved the largest repressive operation in the history of South Africa. Police and army violence, including in custody, was common, and by the end of 1986 the state had suppressed (or at least greatly weakened) many

community-based organizations. The UDF was severely restricted in its operations, and a number of high-profile UDF figures, as well as activists like Mayekiso, were charged with treason. The arrest of many of the most experienced leaders also led to structures of accountability being undermined and an escalation of clashes with the security forces and youths, leading to a militarization of the struggle and a decline in a broader community involvement.

When the transition period started in 1990, the ANC leadership established its hegemony over the community and youth structures and the unions, and when the UDF shut down in 1991 many of its affiliates were absorbed into ANC wings or ANC-aligned groups (Seekings 2000). When the ANC came into power in 1994 there was a process of depoliticization and a shift to focus on state power, with the ANC-led state meant to 'deliver' to the citizens (Neocosmos, 1996). However, in most of the townships and informal settlements the struggle waged by the poor against economic reforms of the newly elected government experienced a new revival, and occasionally led to the emergence of new social movements (Desai 2002; Ballard and Habib 2006; Gibson 2011). In many cases, activists raised the same old grievances of poor service delivery, improper housing and electricity cut offs. The activists in most of the cases explained this continuity of struggle against economic oppression as a struggle for the 'social justice' which has not been achieved in South Africa. The dreams of a radical social transformation, shared in the political climate of the 1980s, and the experiments with 'people's democracy' in many parts of the country have created visions of a possible egalitarian future. Meanwhile the incorporation of the civics into new government and possible decline of the civil society after the transition was foreseen and discussed before the historical moment of the 1994 (Friedman 1991).

### **Concluding remarks**

The period of the 1980s in South Africa is marked as a period of insurrection akin to the uprisings of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1905 (Price 1991), mainly because it revealed the possibilities of mass self-rule from below and highlighted the potential of direct democracy as a tool and practice to govern different communities.

The culture of democracy obviously did not take root in a vacuum. Some researchers consider that the novel forms of political self-organization of the 1980s were a direct continuation of the political struggle waged in the 1950s (Lodge 1983), when township residents organized mass boycotts and exercised their power from below, while others (Buhlungu 2001; Birne et al. 2017) argue that, structurally, the ‘organs of people’s power’ in the townships inherited their pattern from the democratic tradition of the post-1973 unions, ‘which was a complex composite of the lived experiences of egalitarianism and grassroots participation shared by black workers and the intellectual contributions of activists from different social and political backgrounds’ (Buhlungu 2001: 9). Clearly, the culture of protest and self-organization depended much on the township itself, its history and location.

As the interviews demonstrated, ‘organs of people’s power’ were seen as highly urgent forms of social self-organization that were set up out of frustration, rather than by political will. While some of our respondents demonstrated continuity of participation in shop floor organizations through independent trade unions and township committees, others had no such experience of political self-organization at all. It may be supposed that an African tradition of debate and collective decision-making (see, e.g., Mbeki 1964) played an important role in the township activism of the late 1970s and 1980s, manifesting itself in open meetings, night vigils and secret mass meetings held in churches. Besides, many of our respondents referred to other forms of township-based self-organization and self-help in communities (*stokvels* and *burial societies*, for example) – most of which had operated in townships long before the 1980s and were autonomous from the committees and civics. The level of their “politicization” varied. Some of the archival sources demonstrate that such community-based monetary associations as *stokvels* provided solidarity and mutual help for the most vulnerable of community residents and helped to raise funding for the funerals of oppressed township ‘comrades’ (see, e.g., Grassroots 1983–1986; Speak 1993), thus responding to the urban crisis of 1980s and becoming part of the anti-apartheid struggle.

The notion of ‘people’s power’ and ‘people’s democracy’ were explained in various ways. Respondents with a solid political background referred to it as a working practice of decision-making and a

tool that was used consciously by experienced activists in their struggle. Dinga Sikwebu noted: 'In unions, the question about democracy was about the elections of shop stewards. Now whether ... someone must have said and basically transferred the union form of organization to schools and townships or someone felt it was the right way to organize. ... This way of organizing, we were conscious of building that, we were very clear on it'.

Other explanations of 'people's power' were related to the practices of spontaneous self-organization which occurred in the conditions of constant crisis of apartheid society and enabled people without any political background take their destiny in their own hands. In these cases, 'people's democracy' meant 'making the whole community work together', 'enabling control from the bottom up' and 'making sure that people are heard'. This view of democracy as a process or the 'art and skills of collective living' as formulated by J. Rancière (Rancière 1995) or as a practice beyond the conventional political concepts of democracy (Rancière 2001), has been rethought by the new community-based social movements that emerged in post-apartheid South Africa. (E.g. the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign and Abahlali baseMjondolo – both have produced deep understandings of people's democracy as a practice).

However, the respondents displayed no tendency to romanticize their struggles and spoke openly about the limits to 'people's democracy'. Sometimes the fear of being repressed by the apartheid government limited people's capacity to hold open meetings and influenced the procedures for decision-making. Some respondents openly spoke about the abuses of power that their structures had faced. For instance, many civics saw no change in their leadership composition and were dominated by men. Sometimes this was explained by the domination of charismatic personalities and sometimes by the abuse of leadership positions. There were other challenges to democratic procedures that have also been highlighted in the research conducted by I. van Kessel. The fact that participation in any kind of resistance organization involved a risk of being arrested and charged meant many people were unwilling to take the risk of open participation. Some interviews demonstrated that the civics faced challenges of gender and age inequalities; in some cases, there was a generation gap between older residents and the (mainly younger) leaders of the civic as-

sociations, who at times imposed their will on others. This could include using violence. Similar research demonstrates the existence of tensions between the civics and the unions, in part because the latter wanted to ensure their autonomy and were wary of some of the undemocratic practices in UDF-affiliated bodies (Neocosmos 1996).

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank all the respondents for the interviews and the Sociology Department of the University of Witwatersrand for assistance in this research.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Valhalla Park is a colored township based on the outskirts of Cape Town. In the 1980s the Valhalla Park Untied Front led a militant struggle against forced evictions of township residents for non-payment of rents.

<sup>2</sup> The Vaal Civic Association was formed in 1984 and led a mass rent boycott campaign after a rent increase introduced that same year by the government.

<sup>3</sup> The oldest working-class township in Johannesburg, known for its vibrant political culture, mass boycotts of the 1950's and grassroots self-organization of the 1980s.

### **References**

- Birne, S., Ulrich, N., and Van der Walt, L. 2017. Red, Black and Gold: FOSATU, South African 'Workerism', 'Syndicalism' and the Nation. In Webster, E., and Pampillas, K. (eds.), *The Unresolved National Question in South Africa: Left Thinking Under Apartheid* (pp. 254–273). Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Bonner, P., and Nieftagoodien, N. 2008. *Alexandra. A History*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Bonner, P., and Segal, L. 1998. *Soweto. A History*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Buhlungu, S. 2001. *Democracy and Modernization in the Making of the South African Movement: The Dilemma of Leadership, 1973-2000*. Ph.D. dissertation. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.
- Desai, A. 2002. *We are the Poors. Community Struggles in Post-apartheid South Africa*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Friedman, S. 1991. An Unlikely Utopia: State and Civil Society in South Africa. *Politikon* 19 (1): 5–19.
- Gibson, N. 2011. *Fanonian Practices in South Africa. From Steve Biko to Abahlali baseMjondolo*. Pietermaritzburg: Palgrave Macmillan; University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.



- Lodge, T. 1983. *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Mayekiso, M. 1996. *Township Politics. Civic Struggles for a New South Africa*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Mbeki, G. 1964. *The Peasants' Revolt*. London: Penguin Books.
- Neocosmos, M. 1996. From People's Politics to State Politics: Aspects of National Liberation in South Africa 1984–1994. *Politeia* 15 (3): 80–84.
- Oldfield S., and Stokke, K. 2006. Building Unity in Diversity: Social Movement Activism in the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign. In Ballard, R., Valodia, I., and Habib, A. (eds.), *Voices of Protest. Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (pp. 111–132). Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Pithouse, R. 2013. Conjunctural Remarks on the Political Significance of 'the Local'. *Thesis Eleven* 115 (11): 95–111.
- Price, R. 1991 *The Apartheid State in Crisis: Political Transformation in South Africa 1975–1990*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rancière, J. 1995. *On the Shores of Politics*. Heron, L. (trans). London: Verso.
- Rancière, J. 2001. Ten Thesis on Politics. *Theory and Event*. 5 (3):17–34.
- Rethmann, P. 2009. After the Thrill: Global Capitalism and the Search for South African Autonomy. *Globalizations* 6 (3): 365–377.
- Sapire, H. 2013. Township Histories, Insurrection and Liberation in Late Apartheid South Africa. *South African Historical Journal* 65 (2): 167–198.
- Seekings, J. 2000. *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983–1991*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Simpson, T. 2009. 'Umkhonto we Sizwe, We are Waiting for You': The ANC and the Township Uprising, September 1984 – September 1985. *South African Historical Journal* 61 (1): 158–177.
- Simpson, T. (ed.). 2017. *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle in South Africa. Essential writings*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Sithole, J., and Ndlovu, S. (eds.). 2006. The Revival of the Labour Movement, 1970–1980. In Magubane, B. (ed.), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Vol. 2. 1970–1980* (pp.187–241). Johannesburg: Unisa Press.
- Van Kessel, I. 2005. *Beyond our Wildest Dreams. The United Democratic Front and the Transformations of South Africa*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.

### **Archival Sources**

- Grassroots*, 1982. AG2887. Wits Historical Papers.
- Grassroots* 1983. AG2887. Wits Historical Papers.

*Grassroots* 1985. AG2887. Wits Historical Papers.

*Grassroots* 1986. AG2887. Wits Historical Papers.

*Speak*, 1993. Stokvels: Sisterhood and Trust September 1993. P. 12–13. SAHA.

*Speak*. 1986. The voice of the community. Alexandra Special Edition. 15 May 1986. B.1.11.8. Wits Historical Papers.

*Morobe Murphy*. Towards a People's Democracy. IDASA Conference. May 1987. B. 1.3.22. Wits Historical Papers.

### **Interviews with township activists of the 1980s used in text**

T.N., township activist, Soweto, Johannesburg, October 2011

M.M., ex-township activist, Soweto, Johannesburg, October 2011

D. S., NUMSA leader, ex-township activist, Johannesburg, October 2011

Z.M., township activist, Soweto, Johannesburg, October 2011, November 2013

M.M., ex-township activist, Gauteng Legislature, Johannesburg, October 2011, November 2013

B.M., township activist, Soweto, Johannesburg, October 2011, November 2013

Alexandra resident, a member of the bus boycott campaign, Alexandra, Johannesburg, October 2012

Raymond Suttner, Professor, Johannesburg, October 2012

Aunty G., former Chairperson of the Valhalla rent payers association, Cape Town, Delft, November 2013

Aunty J., former Chairperson of the Valhalla rent payers association, Cape Town, Delft, November 2013

Th.N., township activist, Church land programme, Pietermaritzburg, November 2013



## **II. Legacy of the Past and Sociocultural Processes in Contemporary Africa**



# TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL RURAL COMMUNITIES IN EAST AFRICA

*Marina L. Butovskaya*

National Research University Higher School of Economics  
Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology  
of the Russian Academy of Sciences

## **Introduction**

Modern tendencies in the development of rural East Africa are in line with two general trends: intensification of agriculture (introduction of new farming technologies and more efficient varieties of plants and breeds of animals), establishment of agro-industrial factories and plants for raw materials processing on the one hand, and depeasantization, general urbanization of the rural environment and movement of big groups of young people to urban spaces in search of labor and hope for better prospects for life and wellbeing, on the other hand. In the former case this is reflected in the general governmental efforts, directed towards education of farmers and advertisement of modern technologies in the agricultural sphere, provisioning of loans for acquisition of tractors and other technical equipment, as well as promotion of education in agriculture, husbandry and veterinary. These transformations in East Africa, particularly in Tanzania, are in line with the general world movement away from rural smallholder commodity-producing family production towards concentration on simple subsistence food production, and/or other forms of labor (Bluwstain *et al.* 2018; Bryceson 2019: 61). This processes may be agricultural in nature, and represented by waged plantation, sharecropping or industrialized farm labor, as well as engagement in other activities, such as commerce, or hotel business (Bryceson 2000). These processes basically indicate a transition to cash crops, like coffee, tea, banana, or maize and millet in Tanzania, as well as most sub-Saharan African countries. In the Tanzanian case, this is typical for rural communities, nowadays influenced heavily by ethnotourism and proximity to wild-life reserves that result in mass engagement of local population in touristic services and nature protection activities (as rangers, guards, guides, hotel management, etc.).

Currently, Tanzania is an agrarian country, populated largely by agriculturalists and pastoralists with a small share of commercial farmers. The government made substantial efforts to enable the vulnerable social economic groups and individuals to enjoy land tenure security. The National Land Policy plan elaborated by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development in 2016 is to lay the foundations for Tanzania's transformation into a semi-industrialized nation by 2025 (Sulle et al. 2016; Sulle 2017: 19). The process of depeasantization is going very fast in Tanzania now and may be inspired partially by the recently officially announced governmental course on industrialization. All these transformations obviously affect the rural communities, their structure, everyday life and ritual activities, as well as kinship and community networks and obligations among community members.

The aims of this chapter are to describe the main trends in transformations of social life in the rural areas of Eastern Africa (the author's own field data on Tanzania will be mainly used and discussed). With this in mind, we target the following issues: 1. Changes in social network integration, associated with current economic trends, labor and educational migrations; 2. Current transitions in the way of farming and cattle breeding; 3. Transformations in customary ceremonial practices (birth, funeral, and commemoration rites); 4. AIDS and cultural transformations.

### **Changes in social network integration, associated with current economic trends, labor and educational migrations**

In the past, the land in Africa was rarely subject to individual or group ownership of people who exercised exclusive control over clearly bounded parcels of tracts of land (Berry 2018: 6). Access to land was associated with membership in a household, family, community, polity, or another unit. The nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists, the Datoga being an example, do not claim ownership of vast plots of land, which they used for communal pasturing of cattle. They used to graze animals changing pastures in rotating succession in way that cattle would return to the same land once in four years. Thus, they allowed the land to recover from the cattle pressure. Such land-use, although being ecologically healthy, provided a misleading impression of land as unattended and thus waiting for being cultivated in the eyes of farmers and governmental authorities.

In fact, according to African traditions, the stranger who acknowledged the authority of the group was usually free to settle on any unoccupied piece of land and cultivate it, as well as use common resources available to all the community members. This was quite logic and appropriate in the case of farming but caused an obvious tension when farmers were attempting to cultivate the lands of pastoralists. The Datoga recent cases are good examples. As the Datoga have never tried to acquire official documents for their communal land-ownership (land title-deeds), their lands were either gradually occupied by migrant farmers (consequent conflicts over land around the Busoty lake around 2011–2012 and the current situation in Mang’ola are examples), or given by government in concession to agrarian cooperatives (the Canadian Wheat Project during the Julius Nyerere time) (Lane 1996). The latter produced ecological crises in the Hydom region, and although the Canadians withdrew in a few years, the land suffered severe erosion, the upper layer of soil being blown away with the wind. The Datoga people were able to get back to their traditional pasturing system, but under much deteriorating conditions, as the bushland was turned into plain fields, most trees and bushes were chopped, and the grass cover was seriously damaged. The Datoga suffered double stress, because in parallel with the problem of pasturing land depletion, the tombs of ancestors, which Datoga used to worship and visit regularly were destroyed. The recent conflict in Busoty mentioned above between the Datoga and newly arrived farmers aggravated over access to the beaches of the Busoty lake. As a result of uncontrolled land management and its intensive exploitation (application of pesticides, fungicides) with obvious violation of security norms, the clean waters of the lake, the main source of providing drinking water for people and animals, were dangerously poisoned. Although the Datoga leaders addressed the farmer community, as well as the governmental authorities, a number of times with a request to solve the situation, their petitions were ignored. After a few years of struggle without no reaction from the local authorities, the Datoga called for a big tribal meeting in 2013. The Datoga representatives arrived at this meeting from other regions and joined the local Datoga community. The participants stayed camping on the beach of the lake and delivered talks on their vision of the current situation. For three days, men and women actively expressed their wish to get back their land and to re-



store the initial land use of lake beaches (Butovskaya, personal field observations). As the result of the meeting, the following decision was taken: to avoid the aggravation of interethnic conflicts, the local farmers (the Iramba, Niaturu, Sukuma, Iraqw) were suggested to harvest their current crops and withdraw. Unless they ignore the warning and seed new crops, the Datoga elders warned them, that the cattle will be taken to pasture on the crops and will be taken through the fields daily for drinking session. The Datoga leaders also declared that their men were ready to use spears to chase the farmers if necessary. After an official announcement of the Datoga community decision, the local officials issued a legislation, stating that no fields can be used for farming in the one hundred-mile zone around the Basoty lake.

Conflicts over land-use are currently getting more public attention, and they are taking place not only between the pastoralists and the farmers, but also between the pastoralists (farmers) and the government. When in the early 1990s a new paradigm for development among Africa's pastoral populations, linking conservation of natural resources to human development, was officially declared by authorities, it was met with hopes for achievement of a desirable consensus between pastoral groups and governmental bodies (McCabe *et al.* 1992). After the few decades of its accomplishment, the impact of this dual policy on the subsistence economy and nutrition of pastoral populations is far from being satisfactory. The Maasai community, living in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) in Tanzania, which has been managed under the dual mandate of the environmental conservation and pastoral development for over thirty years, seems to be a good illustration. Although the environment has been successfully protected, the Ngorongoro Maasai economy decayed. The percentage of people unable to support themselves by pastoralism is increasing, and the administration of the NCA now has to provision the Maasai families with monthly packets of food supply (maize and beans) to prevent malnutrition.

Disputes over land use were reported in Lolyondo and Ngorongoro between the local Maasai communities and governmental organizations involved in the nature conservation activities (Butovskaya and Butovskiy 2017). According to Filbert Rweyemamu (2017), the Tanzanian government was taken to East African Court of Justice (EACJ) on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 at the request of four villages

(Ololosokwan, Olorien, Kirtalo, and Arash) located in Ngorongoro District of Arusha Region. These villages stated that their eviction from the ancestral land was against the law. They alleged that destruction of their houses and forced eviction from their dwelling areas were against the law because their villages were officially registered. The villagers submitted before the Court certificates on registration of the four villages under the Ujamaa Villages Act of 1975; the documents, indicating that Ololosokwan village, being in the center of the land disputes in Loliondo Division, Ngorongoro District, had obtained its registration in 1978, as well as official documents for registration of Arash village in 2002. The villages protested against the revoking of land ownership by the government and changes in the land use regime on their territories. According to the view of the local elders and activists, the Loliondo land disputes that continued since the 1990s, were mainly pitting the nomadic pastoralists (annexing their grazing lands), on the one hand, and the conservation agencies and the foreign tourist hunting companies on the other. In line with these disputes, nearly 1,000 heads of the Maasai cattle were confiscated by game rangers, and houses were destroyed. Thus, the villagers classified these actions in the EACJ as a serious violation of human rights. The Maasai whose settlements are currently located in Ngorongoro Conservation Area have been protesting against the current land use legislations, according to which no farming (namely growing maize) is allowed and the amount of cattle is said to be controlled.

The situation of the Ngorongoro Maasai is not unique and becoming more and more common throughout the pastoral regions of East Africa, calling for the development of new policy of sustainable coexistence of traditional pastoral land use and nature conservation activities. The examples of such successful projects arranged between local population and nature protection organizations as well as tour operators should be mentioned (Nelson *et al.* 2010). Payments for ecosystem services (PES) is one of such initiatives. Such a strategy provides the developing economic incentives for biodiversity conservation in a range of social and ecological settings around the world (Wunder *et al.* 2008). In 2005, a consortium of tourism companies has contracted with three Maasai villages (Emboreet, Sukuro, and Terrat), located on the Simanjiro plains, to conserve a key wildlife dispersal area in exchange for annual financial payments.

Key factors that enabled establishment of this PES scheme include an enabling institutional framework with respect to village governance institutions and land tenure, low opportunity costs as a result of the compatibility of local pastoralists' livestock management practices with the maintenance of wildlife habitat, and low transaction costs as a result of prior experiences with establishing private community tourism ventures in the area' (Nelson *et al.* 2010: 84).

In March 2019, six Maasai villages in Simanjiro District of Manyara Region engaged in such a kind of collaboration had obtained all official land title deeds, confirming the communal land ownership. Thus, collaboration between pastoralists and conservationists may be fruitful, given the considerations of mutual interests and a constructive program of land management. The number of successful projects in this direction should also be mentioned, including the development of special noninvasive preventive technologies of crop-damaging by elephants, monkeys and other wild animals (using chili pepper and bee heaves fences, or urine spraying for crops protection) in Tanzania and Kenya, provide a solid basis for optimism (Hatfield 2018; Kavia *et al.* 2016; Schultze-Kraft 2018; King 2019).

Harsh conflicts over land use are not limited to the disputes between pastoralists and nature conservation activists. In Tanzania a substantial parcels of land for which different people shared access in the past for using in different ways, have become subjected to layers of claims and in fact a source of harsh conflicts, both between individuals and ethnic groups (Berry 2002; Oomen 2005; Kuba and Lentz 2006; Butovskaya, personal field observations).

On the other hand, commercialization and redistribution of land resources in rural areas may be affected by traditional mentality and tribal hierarchy. Although intensive political processes in Eastern Africa associated with nation building and democratization, along with the general growth of the population's education level, produce a solid basis for decline of various tribal prejudices and beliefs associated with supernatural forces punishing for misbehavior and violation of social power of chiefs and elders, the pace of these processes is slow. Up till now, the common law, elders power, the traditional ways for solving social conflicts and reconciliation remain as effective as in the past. In Tanzania, the power of chiefs is officially declared illegal, however, the village and tribal chiefs in some rural areas remain

highly respected in their communities (the Maasai, the Datoga, the Haya being examples). Although, in Tanzania the modern transformations in land ownership are not stuck due to the pressure of local chiefs, in some neighboring counties (for instance, Zambia), people were reported to refrain to claim the land formerly owned by chiefs, as they were afraid of chiefs' power. After the establishment of the House of Chiefs by the Zambian Constitution of 1996, the chiefs constantly try to interfere into political and economic issues at the national, regional, and local levels (Bondarenko 2014: 106). The Bemba farmers still remained obedient to local traditions and did not challenge the chiefs' alienation of farm- and woodland. This situation may be explained by the strong traditional belief that wicked behavior invites sickness, so they do not expect that chiefs will long survive such wrongdoing (Oyama 2016: 105).

The way people adjust to or oppose the political and economic changes is tightly connected with their worldview. The Meru and Haya peoples are good illustrations to this. The philosophy of Ubuntu (or Utu) is the foundation of the Meru worldview and the basis of their understanding of social justice (Spear 1997). According to this philosophy, every community member has rights for land in order to have means for survival. The Ubuntu (Utu) philosophy enabled people to survive in the course of interactions with the neighbors – the Maasai and Arusha.

The Utu played a positive role in nation building during the Nyerere time and in promoting a positive vision of the Ujamaa ideology (Bais 2017: 68). Today, wealth has become a property of the individual, but not owned by the society, and this contradicts the traditional Meru philosophy. Currently, this causes problems in understanding between the young generation and older people. Christianity also had to adjust to the Meru traditions. For example, the traditional way of acquiring justice and punishing those who misbehave in the community – breaking pot (*chungu/nungu*) is still practiced (Mungure 2002). According to the traditional Meru beliefs, breaking a pot (*kupasua chungu*), is a way of punishing for various misdeeds, including theft, witchcraft, assault, murder, adultery, disagreement on judgements, and land deceit cases, and thus conducted in the interests of justice (Kellsall 2003: 177). It is done by using a small statuette of a man or a woman made of stone, wood or clay and condemnation to break it into

pieces like a broken pot, so it will be impossible to repair the figurine. As a rule, the breaking is only symbolic, thus it leaves an avenue for reconciliation open. The *chungu* was constantly considered an evil practice by Christian missionaries, but this customary law practice is so deeply rooted in the Meru mentality that one of the two Lutheran denominations in Meruland, the African Mission Evangelic Church, has decided to tolerate and accept the *chungu*, along with other traditional practices, in order to keep its influence in the region (Bais 2017: 81–82).

The Haya philosophy of identifying people with their land and beliefs that ancestors are their protectors, on the contrary, was a source of active opposition to the Ujumaa ideology and policy in the Hayaland, as people were not able to accept the collectivistic land-use idea. The Haya only imitated the cooperative activities, in reality investing in their own farms and herds.

### **Current transitions in the way of farming and cattle breeding**



Fig. 1: Traditional carts are still valid in countryside in Kagera Region, Tanzania (photo by the author).



Fig. 2: Traditional Haya grass house (photo by R. Butovskiy).

Tanzania's rural life (Fig. 1, 2) has been rapidly changing due to introduction of new, more efficient varieties of plants and breeds of cattle, thus providing more beneficial conditions for farming and animal keeping. Along with that, small portable agricultural technique has now been widely introduced in Tanzania. Thus, manual labor in the agrarian sphere is gradually reducing. In Mang'ola, for example, where the author of this chapter has been doing fieldwork since 2004, small tractors and motorblocks are in use in the last three years (Fig. 3), and new drilling equipment for underground water extraction has been actively applied. The everyday life has been modernized, and solar batteries and cell phones are widely used (Fig. 4). Consequently, a great part of formally dry bushland has been transformed into fields for growing maize, beans, as well as cash crops, such as onion, rice, tomato and sweet pepper. On the one hand, intensification of agricultural sphere is an obvious sign of the country's rapid economic development. On the other – in the Mang'ola particular case – it creates a real problem for the Hadza (indigenous hunter-gatherers), as practically all groves of tamarind trees, acacias and local fruit trees along the river favored by the Hadza were

chopped out, as well as the commiphora trees and other bush vegetation that served as home for many animals (antelopes, monkeys, rabbits, bush pigs, etc.). Consequently, today most of the Hadza traditional territory is taken away from them by farmers. The pastoral Datoga situation is not much better, as with the development of onion farms they have lost most of their traditional pasturing lands. Some Datoga have managed to capture the modern tendencies and take the land for themselves to penetrate into the agro-business, others have not and migrated with their cattle to other places. Along with modernization of agriculture, problems with security in local communities rose in Mang'ola, as onion business demands a lot of seasonal work, and seasonal workers create a more criminal situation in local villages. Local people are currently obliged to protect their properties, putting locks on the doors and metal frames on the windows. Besides, many local men told me that they had been robbed while coming back from local market in the evening hours.



Fig. 3. Motorblocks and tractors are rarely used by Tanzanian farmers (photo by the author).



Fig. 4. In Karatu District, Tanzania, solar batteries may be obtained nowadays at the monthly market in Mang'ola (photo by the author).

### **Transformations in customary ceremonial practices (birth, funeral and commemoration rites)**

Commercialization of land goes hand in hand with economic and political transformations, affecting all spheres of life. Among others, these spheres include traditional life-cycle ceremonies and ancestors worship (Witte 2001; Mazzucato and Kabki 2008; Boni 2010), religious institutions (Last 1988; Soares 2005; Marshall 2009), principles of interaction between the indigenes and the strangers (Chauveau 2000; Boni 2005; 2006; Geschiere 2009; Lentz 2013). These transformations erode the community identity, customary law, rules of cooperation and mutual assistance. In the rural areas, where population pressure on the arable land was growing, the land/labor exchange based on age and gender within family units has undergone evident transformations. Contemporary monetary economy has demanded new rules of conduct, under which the families provisioning capacity deteriorated and the financial dependence of youth and wives on male patriarchs lessened. As Bryceson argues:



In the process, peasant family units started inadvertently restructuring. Unease and ambiguity over individual members' rights and responsibilities surfaced in family members' internal exchange relations. Boundaries between household solidarity and individual autonomy became hazy. Dependency ties based on gender and age lines weakened within family units. Incomplete family units rose in number involving the locational separation of the reproductive couple for the sake of income-earning reminiscent of colonial labor migration circuits of the past (Bryceson 2019: 62).

### ***Birth rites***

Life-cycle ceremonies used to mark the whole life of individuals in traditional rural communities in East Africa, as in any other part of the world. The degree of preservation of these ceremonies is a matter of equilibrium between the present and the past. In the majority of cases, the birth rites, the first teeth, and funeral rites and commemoration practices have remained unchanged, or minimally changes under the pressure of Christianization, Islamization, as well as governmental laws and prescriptions. In some cases, transformations are due to globalization, as well as to involvement in the monetary economy and mass engagement in labor migrations.

The village woman, Christian or Muslim, will now in predominant percentage (up to 80% according to our Meru respondent (respondent 15), or even 95% according to a Haya respondent (respondent 9) go to the hospital for childbirth. There are obvious cross-ethnic differences as to what extend women now practice fertility rituals. While in the Meru case, they have practically abandoned such rituals, in the Datoga, Maasai, Haya, and Chagga they practice them widely (author's personal observations). Babies are protected by meticulous mixture of modern medicine (vaccination) and traditional medicine (for example, spitting by mothers on babies' heads, as in the Meru case), as well as by all kind of amulets.

In the Haya until the 1990s women widely practiced the ritual of the mother's coming out of home with the baby. The new mother, mother-in-law, midwife and a younger female relative are engaged. According to respondents 10 and 11, after delivery (if not given birth in the hospital), the placenta and umbilical cord were taken to a special, preliminarily selected banana plant (this is a special kind of bananas used for making beer) and buried. The baby stayed on the

right side of the mother for 7 days, and all the feces were not taken away. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day,

when the rest of the cord was dropped down, the seclusion of the mother with the baby came to its end. The baby is placed on the mother's back for the first time and all of its feces and first hair are collected on banana leaves. Participants, all women, make a procession to a special banana tree an eating banana representing the female ancestors if the baby is a girl, and a beer banana representing the male ancestors if it is a boy. The feces and hair are placed at the foot of the tree (where the placenta has usually been buried in the case of a home birth). While processing to the tree, the women and girls sing “Twatwalaki obugumba” (we are carrying out barrenness). Returning to the hut they sing “Twagarulaki Oruzaro” (we are bringing back fertility into the house). The *endilalira* ritual symbolizes the intimate connection between the ancestors, the land, and the fertility of living women. It promotes human fertility by invoking the presence of ancestors as protection against forces responsible for infertility-including witchcraft, in which feces and hair can be employed to harm the child or future children (Stevens, 1991: 9).

According to respondent 10, placenta is buried under banana tree to strengthen the relationship between the baby and family. This banana tree will be used in the future by this child, when he/she will be grown up, and this person is recognized as its exclusive owner.

Nowadays, this ceremony is practiced less frequently (respondent 12). Respondent 10 explained that

the baby's hair is shaven on the fortieth day, collected and put under the same banana tree to prevent the baby from suffering a headache. Besides, the baby is taken to sacred altar for Wamara, where people worship. Child is put on the altar, while parents and grandparents are playing there. This altars may be located either inside of house, or outside. In this case they are always located on the right hand from the main entrance. Altar looks like a small hut. The head of the family is responsible for praying.

Although sometimes women can be ashamed to use traditional rituals, they may continue to practice them in secret. Another women-related ritual that survived until recently is celebration of a baby's first teeth. As with many African cultures, the Haya have beliefs associated with the order of arrival of the first teeth. In their case, it is a lower tooth that must arrive first. Providing the correct tooth erupted first,

the mother carries the baby on her back around the village, while girls collect bananas from each household in baskets. These bananas will then be taken to the house and cooked in one pot. The meal will be shared by relatives and neighbors. This ritual, involving only women, remained intact of any influence from the churches and current modernization processes. According to our respondents 10 and 11, if the succession of teeth eruption is wrong, and a baby gets an upper tooth first, this baby may be killed. To test if s/he is bewitched, it will be put on the pass of the cows, and cows may kill her/him while moving through this place. If a baby were lucky to survive, s/he would be subjected to treatments. The mother and this baby will be sprayed by local medicine. Nowadays, these traditions are completely abandoned but spearing traditional medicine on mothers and such 'bewitched' babies is still practiced among the rural Haya and people from other ethnic groups.

According to estimations of our respondents (respondents 2 and 12), currently, the Haya traditions are under big threat. The new generation might stop such practices completely. These transformations are due to a number of reasons: 1. delivery in the hospitals. Our respondent 12, a former midwife, explained that four years ago, the Tanzanian government issued a special law forbidding the midwife services at home and encouraging people to go to dispensaries and hospitals for delivery. Consequently, now placenta has not been buried in banana gardens; 2. general modernization processes and globalization, easy access to Mass Media and all source of information due to cell phones and the Internet popularizing the modern vision of mother-child interactions; 3. high mobility, intensive migration for educational and labor purposes, interaction with people from other ethnic groups.

### ***Funeral rites and commemoration ceremonies***

Funeral and commemoration ceremonies in present-day rural East Africa provide a perfect illustration of admixture of modern and traditional. In some cases, the reverse transformations in the direction of traditional norms may even be observed. A classic study by Binford (1971) compared mortuary practices in 40 cultures selected from the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF). It was demonstrated that burial practices do tend to reflect social categories and are associated with

social complexity. He coded the societies in his sample on the basis of six distinctions: cause of death, location of death, age, sex, social position, and social affiliation. He asserted that both the number and types of the distinctions varied with subsistence strategy (see Gottlieb *et al.* 2018). Although Binford did not find a statistical difference in the number of dimensions symbolized by hunter-gatherers, shifting agriculturalists, and pastoralists, he found that settled agriculturalists recognize significantly more dimensions. He concluded that sedentary agriculturalists demonstrate an increase in status complexity. Our data from the Haya, Meru, Chagga, and Pare informants are in line with this conclusion. Certain differences can be observed in the types of dimensions recognized. While hunter-gatherers pay more attention to age and sex and less to status, agriculturalists of all types make more emphases on social position. Gender tends to be indicated by the orientation of the body or by the form of the grave, and social affiliation and social status by the location of the burial. Besides, social status may be indicated by the quantity or form of offerings (Kamp 1998: 81). The funerary ritual is a dynamic aspect of social system. When accumulation of wealth is possible, burial expenditures may function as indicators of social status. Tracing the history of transformations in the funerary ritual in Tanzania in the 20<sup>th</sup> – early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, one can disclose the general transformations in Tanzanian rural communities.

The funerary rites are less ‘intact’ compared to the fertility rituals, since they show distinct Christian or Islamic influences. In the case of Christianized groups, at the first glance it may be limited to prayers in the home of the dead person, and the erecting of a small cross over the grave. What strikes an observer is that the central rituals take place at the homestead, they are performed by the lineage members, and may not involve the jurisdiction of the Church.

In the case of the Haya who were among the first Christianized ethnic groups on the territory of Tanzania, transformations in the burial ceremonies are worth describing. According to respondents (respondents 1, 2, 4, 9), the Haya people originally used to take the dead bodies to the mountains and bury them under big stones. When missionaries arrived, they stimulated people to bury their relatives on the graveyards near the churches. With time, the graveyards became completely full, and instead of claiming for new space for these purposes

in rural regions, people started a new tradition of burying their relatives within their own land (currently such graves may be widely observed in rural Tanzania in the Chagga, Haya, Meru, Iramba, Isanzu, and other peoples' communities). The Haya still bury their dead on the *kibanja* (a plot in the banana garden situated around the house), where formerly one's birth placenta was also buried. The connection between the Haya patrilineal land tenure and burial customs was noted earlier by other authors:

Continuity on the land and the appointment of an heir is caught up with a man's fate after death... if he is buried in his *kibanja* and if the line of heirs succeeds him, his spirit is at rest. For the living, the most convincing statement a man can make justifying his ownership is to say that his father is buried on his *kibanja* (Reining, 1965: 169).

The Canadian anthropologist Lesley Stevens who conducted research in the Haya villages in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century suggested that

there is also a parallel between the funerary rites and the fertility ritual after a birth. Family members today still shave their heads after a burial, burn the hair and then disperse it at a crossroad to "send away" death from the homestead, much as women "carry away" from the home of a newly delivered woman the dangerous forces represented by feces and hair (Stevens, 1991: 10).

It is important to mention the Africans' attitudes to the death as a phenomenon. Some cultures, people originally feared the dead, and were getting rid of dead bodies as fast as possible: taking away the body to the bush, forest or mountains, or abandoning the place with the dead person (the Hadza, Datoga, Maasai, Haya, Meru clans tracing their origin to the Maasai). As commented by an old Meru man from Mugure clan associated with the Maasai origin (respondent 15), 'people were feared, that the death will jump on them and take away'. They were happy if the abandoned body disappeared on the next morning and believed that was a sign that the deceased was accepted by Iruva, the Creator of everything (the Giver of gifts, Feeder, Protector, Healer) (Harjula 1969).

According to our respondent 15, before the missionaries created cemeteries, the Meru were a small community that did not have tools for digging the ground for making graves. For that reason, there were no any Meru cemeteries for burying their dead, as well as there were

no specially constructed huts for burying their dead relatives either. However, they had special areas located near their villages where dead people were thrown to be scavenged on by wild animals. If a body remained devoured by the wild animals after a day, an elder would go to the area and throw to the body the datura fruit (poisonous vesper-tine flowering plants belonging to the *Solanaceae* family, also known as 'devil's trumpets'). Usually after the throwing of the datura fruit, the body would be devoured. After about a year, elders from the bereaved family will return to the area where they left the body to bring the dead person home. They will then collect the remains of their relative (bones and skull) and throw them into the banana farm. After this have been done, a goat or sheep will be slaughtered and the portions of roasted meet will be offered to the ancestors. By doing this, relatives of the passed-away person were thanking ancestors for sending the scavengers to devour the body of their relative and to appease them, so that they will grant a peaceful rest to their beloved. A milk and banana pombe (*mbege*) is offered to Iruva on a sacred round stone placed at the entrance near the door on which the offerings of food and milk are offered on daily basis. Usually this ceremony is performed quietly and quickly.

As remembered by respondent 15, a funeral of traditional Meru was usually done by the clan leader (*mshili*). This ceremony was normally performed immediately after a person's death. The Meru were afraid of death, so the normal time for burial was the same day, or if the person died at night, the burial day would be the next one. The dead person was wrapped in her/his bed-sheeting or blanket, and dry banana leaves were the final material to wrap up the body. There were no specific objects that accompanied a Meru in the burial. When the dead person's body was laid down on the burial ground, it was positioned facing Mount Meru, or in other words, facing north. No decoration of any kind was provided.

Roasted meat was eaten at the funeral ceremony but also the local dish *nswa* or *loshoro* (made of boiling maize and milk), and local drinks *mbege* (alcoholic, made of ripe bananas and sorghum) and *kaanga* (made of fried bananas) were offered. The latter were limited to the elders, as young people were not allowed to drink alcohol. Portions of roasted meat were put on banana leaves at the head of the grave as an appeasement. This offering was left at the grave, and after

a few hours, some relatives would come to check. If the meat was no longer there, everyone would be happy, because it would mean that the offering had been received by the deceased and s/he was happy now.

In other Meru clans complicated ceremonies, like double-burials were practiced, similar to those in the Pare and Chagga peoples. The double burial practice suggested that a body was buried twice.

First the body of adults (men and women) was wrapped in a bull-hide, sitting in the (*kumbeny*), a hole/grave, somewhere on the forested hillside, to rot. Secondly, the bones of the skull were collected and returned to the deceased's homestead (*wooro*). In the case of an adult male. The skull was buried by the stone (*jiwe la wooro*) situated at the center of the deceased's homestead (Haram 2018: 253).

Female bones were buried inside the woman's house under a fireplace stones, situated in the center.

As explained by respondents 15 and 16, today the community waits for three days until the body is buried. It is the main responsibility of the bereaved family. In the Meru (as in the Haya, Chagga, and other ethnic groups of Tanzania), nowadays relatives remain very strict in their wish to bury the deceased person by the family, thus spending a lot of money for transportation of the body back to where the person was born.

Family members put in place all the stuff to be used for the ceremony, like flowers for decorating the grave after the burial. Food for all who will attend the funeral ceremony is also arranged. They will also compile a short life history of the dead person which is usually read out to those present at the funeral. According to the Meru tradition, 'a deceased male is mourned publicly for three days after the burial, and a females body is mourned for four days before the cease, or break the mourning (*ikwiimbo rembo*). The differences is due to believes that 'a women's womb takes longer to burst' (Haram 2018: 254). An old man or woman who have lived long, was blessed with many children and great-grandchildren, was good and moral will be properly buried and mourned heavily. The mourning ceremony will be well arranged, with plenty of food and drinks, but the mourning will be not hard to bear, as the deceased was old and lived long. When young people die before marriage and giving birth to children, the feelings of loss are great but the ceremony is much more modest. The

Meru people have the idea of ‘good death’. According to it, ‘an old person with many children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren is a happy deceased’ (Haram 2018: 251).

The burial ceremony in Meru is syncretic, being a mixture of Christian and local religious traditions. The burial day starts with digging the grave at a place chosen by the family. The grave is dug by young men. When the body is brought to the deceased’s house, it is located at a place where the final prayer, led by the church minister or by the family leader if the diseased did not belong to any religious grouping, is organized. After this prayer, the coffin is brought out of the house and placed on a previously prepared stand where the community members may pay their last respects. When this is done, the coffin is covered and the religious ceremony starts. The ceremony takes about an hour and finally the procession takes the dead person to the grave. From the stand to the grave the body is carried by young men from the bereaved family, or Christian leaders if the dead person was a leader in the local Christian community. From the grave, all move back to the house of the deceased, where food is served to everybody in attendance to celebrate the life of the dead person. Today, the Meru have changed the way of serving food during the wedding and funeral ceremonies. Now they arrange buffet, and thus everyone eats from her/his own plate. Modernization transformations also occurred with drinks, as along with banana beer they start consuming modern beverages, such as Cola, Pepsi, Fanta and others, as well as Konyagi, the Tanzanian local spirit.

After the meal, the family leader will give a date when the living members of that family will meet to wind-up the affairs of the deceased. On this day, those who are owed or claiming to the dead person are also welcomed to this meeting to confirm the debt they own or claim. At the final meeting, someone from the family of the deceased is appointed the leader of that family and will report to the clan leader if he may encounter any problems. Usually, this is the end of the burial ceremony. As a rule, there is no preferred place for burial of a passed-away relative other than on family burial ground or family land.

Currently, the rural-urban relationship in sub-Saharan Africa is an arena in which the social change is shaped, expressed, and contested. Along with the examples above, similar tendencies are reported for Western Africa. The rural-urban Igbo migrants in Nigeria



have a strong desire to be buried ‘at home’ – in their ancestral villages, and to perform elaborate and expensive funeral ceremonies for their dead relatives (Smith 2004). According to Smith, the Igbo funerals may solve the best illustration to the structural paradoxes associated with inequality in the Nigerian society. Particularly, they manifest the kinbased patron-client relations between the rural communities and their migrant kin. Burials always cause tensions among relatives, and these tensions suggest that rituals may not only promote social integration but also produce unnecessary discontents regarding transformations in the organization and extent of social inequality (Smith 2004).

### ***Burial associations as a manifestation of traditional rural community norms in Tanzania***

Burial associations are an integral part of modern African reality. Rural communities in Tanzania are not an exception. However, variations in their activities, explainable by cultural and socio-economic factors, may be observed. In the mono-ethnic communities, especially where the monetary economy does not prevail completely, such burial associations are to a large extent lineage- and clan-oriented. For example, in the Datoga of Mang’ola, male relatives of a deceased are responsible for the whole ceremony. They are organized in a group headed by elders. According to my participant observations in the period from 2007 to 2018, such a group of men regulates the investments in the ceremony and decides who this time are responsible for providing cows, and sheep, and goats for feeding people, for making arrangements regarding accommodation of the people arriving from distant places. Usually, the group of elders give orders to young men, the clan members to collect the cattle for the ceremony from particular households, to fetch water, to build temporary houses. The men are also responsible for making honey beer. Honey may be collected from wild bees by special men’s parties, or exchanged from hunter-gatherers (the Hadza) or farmers (the Iraqw). Meantime, woman are responsible for cooking food, as well as meeting visitors with loud cries and laments. Yet, even though cooking is a women’s duty, these are always young men who provide services for feeding men by taking food to special men’s houses or places in the bush near the mourning household. As mentioned above, both food items and services do

not demand any money. The exception may be maize for cooking *ugali* (maize porridge). Some of the Datoga families started cultivation of maize in the 1970s, but they have remained much less effective compared to traditional farmers, according to respondents. All the neighboring households were responsible for maize provisioning. Consequently, every woman arriving to the *boma* (household in Kiswahili) of the deceased, brought flour in calabashes or small bags (at present made of plastic). Nowadays, cash is also needed for buying beverages – soft and alcoholic drinks.

A respondent (respondent 14), Pare by ethnic origin, provided the following description of the reciprocation system of communal help in relation to burial occasions:

We live in the village like one family. In this village, if someone dies all families contribute. All people are coming with something. Today, they mostly come with money, as it is easy to carry. If someone comes to your house asking to help for burial, you cannot say ‘no’. Next time it can be you. Currently some unofficial regulations exist, how much money should be donated. We do not pay equal amount if men and women die. If a man dies, we give no less than 2,000 Tanzanian shillings, and if a woman, half of that – 1,000 Tanzanian shillings. Of course, social status does matter. The higher the status of the person that passed away, the more people pay. If a newcomer dies, we pay less, but still pay. People go and collect from every house, and a collector should give a report to members of the burial committee and the community members in general. Everything should be recorded in the book. Unless this info is not recorded, the collector may steal something, although people are afraid of death spells for misbehavior. But it is still better to protocol everything in the burial community book.

Three members of a burial association from the Kamachumu village in Kagera Region, all Haya by ethnic origin, provided another description most recently, in March 2019 (respondent 7): ‘We visit all the families in our village every month and collect certain money for potential burials. We put all this information in the book. It is reported in the book, who and how much money provided. In this way we protect ourselves from cheaters who may use the money of the community but do not invest in turn’. There may be several burial associations in the village. As a rule, they are organized according to the gender principle (when women collect money from women separately)

but they can also be mixed. Besides, a person may be a member of a few such associations. Finally, the burial associations may be organized on the inter-village basis.

The role of *iddir*, the burial societies or funeral associations, as a form of social cooperation has been described earlier for Ethiopia (Dercon *et al.* 2008: 15). Members of an *iddir* typically meet once or twice a month, making a small payment into the association's fund. These organizations are based on written rules and records of contributions and payouts (Dercon *et al.* 2008: 16). When a member dies, the *iddir* makes a payment to the surviving family members in the median amount paid out by their household. According to Dercon with co-authors, the *iddir* membership is widespread, incorporating nearly 90% of the non-pastoral households in Ethiopia.

### ***'Living dead', ancestors, and gods***

In the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa, ancestors 'are vested with mystical powers and authority. They retain a functional role in the world of the living, especially in the life of their living kinsmen; indeed, African kin-groups are often described as communities of both living and the dead; neglect is believed to bring about punishment' (Kopytoff 2018: 265). Ancestors are involved in welfare of their kin group but they are not linked the same way to each member of the group. 'The linkage is structured through the elders of the kin-group, and the elders' authority is related to their close link to the ancestors. In some sense the elders are the representatives of the ancestors and the mediators between them and the kin-group' (Kopytoff 2018: 265). The same author emphasized a special attitude of Africans to the afterworld where the ancestors reside: 'The Africans emphasize not how the dead live, but how they affect the living. Not all dead, but only dead with particular structural positions are worshipped as ancestors' (Kopytoff 2018: 266).

Our data suggest that the idea of living dead is still present in many rural tribal communities in Tanzania (Butovskaya and Dronova 2019). The Datoga, Maasai, Isanzu, Haya, Chagga, Meru people believe that their passed away mothers, fathers, grandparents are watching them, protecting from evils or punishing for misbehavior. For example, some Meru still keep to traditional beliefs (respondent 15). They believe that the 'living dead' are watching the life of the living families, and communicate with them in the times of misfortune (seri-

ous illnesses, famine, drought, etc.). Diseases are considered as manifestations of the ancestors' displeasure. In this case, a bull, a goat, or a sheep are usually slaughtered and offered as a sacrifice to please them. Happiness and satisfaction in daily activities of the family members indicate that ancestors are pleased and happy as well.

The Datoga used to visit the graves of their relatives and treat them with milk, tobacco, honey beer. They sing and dance for them, ask for blessing and address publicly with thanks for a successful year, health of the family members and cattle, good weather and peaceful life (Butovskaya and Dronova 2019).

### **The AIDS pandemic and Tanzania's rural reality**

The AIDS pandemic has severely threatened the populations of sub-Saharan Africa in late 20<sup>th</sup> – early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and caused obvious damage to the life of rural communities. Concentrated initially in the urban areas, AIDS spread eventually to the rural areas, as many victims were men from villages who were labor migrants to the cities where they were infected by sex workers and who infected their wives in the rural areas after getting home (Barnett and Blaikie 1992; Obbo 1995). Instead of raising the living standards of their families, they became additional loads for their wives, children, and all the relatives (Obbo 1995; Bryceson and Fonseca 2006). With the spread of AIDS, the fear arose, and in combination with the general lack of education and understanding of the nature of virus infections, the gossips about the origin of AIDS began to spread. Many people claimed that this infection was spread by the whites wishing to stop the growth of African population (informant 8). In many rural areas in Tanzania, people refused to be treated with modern Western medicine, and resorted to local traditional medicine obtained from witchdoctors. People were also suspicious for using condoms as a precaution measure against the AIDS infection, repeating the initial claim about the Western pressure for reduction of the Africans' reproductive rate. The fear of being infected became so strong, that people ignored completely the traditional obligation to adopt the children of their passed away because of AIDS relatives. Many children were then abandoned or taken to orphanages.

Although rural community members are usually positive towards modern life and transformations (Fig. 3, 4), some people claim that these changes are taking place at a cost of cultural loss. 'Rapid

changes in social life have in local discourses are liked cultural chaos and fragmentations particularly in sexual and reproductive sphere of young people' (Haram 2018: 259). In some communities, the Meru being an example, people associate the new lifestyle with the spread of AIDS. The AIDS epidemic caused visual transformations in the Meru's mourning behavior. 'Nowadays with high ratio of deaths due to AIDS in Meru community, traditional mourning obligations and expression of sad feelings together with bereaved families become too heavy a burden' (Haram 2018: 259).

A higher mortality of men and women in childbearing ages, the fear of AIDS and the expanding number of orphans are associated by the local communities members with the negative aspects of the customary law. In patrilineal cultures, the death of a male household head threatened the continued land use rights of his wife and children who could be dispossessed by the deceased man's brothers (Akinola 2018; Bryceson 2019). In the households where both parents died, the children sought to join households of extended family members. However, the AIDS epidemic in certain regions has become so strong that caused depopulation of adults in economically active ages. This called to new forms of land tenure: land rental, labor-saving patterns of cropping, as well as selling of family lands.

For the last decade, though, the situation in Tanzania started to change. Recent generations of medicine against AIDS are more effective and provide better prospects for survival. Along with that, the activity of governmental and non-governmental organizations in Tanzania, which present and distribute easy-comprehended information about the causes and consequences of AIDS for carriers and their relatives in rural communities have resulted in the growth of knowledge and willingness to follow the medical instructions.

### **Opposition between young people and elder generations**

The opposition between the youth and the elders in the Meru is a typical case for most of the traditional cultures in Tanzania. The youth have affirmed the gains from the access to the global social networks and technological tools. They want to dress in modern clothes, eat different food and live in more comfortable houses. In the modern world, the young people do not respect elders on the basis of their age and experience any longer. The young generation do not want to speak the

Kirwa language and do not have the sense of duties for their culture. In fact, they do not share the collective cultural identity of the Meru. Although the traditional age-set system is still present, it is under transformation. In the past, every boy ready to enter the age-set system, along with circumcision had to be educated (socialized) in isolation from the community for a three month-period. The boys stayed together for all this time, creating strong solidarity within their group (Haram 2018). Today, most children are at school, they are circumcised in the hospital are and not isolated for three months anymore. The growth of individualism, personal freedom and rights was stimulated by globalization and general cultural changes in Tanzania. It created a painful opposition between the Meru youth and elders, who continuously argue that ‘individual freedom is a challenge for the Meru culture and collective identity’ (Bais 2017: 69).

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, globalization is currently causing serious social and cultural transformations that influence rural communities in the first rate. This conclusion is shared by Western and African scholars alike (Kasongo 2010; Yankuzo 2014). It is eroding the fundamental cultural elements of the personal as well as collective identity. As globalization is aimed at substitution and abandonment of the previous cultural factors, it challenges the survival of entire society in the rural areas. While the young people predominantly welcome globalization and view the modern way of life in urban regions as ideal, the elders associate the changing food habits with new diseases, changes in dressing code with amorality, modern houses with demonstration of superiority (Bais 2017: 87). An important aspect of changes under globalization concerns the age-set system as a form of social unity widely spread in Africa. Brought up in new cultural paradigms (boarding school education in a mixed ethnic environment, limited knowledge of local traditions and moral norms), young people in the rural communities do not want to follow the elders’ instructions, object their rights to give them orders and control over their life perspectives and choices. As commented by a respondent (respondent 2),

my children will hardly remain in the village, I see another life perspective for them: boarding school, university and work in a prestigious company here in Tanzania, but better abroad, in a European country or the

USA. The world is big and opened for the new generation, and if they work hard, they will have much better and more global prospects for their life than we had.

At the same time, all the informants from agriculturalist and agropastoralist ethnic groups without exceptions – the Haya, Meru, Chagga, and Pare – insisted that they would like to be buried in their own banana gardens, no matter how far away they live now and what their occupation is. They also firmly believed that this tradition would remain unchanged in the future generations, because ‘everyone should join relatives in the world beyond’ (respondent 8). On the contrary, pastoralists, the Datoga being an example, abandon households after burying their male owners there (Butovskaya and Dronova 2019), although they visit the graves of the deceased relatives, pray for them, and believe that they will join them after their own death.

### **Acknowledgements**

This chapter was prepared with support of the RSF, grant 18-18-00082. We thank the COSTECH for the permission to conduct field-studies in Tanzania, the Russian Center for Science and Culture for valuable help in our research over more than 14 years. Special thanks for our respondents and local people for their friendship and cooperation.

### **References**

- Akinola, A.O. 2018. Land Reform Question in South Africa: Rethinking the Feminization of Land. *Gender and Behaviour* 16 (3): 12130–12142.
- Almeriko, M.G. 2014. Food and Identity: Food Studies, Cultural, and Personal Identity. *Journal of International Business and Cultural Studies* 8: 1–7.
- Bais, H.A. 2017. *The Challenge of Globalization on the Traditions of Wameru (Varwa) Society of Tanzania*. M.A. thesis. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Beidelman, T.O. African and Classic Secrecy and Disclosure: The Kaguru of East Africa and the Ancient Greek. *Electronic Antiquity* 12 (1): 132–134.
- Berry, S. 2002. Debating the Land Question in Africa. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44 (4): 638–668.
- Berry, S. 2018. *Who Owns the Land? Social Relations and Conflict over Resources in Africa*. Berlin: Free University (GLOCON Working Paper No. 7).
- Binford, L.R. 1971. *Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Their Potential*. *American Antiquity* 36: 6–29.
- Bluwstein, J., Homewood, K., Lund, J.F., Nielsen, M.R., Burgess, N., Mshu, M., ... and Elisante, F. 2018. A Quasi-Experimental Study of Impacts of

- Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas on Rural Livelihoods and Wealth. *Scientific data* 5: 180087.
- Bondarenko, D.M. 2014. Historical Memory and Intercultural Tolerance: Students' Attitudes to the Colonialism-Born Minorities in Tanzania and Zambia. *Social Evolution and History* 13 (2): 97–118.
- Boni, S. 2005. *Clearing the Ghanaian Forest. Theories and Practices of Acquisition Transfer and Utilization of Farming Titles in the Sefwi-Akan Area*. Legon: Institute of African Studies Press.
- Boni, S. 2006. Indigenous Blood and Foreign Labor. The 'Ancestralization' of Land Rights in Sefwi, Ghana. In Kuba, R., and Lentz, C. (eds.), *Land and the Politics of Belonging in West Africa* (pp. 161–186). Leiden; Boston: Brill.
- Boni, S. 2010. 'Brothers 30,000, Sisters 20,000, Nephews 15,000, Nieces 10,000': Akan Funeral Ledgers' Kinship Values and Negotiations, and Their Limits. *Ethnography* 11 (3): 381–403.
- Bryceson, D.F. 2000. Peasant Theories and Smallholder Policies: Past and Present. In Bryceson, D.F., Kay, C., and Mooij, J. (eds.), *Disappearing Peasantries? Rural Labour in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (pp. 1–35). London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Bryceson, D.F. 2019. Gender and Generational Patterns of African Deagrarianization: Evolving Labour and Land Allocation in Smallholder Peasant Household Farming, 1980–2015. *World Development* 113: 60–72.
- Butovskaya, M.L., and Butovskiy, R.O. 2017. Masai Tanzanii: problemy ustoychivogo razvitiya na okhranyaemoy prirodnoy territorii Ngorongoro [The Maasai of Tanzania: Problems of Sustainable Development in Ngorongoro Conservation Area]. *Sibirskie istoricheskie issledovaniya* 3: 221–251.
- Butovskaya, M., Dronova, D. 2019. Pominal'nye tseremonii u datoga v kontekste edinogo sotsial'nogo prostranstva zhivyykh i myortvykh: etologicheskii analiz [Commemoration Ceremonies among the Datoga in the Context of a Single Social Space of the Living and the Dead: An Ethnological Analysis]. *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1: 42–64.
- Chauveau, J. 2000. La question foncière et construction nationale en Côte d'Ivoire. Les enjeux silencieux d'un coup d'état. *Politique africaine* 78: 94–125.
- Dercon, S., Hoddinott, J., Krishnan, P., and Woldehanna, T. 2008. Collective Action and Vulnerability: Burial Societies in Rural Ethiopia. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (CAPRI Working Paper No. 83).
- Fortes, M. 1965. Some Reflections on Ancestor Worship in Africa. In Fortes, M., and Dieterlen, G. (eds.), *African Systems of Thought: Studies Presented and Discussed at the Third International African Seminar in Salisbury, December, 1960* (pp. 122–142). London: Oxford University Press.



- Geschiere, P. 2009. *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship and Belonging in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gottlieb, J., Grossman, G., and Robinson, A.L. 2018. Do Men and Women Have Different Policy Preferences in Africa? Determinants and Implications of Gender Gaps in Policy Prioritization. *British Journal of Political Science* 48 (3): 611–636.
- Haram, L. 2018. ‘We are Tired of Mourning!’ The Economy of Dearth and Bereavement in Time of AIDS. In Robben, A.C.G.M. (ed.), *Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (pp. 250–262). Hoboken, NJ, USA: Wiley Blackwell.
- Harjula, R. 1969. *God and the Sun in Meru Thought*. Helsinki: The Finnish Society for Missiology and Ecumenics (Annals of the Finnish Society for Missiology and Ecumenics XVI).
- Hatfield, L. 2018. *Waste Not, Want Not: Using Source-Separated Urine to Cultivate Maize in the Southern Highlands, Tanzania*. M.A. thesis. Houghton, MI: Michigan Technological University. <https://digitalcommons.mtu.edu/etdr/583> (accessed May 3, 2019).
- Ibrahim, A.A. 2013. The Impact of Globalization on Africa. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3 (15): 85–93.
- Kamp, K.A. 1998. Social Hierarchy and Burial Treatments: A Comparative Assessment. *Cross-Cultural Research* 32 (1): 79–115.
- Kasongo, A. 2010. Impact of Globalization on Traditional African Religion and Cultural Conflict. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences* 2 (1): 209–322.
- Kavia, F., Loconto, A., and Simbua, E. 2016. Institutional Collaboration for Sustainable Agriculture: Learning from the Tea Sector in the Southern Highlands of the United Republic of Tanzania. In Losonto, A., Poisot, A., and Santacoloma, P. (eds.), *Innovative Markets for Sustainable Agriculture: How Innovations in Market Institutions Encourage Sustainable Agriculture in Developing Countries* (pp. 303–326). Rome: FAO/INRA.
- Kelsall, T. 2003. Rituals of Verification: Indigenous and Imported Accountability in Northern Tanzania. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 73 (2): 174–201.
- King, L. E. 2019. Elephants and Bees Using Beehive Fences to Increase Human–Elephant Coexistence for Small-Scale Farmers in Kenya. Human–Wildlife Interactions. In Frank, B., Glikman, J.A., and Marchini, S. (eds.), *Turning Conflict into Coexistence* (pp. 216–241). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kopytoff, I. 2018. Ancestors as Elders in Africa. In Robben, A.C.G.M. (ed.), *Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (pp. 250–262). Hoboken, NJ, USA: Wiley Blackwell.

- Kuba, R., and Lentz, C. (eds.). 2006. *Land and the Politics of Belonging in West Africa*. Leiden: Brill.
- Lane, C. 1996. *Pastures Lost: Barabaig Economy, Resource Tenure, and the Alienation of Their Land in Tanzania*. Nairobi: Initiatives Publishers, Initiatives Ltd.
- Last, M. 1988. Charisma and Medicine in Northern Nigeria. In O'Brien, D.C., and Coulon, C. (eds.), *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam* (pp. 183–204). Oxford: Clarendon.
- Lentz, C. 2013. *Land, Mobility, and Belonging in West Africa*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Marshall, R. 2009. *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mazzucato, V., and Kabki, M. 2008. Migrant Involvement in Community Development. The Case of the Rural Ashanti Region, Ghana. In Spaan, E., Zommers, A. and Naerssen, T. van (eds), *Global Migration and Development* (pp. 150–171). London: Routledge.
- McCabe, J., Perkin, S., and Schofield, C., 1992. Can Conservation and Development be Coupled among Pastoral People? An Examination of the Maasai of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania. *Human Organization* 51 (4): 353–366.
- Mungure, J.E. 2002. *Chungu (Nungu) as a Curse in Traditional Religion among Wameru of the ELCT-Meru Diocese*. Tanzania: Tumaini University.
- Nelson, F., Foley, C., Foley, L.S., Leposo, A., Loure, E., Peterson, D., ... and Williams, A. 2010. Payments for Ecosystem Services as a Framework for Community-Based Conservation in Northern Tanzania. *Conservation Biology* 24 (1): 78–85.
- Oomen, B. 2005. *Chiefs in South Africa. Law, Power and Custom in the Postapartheid Era*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Oyama, S. 2016. Guardian or Misfeasor? Chiefs' Roles in Land Administration under the New 1995 Land Act in Zambia. In Moyo, S., and Mine, Y. (eds.), *What Colonialism Ignored. 'African Potentials' for Resolving Conflicts in Southern Africa* (pp. 105–136). Bamenda; Buea: Langaa RPCIG.
- Reining, P. 1965. *The Haya: The Agrarian System of a Sedentary People*. Ph.D. thesis. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Rweyemamu F. 2017. Govt Taken to East African Court over Ngorongoro Land Crisis. *The Citizen*. October 3, 2017. <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/news/govt-taken-to-east-african-court-over-ngorongoro-land-crisis/1840340-4122904-m5xqvc/index.html> (accessed May 3, 2019).
- Smith, D.J. 2004. Burials and Belonging in Nigeria: Rural-Urban Relations and Social Inequality in a Contemporary African Ritual. *American Anthropologist* 106 (3): 569–579.

- Schultze-Kraft, M. 2018. *Serious and Organised Crime and Livelihoods Programmes. K4D Helpdesk Report*. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.
- Soares, B. 2005. *Islam and the Prayer Economy. History and Authority in a Malian Town*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Spear, T. 1997. *Mountain Farmers: Moral Economics of Land and Agricultural Development in Arusha and Meru*. Berkeley, CA; Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Stevens, L. 1991. Religious Change in a Haya Village, Tanzania. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 21 (1): 2–25.
- Sulle, E. 2017. *Of Local People and Investors: The Dynamics of Land Rights Configurations in Tanzania*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS Working Paper 10).
- Sulle, E., Lekaita, E., Massay, G., ... and Jacob T. 2016. Making Tanzania's National Land Policy Inclusive and People-Centred. Bellville, South Africa: PLAAS blog, 24 November. <https://www.plaas.org.za/blog/making-tanzania%E2%80%99s-national-land-policy-inclusive-and-people-centred> (accessed May 3, 2019).
- Witte, M. de. 2001. *Long Live the Dead! Changing Funeral Celebrations in Asante, Ghana*. Amsterdam: Aksant Academic Publishers.
- Wunder, S., Engel, S., and Pagiola, S. 2008. Taking Stock: Lessons Learnt for the Design of Payments for Environmental Services Programs. *Ecological Economics* 65: 834–852.
- Yankuzo, I.K. 2014. Impact of Globalization on the Traditional African Cultures. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* 15: 1–8.

### **Field Evidence Cited Interviews**

- Informant 1. Man. 46 y. Haya. Engineer. Dar es Salaam, 07.03.2019.
- Informant 2. Man. 50 y. Haya. Teacher. Bukoba. 08.03.2019.
- Informant 4. Man. 74 y. Haya. Farmer. Ziva Magaribi. 10.03.2019.
- Informant 7. Man. 40 y. Haya. Farmer. Ziva Magaribi. 11.03.2019.
- Informant 8. Man. 79. Haya. Professor. Kumuchama. 12.03.2019.
- Informant 9. Woman. 65 y. Farmer, midwife. Kumuchama. 14.03.2019.
- Informant 10. Woman. 73 y. Farmer. Haya. Kumuchama. 14.03.2019.
- Informant 11. Man. 83 y. Farmer. Haya. Kumuchama. 14.03.2019.
- Informant 12. Man. 45 y. Teacher. Haya. Kumuchama. 14.03.2019.
- Informant 14. Man. 81y. Pastor. Pare. Usa River. 20.03.2019.
- Informant 15. Man. 78 y. Pensioner, former agricultural specialist. Meru. Usa River. 23.03.2019.
- Informant 16. Man. 46 y. Haya. Professor. Zanzibar. 26.03.2019.

## RELIGION, HISTORY AND SOCIETY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

*Cecilia Pennacini*  
University of Turin

### **The context**

The spiritual life of the Great Lakes region is deeply rooted in its social history. Concepts related to spirits and to their relations with the living, together with the institutions regulating this domain, have been built slowly during the historical events that marked the formation of interlacustrine societies. The spirits of the ancestors, of deceased chiefs, heroes and heroines, of animals and other natural elements, together with those who mediated with them, played a fundamental role in local communities. The history of religion appears to be strictly related with the social and cultural processes taking place in the region. If we want to understand the present meaning of spiritual life in the area – that is still very vibrant – it is necessary to frame it in a historical perspective. A history to be observed in a regional scale, because single ethnic groups are changing realities constantly emerging and disappearing, overlapping and mixing together in a continuous flux of exchange. That is why the fundamental social and cultural processes affecting the area become clear only if we adopt a wider geographical and temporal perspective.

The region presents itself as a relatively homogeneous cultural and linguistic area. Inhabitants speak languages belonging to the interlacustrine Bantu cluster, that are partly reciprocally understandable. From the first millennium before Christ, communities engaged in an agricultural economy based on the cultivation of cereals and tubers, later integrated by different species of banana and plantains (*musa*) imported from South-East Asia and the Indian Sub-Continent (Lejju et al. 2006; Schoenbrun 1998: 80). Moreover, cattle herding became intensive at the end of the first millennium, when some groups occupied the savannahs that were favourable for grazing: ‘The growth of banana farming and specialized pastoralism marked an important break in the region’s history’ (Schoenbrun 1998: 77). This process would eventually lead to the formation of an integrated agro-pastoral system,

which is unique in Africa: agriculturalists and herders would become interdependent in the economic, social and cultural domain (Chrétien 1986: 259). The system allowed an abundant food production that would sustain the emergence – around the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century – of centralized societies based on complex bureaucratic and ritual systems (the kingdoms of Bunyoro, Toro, Nkore, Mpororo and Buganda among others), while other societies maintained different political organizations based on clans or chiefdoms (for example, the Bakiga, the Bakonzo and the Banande).

The socio-economic integration of agnatic groups, speaking closely-related languages, brought about the internal development of single societies. In specific areas groups joined forces to start a centralisation process leading to the formation of kingdoms. This new political system spread in similar forms all over the region. A sacralised conception of monarchy, connected to a symbolic and ritual complex, was at the core of the system. At the same time, the region reached a remarkable integration in the religious domain: spirit possession became a fundamental mechanism granting communication with spirits of deceased beings. Moreover, the cults contributed to the conservation of the historical and mythological memories of the past.

It is still common in the Great Lakes region to come across mediums and ritualists possessed by different categories of spirits<sup>1</sup>: clan ancestors, spiritual beings related to the natural environment, deceased chiefs, kings, heroes and heroines, national divinities connected to kingdoms. These spiritual presences manifest themselves during rituals performed by mediums at the shrines and sacred places present all over the region. Rituals transmit the traces of the past through generations. To unravel the tangled skein made by these complex and various spiritual traditions, we must thus retrace the most important moments of the history of interlacustrine societies, where spirits, mediums and religious beliefs are inextricably connected with the political life of the courts<sup>2</sup>.

Comparing the information contained in oral tradition and rituals with the lexico-statistic, glotto-chronological and archaeological data, it is possible to describe the characteristics of the cult system in particular areas and in specific periods. At the same time this approach can outline the evolution of the bigger picture. A picture characterized at the political level by the rise and progressive development – be-

tween the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – of important state formations that replaced the old social organizations based on kinship. Alongside this process, the religious landscape evolved.

### **The clan period**

Before the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which marks the emergence of the kingdoms, interlacustrine societies were organized according to kinship. The descent system, that continued to be extremely important even after political centralization, was based on patrilineal, exogamic clans: ‘We should recognize that the most ancient social structures, in addition to domestic nucleus and restraint lineages, were wholes combining kinship, exogamy, a symbolic code and solidarity rules, that since the 19<sup>th</sup> century are called clans’ (Chrétien 2000: 71, 72). But the meaning of the Gaelic term ‘clan’, adopted in anthropology to define unilineal descent groups, is slightly different from the words used in interlacustrine languages for these entities: *oruganda* in Runyakitara<sup>3</sup>, *umuryango* in Kirundi<sup>4</sup>, *ubwoko* in Kinyarwanda<sup>5</sup>, and *ekika* in Luganda. All these words indicate the agnatic descent group without strict reference to blood or genetic transmission. The clan is conceived as a category associating members of the patrilineal group with a common ancestor. This association is obtained through filiation as well as adoption, or through other cultural means able to *create* kinship (for instance, the institutions of blood-brotherhood or joke-kinship). Moreover, members of the clan appear to be strongly tied to their *omuziro*<sup>6</sup>, a taboo regarding any contact with a specific animal or vegetable species. That is why literature on the area commonly speaks of totemic clans, referring to this prohibition marking the identity of the members of the group<sup>7</sup>.

We should also consider that clans are interethnic realities: identical clan names, connected with the same taboo, are spread all over the region and, moreover, include various social categories of people. As Justine Willis remarked (1997: 588), clans normally include both agriculturalists (called *bairu* in the Northern part of the region and *bahutu* in the South) and pastoralists (*bahima* or *batutsi*). Even pygmies (*batwa* or *baswa*) are often members of clans bearing the same name, which are referred to different social categories despite the very pronounced hierarchy present in every interlacustrine society (Chrétien 2000: 74).

The most ancient religious practice (that is still alive today) is devoted to *misambwa*<sup>8</sup>, spiritual entities living in special spots characterized by impressive natural elements, such as rocks with unusual shapes, ancient trees, caves, waterfalls, lakes, rivers, etc. The *misambwa* dwell in those places sometimes acquiring the appearance of wild animals like water snakes, pythons, leopards, crocodiles, swarms of bees, and others. The origin of the *misambwa* cults seems to be connected with migrant groups settling in specific areas (Schoenbrun 1998). The first group who arrived in a region started a cult, taking control of the spirit living there (Schoenbrun 2006: 1426). Welbourn emphasizes that ‘The attachment of *misambwa* to localities is well attested’ (1962: 175) as the connection between these sacred places and the clan controlling the area.

The etymology of the word *misambwa* is referred to the verb *ku-samba*, meaning at the same time ‘to bless’ and ‘to judge, to give justice’ (Schoenbrun 1998: 200; 2006: 1414). The same Bantu root put in the passive form is widely used in interlacustrine languages to refer to natural spirits. These spirits do not have names or any anthropomorphic representation. They are identified with the earth that they enliven with their spiritual essence. Thanks to this mystical power, ritualists and mediums were able to bless and at the same time to judge the behavior of human beings living in the territory.

One of the most sacred place of the entire region is a rocky hill located in Munsu in central Uganda. In this place archaeologists were able to identify a settlement starting from the 10th Century. A complex of earthworks dated in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century, probably used as a fortification system to protect a court, was also discovered. Between 1988 and 1995 archaeologist Peter Robertshaw carried out several excavation campaigns in the area, finding various burial sites containing funeral outfits: beads, bracelets, iron tools and different prestigious objects. Signs of ritual and economic activities were also found. Oral tradition honours this site as the court of Prince Kateboha, a mythical figure belonging to the Bacwezi epic, an important tradition that spread all over the region since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the kingdoms emerged. But archaeological evidence clearly shows a previous occupation of the site, that could be connected with the *misambwa* cult.

Another ancient religious tradition is represented by cults devoted to deceased ancestors. Ancestors’ remains are buried in specific plots

that consequently become sacred. This practice should be associated to the sedentary transformation of societies. A slow transition from a settlement pattern based on an itinerant agriculture to a new system based on the intensive cultivation of bananas and plantains took place in various areas, probably after the first millennium. A new sedentary settlement pattern thus emerged, also changing the spiritual life of the group, as Hanson noticed referring to the formation of the Buganda Kingdom (2003):

Living in one location and cultivating the same land for a long period of time, even whole lifetimes, changed the transcendent aspects of life as well as the material ones. People developed new practices for remembering ancestors and elaborated the relationship of the living and the dead (Hanson 2003: 31).

Following this sedentary process, Baganda began to venerate the ancestral tombs located in the clan lands called *butaka*. As emphasized by Hanson, burying a growing number of ancestors in the same portion of land transformed the area into a *butaka*:

As the Baganda said, ‘*Ensi engula mirambo*’ – ‘Land is acquired through tombs’ ...A good *butaka* should contain about 10 bodies of chiefs, the length of time also make a difference, some *butaka* has 50 or 60 bodies in (Hanson 2003: 32–33).

A medium or a traditional healer was commonly in charge of the tombs located in the *butaka*, where he or she lived together with the family. Members of the descent group gather regularly on the spot to celebrate rituals and make offers to the ancestors, thus preserving the clan history. Spirits of the ancestors are called *mizimu* in the entire region. In a way that is not so different from natural spirits, *mizimu* are deeply rooted in the land which is then for this reason considered a property of the clan. The privileged relationship with these spiritual entities legitimates the authority of the clan upon the land. The presence of clan spirits – *mizimu* – and the control of territorial spirits – *misambwa* – establish clan’s land titles, not as material property but as the result of a mystical relation.

Moreover, spirits of deceased clan chiefs continued to exercise power on the land through the custodians of the tombs, so that the burial of the chiefs became a real system of land control: ‘The power of important buried ancestors to draw followers to the land around their graves helped to establish the pattern of access to land that came to



characterize the Ganda state' (Hanson 2003: 33). This process led to a progressive coalition of different clans, that associated on the basis of shared religious practices addressed to the spirits. More specifically, Hanson underlines the presence, in the period before the formation of Buganda kingdom, of important cult associations, as the one devoted to Kintu, a spirit originally venerated in the Magonga area by a group of clan members. Kintu catalyzed a group of faithful, to be later transformed into the mythical founder of the kingdom.

The cult of territorial spirits gave rise to the first form of authority known in the region: those who took care of the shrines dedicated to natural spirits and of ancestral burials seem to have exercised a power that includes spiritual, juridical and political prerogatives. A situation that would change around the 15<sup>th</sup> century in relation to several factors: local cults progressively abandoned their territorial root while medium and healers widened their influence in a supra-clanic dimension. Religious associations – like the one quoted for the Buganda region – were typical of an intermediate phase, in a process that ended in the reformulation of the political-religious organization and, eventually, in the emergence of the State.

### **Kubandwa: spirit possession**

Spirit possession, indicated with the term *kubandwa* in all interlacustrine languages, is a religious mechanism known since very ancient times, as the glotto-chronological analysis of the root shows (Schoenbrun 1998). *Kubandwa* is the passive form of the verb *kubanda*, meaning 'to exert a pressure from outside to inside' in several Bantu languages (Guthrie 1967, vol. 3: 28). Interlacustrine people use this expression as a metaphor to indicate that a spirit has taken possession of a person in order to speak through him/her. Around the beginning of the second millennium, spirit possession underwent a process of institutionalization thanks to the introduction of an initiation rite, meant to transform a common person into a medium committed to divination and healing (Schoenbrun 1998: 266–268).

The initiated medium (called *mandwa* or *embandwa* in the different languages spoken in the region) started to occupy a central place in the religious sphere, assuming a mediation role between the community and the spiritual world. The introduction of mediumship is an important step in the history of the interlacustrine religion: within this

new religious organization, spirits would detach themselves from the places where they used to dwell to proliferate in many sacred centers disseminated all over the region. The transition from the old system of territorial spiritual entities to the new landscape of ‘portable’ cults resulted in naming the spirits, an innovation giving them a fixed identity. Certain divinities show this transition in the traces of their territorial rooting, even if now they are venerated in a ubiquitous form. For example, Irungu (the deity of the uncultivated savannah where wild beasts live) and Mukasa (a god incarnating Lake Victoria) are strictly related to localized elements of nature. But at the same time they adopted the typical mobility of *kubandwa* cults:

Traditions about Mukasa reveal how transforming the territory of healing from local to exportable forms engaged several important aspirations...North Nyanzan and Rutaran societies, where these tales circulated, recognized Mukasa as a new sort of musambwa or mbandwa who was portable and capable of providing all the many sorts of fertility that people required: rain, children, pasture, and healthy soils. They did so around the turn of the first millennium... During this period, major settlements turned up in the formerly dry interior of the region, west of Lake Victoria, indicating a general increase in population densities after the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Schoenbrun 2006: 1430).

Mukasa continues to be associated to natural spirits: the water of the lake, the rainbow, thunder, wind or even some water animals. But its manifestations lost their territorial root starting to appear in various places, where mediums possessed by him are operating. The image of the wind is often used to describe the spirits of *kubandwa*, an idea that is close to the meaning of the Latin word *spiritus*. The change in religious conception is clear: spirits previously identified with rocks, trees, waterfalls, etc., became winds blowing everywhere, penetrating the people to occupy their bodies and speak through them.

The multiplication of ritual centers with their delocalized spirits produced another important innovation: mediums started to extend their authority beyond the limits of the clan, offering their services to people belonging to different groups of descents. This change gave rise to the new conception of an authority projected beyond the clan dimension. At the same time, ritualists and political chiefs started to separate their prerogatives. Societies evolved toward the emergence of

a centralized political system where religion and politics represent separate domains, controlling and limiting each other.

### **The Bacwezi complex**

The centralisation process that led to the advent of kingship lasted several centuries. During this period, a growing number of independent clans would be absorbed in the influence sphere of some dominant groups. Most authors associate this process with the arrival, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, of Nilotic-speaking groups coming from the North. By the way, various ecological and demographic factors contributed to the change (Robertshaw, Taylor 2000) that led to the formation of states.

Both oral tradition and cult practices testify this epoch-making transition, remembering it in the imaginary forms typical of these genres. The drama concerns the Bacwezi, semi-divine heroes who ruled over a wide empire called Kitara, later leaving it to dynasties still in power in the present kingdoms. This oral tradition was transcribed for the first time by British missionary Ruth Fischer (1911). Various characters take part in the story that starts with the Batembuzi, a divine clan sent on earth by Ruhanga, the creator, to populate and rule it. They created the Kitara, a kingdom described as occupying the entire Great Lakes region (Nyakatura 1947: 1). At a certain moment, the last Batembuzi king, Isaza, left for a trip entrusting a common human being, a goat keeper called Bukuku, to govern the empire. This passage of the myth evokes the entering of a commoner in the arena of power, that was previously controlled by a divine, aristocratic leadership. The episode could adumbrate a new conception of government based on a larger inclusion of different social groups.

Bukuku had a daughter, Ninyamwiru, born with only one eye and one ear. Despite this disability, Isimbwa – the son of the king – fell in love with her. They conceived a child who, after a number of adventures and having killed his grandfather Isaza, became king under the name of Ndahura. Son of a god and of a woman of the people, Ndahura is the founder of the Bacwezi dynasty. He would establish his capital on Mubende hill (now in Central Uganda), from where sight could extend over the vast empire. He reigned with his brothers, sons and nephews: Kyomya, Kagoro, Wamara, Ibona, Kiro, Mugenyi, Mulindwa and Mugasha: ‘These nine Bacwezi were not like other men, but were gods, for although they were born of

women they had un-ending life, and knew neither sickness or death' (Fisher 1970: 99).

The second and last Bacwezi king was Wamara, son and successor of Ndahura. His reign was marked by misfortune that completely destabilized the empire. In fact, a foreign diviner coming from the North pronounced a terrible omen reading the entrails of the sacred bull Bihogo:

A stranger crossed the courtyard and stood at the entrance of the house. He was dressed in skins of wild animals; his neck, head, and arms were laden with strange charms. As the king and witch-doctor looked up, he spoke to them thus, 'I am Nyakoko, the wise man of Bukidi; I hold intercourse with the gods, man, and devils. I know no limitation; Heaven, the world, and hell are open to me. If you want to understand the mystery of the ox Bihogo, take me to it ... My master, I foresee evil only. The body of the ox being empty, signifies that the rule of the Bacwezi is over, and the land is void; the entrails found in the head tell to me that you will still, however, exercise power over mankind; the others, found in the hoofs, mean that you will wander continually over the earth. The smut is a black-man, a barbarian, who will come and usurp the kingdom ... The drum of the gods will be beaten by a savage, and others of his kin will possess it after him' (Fisher 1970: 106-7).

The myth summons up two fundamental historical processes, compressing them in a short lapse of time. The first one recalls the end of the Bacwezi rule and the beginning of the Babito dynasty, probably identified with a Lwoo group coming from the North (Crazzolaro 1950: 69). All the royal dynasties presently reigning in the region claim to descend from the Babito, so that this passage adumbrates the emergence of the kingdoms. The second fundamental process is the birth of the Kubandwa religion, overshadowed by the image of the Bacwezi wandering forever on the land in a spiritual form, continuing to exercise power over their subjects through the mediums. The two processes – political centralisation and institutionalisation of mediumship – mark the definitive separation of the secular and religious domains. In the new landscape of the kingdom, religion would thus become a tool of balancing political power.

### **Kingdoms, capitals and shrines**

As a result of this long and complex process, the kingdom of Bunyoro appeared in the Northern part of the region around the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It

is the prototype of the interlacustrine kingdoms that were later founded in surrounding areas: Nkore, Karagwe, Toro, Buganda, Rwanda and Burundi among others. One of the most important features of these new political formations is the creation of centers and capitals. In Bunyoro, the king and his court resided in a settlement that included the royal compound and other palaces occupied by chiefs and functionaries. This capital, as the others that would emerge, englobed large cultivated plots and grasslands used for pasture thus integrating political functions and agro-pastoral activities. Centers were at the same time 'poles of authority and *carrefour* of human beings and things' (Chrétien 2004).

As in other African contexts, the capital was systematically destroyed and rebuilt at each sovereign's death, and sometimes even during his kingdom. The use of perishable building materials, the absence of a waste disposal system and, more generally, the inevitable deteriorating of hygienic conditions are factors that can partially explain the need to shift the capital. But, more specifically, the movement must be reconnected to the particular conception of kingship elaborated by interlacustrine states. The kingdom was strictly associated to the person of the king and to his body. For this reason, his death required the abandonment of the architectural structures created by him. In this way, each new king could recreate a new capital in another place, so that the entire territory of the kingdom would be disseminated by ritual centres built on the royal tombs, that often correspond to the places of the ancient capitals.

The tomb containing the relics of the royal body became a sort of capital of the deceased king, guarded by mediums possessed by his spirit. The sacred places disseminated on the territory thus represent the past and the memory of kingdoms. At the same time, these places escape the political control of the king, because mediums are seen as independent from political authority, being in their turn imbued by the mystical power of a spirit. In this way, a class of religious specialists, incarnating spirits and kings of the past, counterbalanced the power of the sovereigns.

In the kingdom of Buganda the separation of powers was clearly established: the world of the living, organized in a complex political and administrative architecture, depended on the spiritual world. The two worlds were opposite both in the spatial and in the temporal di-

mensions: the administrative system organized around the capital overlapped the network of temples and shrines dedicated to *mis-ambwa*, *lubaale* (ganda deities that substituted the Bacwezi in the local pantheon) and to the spirits of deceased kings. When the king died, ritualists and mediums took over, granting the reproduction of political power in the ritual dimension. So the king of Buganda, who exercised a power of life and death over his subjects, was thus subject to the mystical power of the spirits and of their mediums.

As Luc de Heusch observed (1987), the Great Lakes sovereigns were not considered divinities, but they were subject to a complex of rituals meant to sacralise them. During his life, the body of the king was treated as a sort of fetish incarnating the kingdom, its territory and its inhabitants. After his death, his spirit would become a member of the *bassekabaka*, the deceased *kabaka* (kings) that would maintain a spiritual court inside the shrines built on the sites of the ancient capitals. The transformation of a king into a royal spirit took place during the funeral rites.

The relics of the king (the jawbone, the genital organs and the cord considered as a twin of the king) are kept in the shrine. More than thirty royal sanctuaries containing the remains of kings belonging to the royal dynasty are thus kept by Baganda as their *lieux de memoire*. In absence of writing techniques, these places offered a sort of spatial representation of the history of the kingdom, where spirit possession brings back to life the ancient courts. So, in a *mise en scene* whose theatrical dimension is patent, time goes back for decades and centuries: history is displayed to the people.

Evoking the famous definition of theatre introduced by Antonin Artaud (1964), spirit possession cults represent in this context 'a double' of kingship. In the royal shrines, mediums in trance offer a lively personification of deceased chiefs and heroes during rituals, they enliven terrifying but at the same time grotesque and parodic representations of power. A mixture of fear, respect and scorn characterize the appearance of the spirits that are perceived as very ambiguous characters, bearing a power that can be alternatively used in a positive or a negative way. This ambiguity is in itself part of the conception of kingship: on the one hand its sacredness strengthens and legitimates it but, on the other, the mimetic, parodic meaning of spirit possession inevitably shows the limits of power.

## **The colonization of the minds**

The second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the Great Lakes region enter the world economy, facing a dramatic series of changes. After 1850, Arabized merchants coming from the coast or from the Northern regions reached the heart of the area with their caravans, looking for ivory and slaves and bringing firearms and other goods. Commerce developed thanks to the collaboration of local chiefs; many of them were soon converted to Islam, as *kabaka* Mutesa of Buganda did around 1867 (Médard 2007: 370). Mutesa then taught the inhabitants of the capital to fast, prey and read the Qur'an (Hanson 2003: 105).

A few years later, in 1877, representatives of the Church Missionary Society arrived in Buganda, called by explorer Henry Morton Stanley (who had visited the capital in 1874). In 1879, the Catholic Missionnaires d'Afrique decided to send their missionaries to the region as well. Thanks to Mutesa's extreme openness, representatives of Islam and of different Christian confessions (Protestantism and Catholicism) found hospitality and plots to cultivate inside the court, living side by side with the traditional religious specialists. But inevitably tensions started when European nations began to send agents to pursue their commercial and political interests. Religious, economic and political interference resulted in the destabilization of societies all around the region.

One of the most emblematic events of the crisis took place inside the Buganda capital in 1885, when Muslim and Christian pages were ordered to be massacred by king Mwanga II, who was trying in this way to demonstrate his power over subjects recently converted to the new religions. The episode marks the end of the pre-colonial era: as a matter of fact, its extreme violence legitimated the direct intervention of the British in what would soon become the Uganda Protectorate. The mass killing is remembered for the sanctification of the Catholic victims, who are worldwide known as the Uganda Martyrs. Suddenly it became clear that the arrival of new gods and different clergies were not harmless: the entire society was destined to change dramatically just like its religious landscape.

In the same period Germans took control of Rwanda-Urundi, while the Western side of the Rwenzori and Mitumba mountains fell under the control of Leopold II of Belgium. Everywhere in the region, Europeans took over and established their colonial administration. In

many fundamental sectors the new order relied upon the missionary work that governed very important aspects of social life, like schools and hospitals. Handling education, health and spiritual life, the missionaries played a crucial role in the transformation of social life, including gender, marriage, family models, labor division, etc. The 'missionary factor' (Oliver 1952) thus became a central element in the 'colonization of the consciousness' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991) that deeply affected the life of communities and individuals, while cultures and their transmission tools entered a process of rapid transformation.

A fundamental change resulted from the adoption of a new communicative medium, that is central in the 'Religions of the Book', namely writing. Writing and especially reading techniques were in fact required to obtain baptism. The introduction of the Sacred Scriptures meant a radical shift in the religious practice: local communities had to switch from spirit possession – a mechanism enabling them to communicate with the spirits of the dead and the gods through mediums – to a completely different system. In the new concept of religion imported from Europe, the faithful could not simply listen to the words of the gods pronounced by mediums (or watch their gestures during ritual performances); they had to read them in a sacred book. More generally, a communication system that was previously completely nested in orality was transformed into something different, where books and written documents became more and more important.

The attitude of the first missionaries and of the colonial administrators toward traditional religion was clearly destructive. The centrality of spirit possession in the Great Lakes religious system made it impossible for the missionaries to consider it compatible with the Gospel. Christianity rejected mystical tradition based on trance a long time before, recognizing only few ecstatic intellectual experiences (like the one experienced by some medieval and renaissance saints). Consequently, spirit possession was considered devil's work that called for exorcism. In the colonies, African ancestral spirits as well as royal and natural ones, all underwent a process of demonization that resulted in the forced confiscation or destruction of religious objects, seen as idols or fetishes of the false gods, while possession cults started to be persecuted.



In the Uganda Protectorate a Witchcraft Ordinance was promulgated in 1912 to forbid all practices related to magic, spirit possession and, more generally, traditional healing, with the only exception of herbalism. The entire traditional cosmology underwent a violent and powerful attack. At the same time the new religions of the Book became extremely attractive for some practical reasons referred to the medical and technological knowledge imported by missionaries. The result was a wave of enthusiastic conversions to various Christian confessions. But people clearly could not renounce to the protection and to the sense of belonging emanating from the spirits of the past. Thanks to their polytheistic approach, they managed to continue to practice the old cults secretly, developing a sort of ‘schizophrenia’ that allowed them to follow both the traditional and the imported religions at the same time.

The ancient anti-hegemonic dimension of mediumship was re-discovered during the colonial rule. The few resistance movements that took place against the invaders were led by some mediums who were successful in catalysing the resentment of communities against the strangers. In 1919 an important rebellion broke out in the Rwenzori area. The ‘Abayora revolt’ was led by two chiefs and a medium, who would be hanged by the British who harshly repressed the revolt. In the same period in German Rwanda a woman called Muhumuza, mother of an unsuccessful claimant to the throne, started an important cult devoted to the feminine spirit of Nyabingi. With the support of local communities, she acted against king Musinga in a way that was interpreted as an anti-European political rebellion. She was then forced out of the country and eventually re-settled in the Uganda Protectorate proclaiming herself the Queen of Ndorwa (Vokes 2009). The British subsequently captured and imprisoned her until she died

These two examples once again show the subversive dimension of the *kubandwa* religion, a central feature of the cult as well as of the political traditional system of the Great Lakes. In the colony this ancient form of protest against the abuses of political leaders was used to try and limit the heavy interference of European rule, and for this reason ended to be violently repressed. But the idiom of spirit possession continued to play a very significant role in the politics of post-colonial states, as we will see in the next section.

## **Religion in post-colonial Interlacustrine societies**

During the process of decolonization that took place in the Sixties, religion played a very important political role in the different regional contexts. The fragmented religious landscape resulting from Christian and Islam conversions affected the transition toward the post-colonial period. Christianity in its diverse confessions and Islam had in fact deeply penetrated the social tissue, so that the forces that confronted each other in the political arena were sided along religious fractures. Moreover, modernity produced a sort of short-circuit that in some cases provoked violence and conflicts rooted in various forms of spiritual practices.

In the Buganda kingdom, the beginning of colonization had seen the formation of political factions created by Catholic, Protestant and Muslim converts who competed to control the court and the state. After the Martyrs' killings, converts had created different parties as a result of the development of missionary clientage (Low 1957); from this moment on the political arena in colonial Uganda would be organized along religious affiliations. Christians, and specifically Protestants, were the majority among the total Ugandan population, and they actively supported the British in the building and in the administration of the colony. As was in the pre-colonial past, the 'realm of faith' continued to be inseparable from political culture: during the colony and also in the post-colonial period, 'the architecture of state and society was in many ways defined in terms of spiritual allegiance' (Reid 2017: 329). Moreover, various movements of Christian renovation started in the Thirties to rediscover a 'real' African Christianity, as happened for the East African movement and later for Born Again (*Balokole*) Pentecostal churches. The religious landscape became more and more complex.

These various religious movements<sup>10</sup> tried to retrieve some aspects of the traditional African liturgy. The image of the Holy Spirit descending on the faithful who in turn fall into a trance speaking in tongues or having visions and dreams, are in fact very close to the traditional practice of spirit possession. This coincidence can in part explain the success of the renovated Christian movements in Sub-Saharan Africa. Contaminating the traditional mediumship institution with a sometime idiosyncratic interpretation of the Old and New Testament, these new religions deeply engaged in politics actualizing the characteristic political dimension of the cults.

As an example, the rise of the Holy Spirit Movement led by Alice Lakwena in Northern Uganda, in the 1980s, seems to put together the antagonistic prerogative of the medium tradition with the almighty power of the Christian God (Behrendt 1999). Already in 1986, when Yoveri Museveni came to power, Lakwena started her organized protest against him to be later defeated by the governmental forces. Lakwena's heir, Joseph Kony, took over her mission to lead the Lord's Resistance Army, that became ominously famous for the atrocities perpetrated on the civil population, and especially for the abduction of children forced to become soldiers. The reinterpretation of a subservice mediumistic tradition led to a humanitarian catastrophe (Finnstrom 2006).

Interpenetration of new and old beliefs sometimes produces scary short circuits even in everyday life, as happened in the last decades with new forms of black magic. Probably the most horrible of these practices is child sacrifice, a phenomenon that appeared in Uganda in the nineties, reaching his peak in the first decade of the new millennium<sup>11</sup>. Narrations related to it usually refer to the ritual killing of children whose body parts will be used in propitiatory practices connected with the construction of new modern buildings. The flesh and the blood buried under the foundations of the buildings are believed to improve the businesses which will take place there.

Beside the violent drift that sometime has marked the impact of modernity on the religious landscape, different developments can be observed in the region showing the vitality of the ancient spirituality. If the arrival of Arabs and Europeans provoked structural changes of the cultural and religious landscape, mediums and other ritualists and healers did not disappear. After the Witchcraft ordinance, they did not stop their practices but continued to operate although in secret inside the houses and during the night. In the nineties, kingdoms were restored in Uganda and traditional mediums and healers regained their dignity too, reaffirming their mystical powers in open air. The result was an important revival of pre-colonial spirituality, that was rediscovered and somehow reinvented in various forms. Ancient traditional shrines were again visited by a growing number of people, seeking a contact with their ancestral spirits.

Today the contemporary religious landscape is extremely rich and complex. It encompasses the pre-colonial cults which have been redis-

covered and often re-integrated with new spiritual entities brought from external traditions. The monotheistic faith to the Christian and Muslim god has been widely adopted, even if conversion is not perceived as exclusive. But besides the official confessions, a myriad of Pentecostal churches appeared in the last decades: they offer an immersive, totalizing experience to a growing number of faithful. In this plural context, each one can find a relation with the spirits, whether the ones of the family, of natural entities, of political and cultural leaders of the past, or of gods and saints imported from abroad. Affiliation to churches and religious denominations can change during the life of an individual, depending on actual contingencies. With its flexible, dynamic and somehow unpredictable dimension, religion continues to be a crucial factor of human existence in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For two decades, I have been carrying out research on the religious landscape of the Great Lakes region in the framework of the Italian Ethnological Mission in Equatorial Africa, a research group founded in 1979 thanks to the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this context, I was able to meet and interview many mediums, observing their religious practices in different areas of the region (Kagera, Buganda, Ssese islands, Rwenzori).

<sup>2</sup> To build this frame, I relied on a number of historical and ethno-historical researches that have appeared in the last decades: Cohen (1972; 1977), Buchanan (1974), Tantala (1989), Wrigley (1996), Schoenbrun (1998; 2006); Chrétien (2000), Hanson (2003), Doyle (2006), Médard (2007), Reid (2007), Kodesh (2011), to quote only a few authors.

<sup>3</sup> Pl. *enganda*.

<sup>4</sup> Pl. *imiryango*, literally ‘those who eat together’ (Rodegem 1970: 383).

<sup>5</sup> Pl. *amoko*.

<sup>6</sup> From the verb *okuzira*, meaning ‘to forbid’ (Murphy 1972: 648).

<sup>7</sup> For example, the ones who do not eat *nsenene* (grasshoppers or locusts), the name of an important clan in many interlacustrine societies.

<sup>8</sup> Sing. *musambwa*.

<sup>9</sup> Sing. *muzimu* (Murphy 1972: 396).

<sup>10</sup> Movements of Africanisation of Christianity are partly inspired by the reinterpretation of the Gospel elaborated in the Afro-American milieu of the US at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the Pentecostal movement started.

<sup>11</sup> 29 cases were enquired by the police in 2009, but much more clearly remained unknown.

## References

- Artaud, A. 1938. *Le théâtre et son double*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Behrendt, H. 1999. *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits: War in Northern Uganda, 1985–97*. Nairobi: Eastern African Studies.
- Buchanan, C. 1974. *The Kitara Complex. The Historical Tradition of Western Uganda to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*. Ph.D. thesis. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.
- Buchanan, C. 2004. Les capitales royales de l'Afrique des Grands Lacs peuvent-elles être considérées comme des villes? *Journal des Africanistes* 74 (1-2): 277–298.
- Chrétien, J.P. 2000. *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Deux mille ans d'histoire*, Paris : Flammarion.
- Cohen, D. 1972. *The Historical Tradition of Busoga. Mukama and Kintu*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Cohen, D. 1977. *Womunafu's Bunafu*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Comaroff, J., and Comaroff, J. 1991. *Of Revelation and Revolution*. Vol. I. *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Crazzolara, J.P. 1950. *The Lwoo*. Pt. I–II. Verona: Missioni Africane.
- De Heusch, L. 1987. *Écrits sur la royauté sacrée*. Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université.
- Doyle, S. 2006. *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro: Population and Environment in Western Uganda, 1860–1955*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Finnstrom, S. 2008. *Living with Bad Surroundings: War, History, and Everyday Moments in Northern Uganda*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Fisher, R. 1911. *Twilight Tales of Black Baganda*. London: Marshall Brothers.
- Guthrie, M. 1967. *Comparative Bantu*. Vol. 1–4. Amersham: Gregg Press.
- Hanson, H. 2003. *Landed Obligation. The Practice of Power in Buganda*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Kodesh, N. 2010. *Beyond the Royal Gaze. Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda*. Charlottesville, VA; London: University of Virginia Press.
- Lejju, J.B., Robertshaw, P., and Taylor, D. 2006. Africa's Earliest Bananas? *Journal of Archaeological Science* 33 (1): 102–113.
- Low, D.A. 1957. *Religion and Society in Buganda, 1875–1900*, Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research.
- Médard, H. 2007. *Le royaume du Buganda au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris: Karthala.
- Murphy, J.D. 1972. *Luganda-English Dictionary*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.

- Nyakatura, J.W. [1947] 1973. *Anatomy of an African Kingdom. A History of Bunyoro-Kitara*, New York: NOK Publishers.
- Oliver, R. 1952. *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, London: Longmans, Green & Co.
- Pennacini, C. 2013. *Kubandwa. La possessione spiritica nell'Africa dei Grandi Laghi*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Torino: Trauben.
- Reid, R. 2017. *A History of Modern Uganda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robertshaw P., and Taylor, D. 2000. Climate Change and the Rise of Political Complexity in Western Uganda. *The Journal of African History* 41 (1): 1–28.
- Rodegem, F.M. 1970. *Dictionnaire Rundi-Français*. Tervuren: MRAC.
- Schoenbrun, D. 1998. *A Green Place, a Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender, and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Schoenbrun, D. 2006. Conjuring the Modern in Africa: Durability and Rupture in Histories of Public Healing between the Great Lakes of East Africa. *American Historical Review* 111 (5): 1403–1439.
- Tantala, R. 1989. *The Early History of Kitara in Western Uganda: Process Models of Religious and Political Change*. Ph.D. thesis. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.
- Vokes, R. 2009. *Ghost of Kanungu. Fertility, Secrecy and Exchange in the Great Lakes of East Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Welbourne, F.B. 1962. Kibuuka Comes Home. *Transition* 2 (5): 15–17, 20.
- Willis, J. 1997. Clans and History in Western Uganda: A New Perspective on the Origins of Pastoral Dominance. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30 (3): 583–600.
- Wrigley, C. 1996. *Kingship and State. The Buganda Dynasty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN AFRICA FROM A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE

*Pino Schirripa*

Sapienza University of Rome

### **The African religious movements and Africanist anthropologies**

The analysis of African prophetic movements, and mainly of those that we can at first define as Christian syncretic churches, represented a privileged locus of studies of religious anthropology and, at different times in the history of our discipline, they were also a good viewpoint from where to work at the elaboration and verification of more general theoretical and methodological proposals. As Birgit Meyer pointed out in a critical review of research on African prophetic movements: ‘Ever since African Independent Churches became a central research focus for anthropologists in the 1960s, these churches have not only formed fascinating research locations but also have been major sites for more general theoretical reflection and innovation in anthropology’ (Meyer 2004: 447).

This is what happened in the 1960s, when in the anthropological studies, through the analysis of the Christian churches and prophetic movements in the colonial context, emerged an analytical perspective that was attentive to the dynamics of social and cultural changes taking place in the continent. Anthropology had shifted its attention from social equilibrium to those changes brought by independence and the birth of the new postcolonial states. The studies proposed in those years by Sundkler (1961), Lanternari (1960), Barret (1968), Peel (1968), to quote some of the most significant authors<sup>1</sup>, made a fundamental contribution to the development of theoretical alternatives to the dominant structural-functionalist model that showed all its limitations in the analysis of social change.

Those anthropological works put at the center of their analysis the idea that the churches were a fundamental place of investigation for better understanding of the vast social and cultural changes that were taking place on the continent. By abandoning the idea of societies in perpetual equilibrium, anthropology then posed new questions and developed researches that highlighted the continent’s extreme social

and cultural dynamism. Such researches, as is the case of the school of Manchester and Balandier, took place in context from the rural areas where the researches were used to be carried out, that is to say the new urban reality. The churches were a visible and tangible novelty, which combined in a creative way traditional forms of religiosity with others imported from the preaching of missionaries from Western historical denominations. Scholars focused on the analysis of religious movements because they represented a dynamic and creative response to the colonial situation, effectively opposing to a sterile re-proposal of traditional cultural values, as well as a supine acceptance of Western models. From the point of view of the history of religious anthropology, these studies have however marked a moment of radical rupture with the past, precisely because they have made fundamental the problem of how local populations reacted to social change, and how they made it thinkable and interpretable.

After that, the African churches remained a locus of research and analysis for anthropologists (see Fernandez 1978; Ranger 1986), certainly also because of their rapid and impetuous spread: if in 1968 Barret surveyed 6,000 churches in the continent (Barret 1968), in the following decades these became some tens of thousands and the number of their members dramatically increased. The post-colonial ethnographies on the religious movements have mainly highlighted the aspects related to the political role of the churches; the Africanization of Christian discourse; but above all they have investigated their therapeutic character, following in this their characterization as 'healing churches'. However, although research and analysis seem to be carried out almost without interruption, it must be said that they have gradually lost their centrality in the wider anthropological debate, which focused on different issues.

We will have to wait for Jean and John L. Comaroff's studies to make African churches again a focal point for formulating new analytical and theoretical proposals (Comaroff J. 1985; Comaroff J. and Comaroff J.L. 1991; 1997). In their texts, through an ethnography that lays in a rigorous historical analysis, the Comaroffs question the essentializations linked to the rigid opposition between Africa and the West, thus dismissing a certain way of understanding the syncretism that had prevailed since then, and above all putting in light of how through a historical study it was possible to investigate the 'long dia-



logue' between missionaries, merchants, colonial administrators and local populations that is refracted and reflected precisely in the preaching of African churches. Therefore, African churches no longer were only a place of creative synthesis between native traditions and a new set of religious ideas that, inevitably, is an exogenous result, but rather became a locus of cultural exchange and catalyst for instances of protest and resistance. In this way, the analysis of the phenomena of resistance and protest is carried out in a historical perspective that takes into account the overall history of these populations and, at the same time, strives to overcome the dichotomy between heuristic perspectives centered on the local or global.

The study of African churches over the last few decades thus takes on a strongly historical dimension, which tends to read the phenomenon over a longer period. The contents of the preaching fit into a more articulated analysis of the colonial context, and more complex meanings are brought to light. Above all, it reflects on how such preaching is central to the construction of a project of African modernity. It is in these terms that Dozon reads the Ivorian prophetism in its development from William Wade Harris onwards (Dozon 1995). In this case, the analysis of the prophetisms is done through a very broad historical perspective. The result is an analysis that takes into account the complex relationships that were woven into the colonial society among the prophets, the local population and the colonial power. The dichotomy, typical of classical anthropology, even of a dynamic nature, between colonial power and the submissive indigenous world gives way to more composite images of these societies. The prophetisms are born and develop in a dynamic situation, in which they are also used as instruments of the internal class struggle within the indigenous world and at the same time weave ambivalent relations with the colonial power, first, and with the political power of the Independent Ivory Coast, later.

Dozon underlines how the prophets are the religious products of modernity, noting how the great divide between tradition and modernity that had been the basis of the studies of the previous decades had to be overcome. It is from this perspective, and having distanced himself from the studies that on that great divide had built the analysis of independent churches, that Dozon seems to prefer the definition of 'synthetic churches' to that of 'syncretic churches' because synthetic refers to

[...] a capacity for synthesis, a disposition to integrate new data and make the necessary readjustments [...]. Better than the qualification of synthetic, also associated with the idea of a simple *mélange*, their way of proceeding is better defined as synthetic precisely because of this double work of interpretation which gives rise to new religions (Dozon 1995: 11–12, the present author's translation from French).

### **Preach the gospel, face modernity**

So the most recent analyzes are enriched by a deeper chronological perspective and above all render a more complex image of the relationships and social dynamics within the colonial and post-colonial societies. At the same time, it should also be emphasized that in these years the ethnographies have not only returned a composite image of these movements, but have also shown that they may face, in a pluralistic way, new questions posed by the current economic and social dynamics that crosses the African continent. These vary from the crisis of state intervention, the great economic restructuration ordered by the International Monetary Fund policy, to the more general questions related to the globalization of goods and the labor market. I will say more on that in the last section.

The restructuration of African economies, the emergence of even more strident social inequalities, as well as the great movements of people across the continents that characterize the last decades, have found an immediate confirmation in preaching, theologies and organizations of these churches. The figure that emerges is that of the incessant movement of preachers and the redeployment of churches in new territories. However at the same time the re-signification of the contents of the preaching that allows us to think of modernity both in terms of access to prosperity and of critical discourse on the (im)morality of exchange and the neoliberal economy.

André Mary emphasizes:

Christianity has never had such a planetary dimension and at the same time such a plurality. This happens today thanks to this 'reverse' evangelization movement that brings a revitalized Christianity from its African sites to investing European and American capitals, think of the Ghanaian Pentecostalism in Amsterdam, the Beninese Christian Heaven in Paris, or the success of Monsignor Milingo in Rome. At the same time African cities become the mission land of Brazilian or Korean neo-Pentecostals, or Africans rediscover the spiritual values of their *négritude* through the

'black' American movements (Mary 2000: 118, the present author's translation from French).

In fact, a composite image emerges from contemporary literature on African religious movements and it is difficult to trace the current effervescence back to a common denominator. Moreover the contemporary images of the preachers of these churches, as well as the contents of their speeches refer to a universe of meanings and practices far from the one outlined by the ethnographies of past decades; underlines Birgit Meyer:

Nothing can better evoke what is at stake than the salience of the contrast between the familiar image of African prophets from Zionist, Nazarite, or Aladura churches, dressed in white gowns, carrying crosses, and going to pray in the bush, and the flamboyant leaders of the new megachurches, who dress in the latest (African) fashion, drive nothing less than a Mercedes Benz, participate in the global Pentecostal jetset, broadcast the message through flashy TV and radio programs, and preach the Prosperity Gospel to their deprived and hitherto-hopeless born-again followers at home and in the diaspora. (Meyer 2004: 448).

I would like, however, to focus on some examples that can perhaps better make sense of the current dynamics, especially as to how these movements respond to the questions posed by globalization and economic restructuring. To do this I will refer to two specific ethnographic cases that can illustrate the different ways in which, by preaching the gospel, these churches narrate – or rather interpret and rebuild – the modernity of late capitalism as it appears in Africa.

Before proceeding, however, it is good to specify how I intend to use a controversial, and in many ways ambiguous, term of 'modernity'. Then I would like to better describe the current Christian landscape in Africa. After that, I will go on with the two examples.

In the introduction to *Modernity and Its Malcontents* Jean and John L. Comaroff (1993) state that modernization would be the last great narrative of the modern West. The only one that still resists. The great narrative, as understood by Lyotard, is the instrument that in the modern West has given political and social validation to knowledge. The great narratives are nothing but the great theoretical and rhetorical systems (the realization of the Spirit; the equality of opportunities of citizens in the market society; the classless society) that legitimized the societies or the criticism of them and oriented the action. Today

these great systems of thought are in crisis, they do not provide universal legitimacy and validation and do not orient actions.

In our post-modern era, the totalizing form of the great systems of thought has given way to partial, provisional, local knowledge. Yet, the Comaroffs say, the great narrative of modernization resists. It consists of 'a narrative that replaces the protean and unequal relations between 'us' and 'others' in the history of the world, with a simple, epic story of the transition from the savage to civilization, from the mystic to the worldly' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: XII).

The polemical target of the Comaroffs is the teleology implicit in the modernization paradigm, which reads modernization as a progressive approach to the Western model. The introduction of the market society, and more generally of the values of the West, would entail an approach to modernity as it has historically been configured in the Euro-American West. Such a vision is now called into question by those who insist on the plurality of modernity (coining the English neologism of modernities). Assuming the multiplicity of modernities (understood as peculiar historical experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere) means agreeing on the fact that there is a construction and reconstruction of multiple cultural programs and social arrangements, which cannot be seen as a progressive reduction to a dominant model. In this sense, the notion of multiple modernities has in itself implicated the rejection of the paradigm of modernization.

So far, I have talked in general terms of African Christian movements, however, it should be noted that such a wide definition is not only inaccurate but a harbinger of possible misunderstandings and misinterpretations. In reality, the African Christian religious landscape is very diverse and cannot be traced back to a dichotomy between what comes 'from outside', that is the historical denominations of mostly Protestant or Catholic matrix, and what is instead 'born there' from the local reworking of missionary preaching. In fact, the long dialogue between Christianity, in its various forms, and the local African world has given rise to different configurations, not attributable to a unidirectional movement. An aspect that in fact is increasingly highlighted by recent investigations is the process of vernacularization that even the practices and preaching of historical denominations have known in the African continent (Meyer 2004).

It should be emphasized that the panorama of African Christian religious movements has changed considerably in recent decades. One of the most evident data is the substantial growth of Pentecostalism, a phenomenon that is also noted on a planetary scale (Robbins 2004). These are churches that arrived in Africa in different waves before and after the Second World War, thanks above all to the action of preachers from Europe and the United States and, in recent years, also from the countries of the Far East.

In many ways, these churches share many of the distinctive features of charismatic ones – the name with which independent African churches are designated in recent years –: preaching against witchcraft and therapeutic action above all. In their preaching, however, the Pentecostal movements accentuate some elements: the charisma of the Holy Spirit, as a gift to all the faithful – and among these mainly that of speaking in tongues – the complete break with the past – understood primarily as a break with the native African traditions (Meyer 1997) –, preaching against witchcraft and occult forces, strong ties with the global international network of Pentecostalism. This is not just a financial link, even though several African Pentecostal churches receive money from North American or Eastern Pentecostal churches, in fact often non-African preachers participate in the conversion crusades that the African Pentecostal churches periodically organize in the large urban conglomerations of the continent.

It is difficult to draw a clear line that makes it possible to distinguish the Pentecostal churches from the charismatic ones, and in any case, it would be an almost taxonomic operation that is not very useful for understanding the current religious dynamics in Africa. Instead, it is a matter of accounting for a magmatic situation, where the boundaries between denominations are fluid and where there is a continuous exchange of elements. For this reason, those who concentrate on the analysis of this phenomenon often prefer to speak of Pentecostal-charismatic churches (Meyer 2004; Robbins 2004), thus emphasizing the unitary character of this phenomenon<sup>2</sup>.

In her analysis of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, Birgit Meyer highlights two elements that appear to be central to the discussion I am pursuing here.

Pentecostal churches throughout the continent make extensive use of technological tools, above all new media ones. Often their message

is transmitted via radio or television broadcasts, but in addition, taking advantage of a considerable reduction in production costs due to the spread of new digital technologies, there is – at least in the western part of the continent – a considerable production of movies. The main contents of these productions can be summarized in the concept of regeneration of the individual with the conversion to Pentecostalism; and the constant action of the devil in the life of individuals, from which one can escape only through the blessing of God most often found in the preaching of the Pentecostal pastors. I would like to summarize two examples taken from Birgit Meyer’s research.

In her fieldwork in Ghana Meyer has often noted that one of the fulcrums of preaching was the total break with the past that an individual must perform at the time of conversion. In fact, such a preaching would seem to be in line with the Pentecostal ideology, given that the convert, at the time of his baptism, which marks full entry into the community, becomes a born again. Born again because he was born into life in communion with God, and therefore born as a different individual from what he had been in the past. It should be emphasized that different scholars point out that this is absolutely consistent with the individualistic idea of salvation of Pentecostalism and that this very idea is one of the central elements of the success of such churches in the context of neoliberal Africa.

In the case of Pentecostalism – in Ghana as elsewhere – the past to which the predications refer is not only the individual one. In preaching, as well as in the practices of exorcism and healing, which serve among other things to cleanse individuals from sins committed before conversion and whose negative effects are still present, pastors and their assistants operate on a broader chronological and social scale which goes beyond the individual and takes into account the history of his family and his group. What is being questioned is therefore not only the past of the individual, but also the past of his larger family group and the historical past of the country. As Meyer points out: ‘The appeal to “time” as an epistemological category enables Pentecostals to create a rift between “us” and “them”, “now” and “then”, “modern” and “traditional” and, of course, “God” and the “Devil”’ (Meyer 1997: 317). Breaking with the past therefore allows them to create a wider horizon in which ‘God’, ‘now’ and ‘modern’ are found on the same level; in this way the pre-colonial past, the time in which their ances-

tors were pagans, is rejected as sinful and therefore a harbinger of negativity, illness, poverty. Through the break with the past, seen as 'devil', the Pentecostal declination of modernity is built and designed.

The presence of the devil in the construction of narratives and more generally of Pentecostal discursive practices, is not found however only in the negative conceptualization of the past. The devil is an element constantly present in preaching and, together with witchcraft, provides the material on which a metaphorical discourse concerning modernity is built. A modernity that is questioned and subject to critical reflections, above all as regards the morality of the exchange.

In one of her articles, Meyer (1995) analyzes various testimonies of individuals who have had to deal with witchcraft, often to obtain money magically, and for this reason they have been somehow persecuted by the devil. Their salvation is linked to frequenting Pentecostal churches. One of these stories tells of an individual who, in order to get rich, orders a sorcerer to kill his mother and his brother through a magical assault. In this way, he can inherit the wealth of the family. Once this is done, the magic art of the sorcerer also allows him to improve his business. All this was due to a living snake, on which the sorcerer had worked magically, which the man had to wear as a belt. The fortune that accompanied the man in his business lasted for some time but then things took another direction. One morning he forgot to wear his magic snake, and it remained free, wandered around the house, and bit his youngest daughter who died poisoned. Shocked by the fact, the man entered a Pentecostal prayer group and managed to get rid of the evil influence of the sorcerer before it destroyed his family. This kind of narration is not uncommon in Ghana, often such stories are found in the popular press. In her essay, Meyer also reports a passage from a very famous film in Ghana, *Diabolo*. Although it is a fiction, the film takes up narrative themes that are widespread in the urban culture of the country. In the scene in question, a man approaches a prostitute; after agreeing for a sexual performance for a very high amount, the two go to an elegant villa. There, after drinking a strange concoction, the man turns into a python and in this form, he violates the girl. In the next scene, the man resumed his normal appearance and the girl, sitting next to him, begins to vomit money. When she eventually comes out of the man's house and reaches her home, she dies spewing blood and some more coins.

The two stories reported here both refer to an acquisition of money and other wealth through magical practices. As Meyer points out, it is necessary to read these narratives within a social context, such as the Ghanaian one following the structural adjustment programs that the International Monetary Fund has imposed on many African economies, characterized by a great imbalance in the distribution of resources and above all by a widespread poverty. The stories that tell of enrichments through Satan give an account of the ambiguous relationship that is established with wealth; on the one hand the strong desire to possess the money that allows to reach the foreign goods of which the country is filling up, on the other – by correlating the enrichment with the evil action – they propose a critical look at the (im)morality of the economic forms dominant in the country: those of modern global capitalism.

According to Meyer ‘Pentecostalism is as popular as it is in Ghana because it supplies people with an image of the Devil which can be used not only to demonise traditional gods and ghosts but also to diabolise negative aspects of the capitalist world economy’ (Meyer 1995: 250). Such narratives are a clear example of how through discourses linked to the risk of magical aggression – but also to salvation, with conversion to the Pentecostal faith – a highly critical metaphorical discourse is proposed with respect to the existing social situation.

The ambiguous relationship with wealth, as well as enrichment, is a constant figure in the preaching of churches. On the one hand, in fact money, and even more goods, are seen as a means that the devil uses to intensify his malign influence on the world, on the other goods and money are the sign of divine benevolence towards the faithful and born again in particular. This is made evident by the display of riches of some Pentecostal preachers who show off the latest fashion clothes and drive Mercedes and other luxury cars.

This ambiguous relationship takes on meaning in the context of present-day Africa, where structural adjustment programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank has led to a progressive withdrawal of the state from the sphere of economic intervention and the provision of services, with a consequent reduction in the area of public employment. All this together with the neoliberal turning point of most African states and market opening policies have led to an incentive for private initiative which, if for some it



has meant enrichment, has generally produced a progressive impoverishment of a large part of the population. This impoverishment is countered by the invasion of western goods, due to the opening of the markets, which often become the sign and the figure of desires that cannot be realized. Money and goods are therefore at the same time the object of desire and a tangible sign of the new social and economic reality in which group solidarity leaves space for individual enterprise and in which the economy of exchange overlaps with local moral economies.

It is in this context that the narrations proposed by Meyer should be read. The devil becomes an advocate of easy, as well as pernicious, enrichment; he must be seen as the metaphorical device that allows people to question or at least critically reflect on the (im)morality of the exchange and the neoliberal economy.

The ambivalent relationship with money and goods finds a counterpoint to what has been said so far in those churches, commonly known in Africa as ‘money churches’, which are inspired by the prosperity Gospel and which are found in Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya as well as in other countries of the continent<sup>3</sup>.

If on the one hand these churches struggle against satanic enrichment, and therefore recognize a possible diabolical nature in enrichment and acquisition of goods, on the other hand money can be a sign of God’s benevolence. Preachers who are inspired by the prosperity gospel consider material wealth as a blessing from God. The more a church, or even an individual, is under direct divine protection, the more resources, even material, this church or individual will accumulate. Because these signs of the divine blessing will have to be exhibited as a demonstration of how powerful and benevolent God is to those who rely on Him.

### **Civil society, churches and development**

During the 1980s, the African continent was hit by a severe crisis, both economic and financial. It emerged from the decade of great hopes, the one in which a large part of the continent had reached independence and where the difficult process of nation-building began. A decade marked by great strides and sharp setbacks, in which the elites who came to power have not always managed to keep the promises of freedom, justice and emancipation.

The reasons for the crisis are to be found in a series of global and local situations. The surge in oil prices on the international market has had dramatic consequences in these countries, because it was associated with a concomitant collapse in prices on the international market of commodity prices, such as cocoa and coffee, which were one of the main trade export entries for many African countries. All this led to a serious inflationary spiral, which exacerbated the difficult economic situation. The African states saw their debt worsen, and it was already high due to investments in infrastructure made in previous years. The heavy debt situation and the export crisis, which required the need for new loans, led the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to condition new financing to a radical restructuring of economies and assets. In short, the structural adjustment plans I have already mentioned to which most of the countries of the continent were subjected. These plans provided for a drastic reduction in the presence of the state in key sectors of the economy and, more generally, a strong liberalization and an opening to international markets, also through the reduction of customs barriers. The aim was therefore to promote the development of the private sector; reduce taxes; simplifying market and business rules; in short create the conditions for the development of an economy of clear neoliberal style. To this was added the devaluation of national currencies; the privatization of state-controlled companies and, finally, a strong reduction in public employees. All this in the perspective of a market economy that favored the birth of new companies and that was driving for a more general economic development.

The churches, both the historical denominations and new evangelical and Pentecostal, occupy spaces left free by the retreat of the states. Schools, dispensaries, hospitals are now managed directly by the churches, which in this way occupy an increasingly important position in the field of primary services for the population. Schools and hospitals are in fact two of the key symbols of development processes for the values that can be associated with them. It is through these kinds of actions, which are more than complementary, that the churches promote themselves as agents of development and modernization. Here I would like to underline how, in this way, the idea of modernity carried out by religious agencies, calls into question one of the pillars on which modernity has been built in the West, that is, the

link between it and secularism. The modern West has always thought of itself in secular terms. Proposing development plans in poor countries, the Western World has always thought of the processes they were to trigger as of approaching the Western modernity. It was not just about setting up hospitals and schools, exporting technologies; instead, it has always been a more complex operation, which had at its base a specific idea of society and institutions that, reflecting the Western model, made secularism its base. The increasingly prominent role of churches as development agents calls into question the concept of secular development.

In this regard, what Jean Comaroff writes is particularly interesting:

At a time when, under the sway of neo-liberal policies, many states have relinquished significant responsibility for schooling, health, and welfare – in short, for the social reproduction of their citizens – religious organizations have willingly reclaimed this role. It is a role that, in some places, they never fully lost to the grand disciplinary institutions of the welfare state. The recent expansion of faith-based social services has challenged the separation of powers that underlay the ideals, if not always the practices, of most twentieth-century liberal democracies. (Comaroff 2009: 20).

Therefore, religious organizations play an important role in managing social services; at the same time, they have set up NGOs that are their direct subsidiary. Although Christian-inspired NGOs have long been a consolidated reality, we are faced, in this case, with a partly different phenomenon. These are not autonomous and independent organizations that plan their policies and their practices based on a perspective and inspiration of a religious nature, instead they are organizations that are intimately linked to the churches, which actually manage them directly.

The development actions promoted by the churches have a fundamentally different perspective than those promoted by Western agencies. The activities of the churches do not aim only to improve the living conditions of the population, but aim at a more comprehensive development, that of spiritual transformation, a transformation seen in a global manner that involves the whole individual: ‘This concept of transformational development is about development as much as it is about spiritual growth. In fact it is an ideology of development that is radically different from that used by secular development organisa-

tions, starting from the spiritual and then moving out to the social and the material' (Freeman 2013: 241). Through such a proposition, the churches aim at the creation of specific subjects. The idiom of the development of NGOs and large supranational agencies rests on a specific idea of progress: that which has historically established itself in the West, characterized by a development seen as secularized, disconnected from religious discourse and centered on technological progress. Conversely, the translation of development into the religious idiom of churches entails a fundamental shift: the idea that development is linked to a radical transformation of the individual. Although consistent with neoliberal ideology, church development practices pose a radical challenge to our secularized universe. What is proposed is a version of modernity that, while following the fundamental axes of the neoliberal perspective, such as individualism and entrepreneurship, seems to aspire to make inroads into a more global vision of the individual.

The close connection between neoliberal practices and rhetoric and Pentecostal doctrine, especially in the version of the gospel of prosperity, has often been pointed out in the anthropological debate. I would like to conclude by reflecting on the way in which religious doctrines and practices can constitute processes of subjectivation aimed at forging individuals coherent with the neoliberal perspective today hegemonic on the continent; and again, how the religious idiom translates and transforms the idiom of development.

First of all, I would like to present a brief ethnographic case referring to my work in Ethiopia. I was in Mekelle in 2012; at that time, I attended a Baptist mission led by an American missionary. It is a branch of the Baptist movement not very far from Pentecostalism; moreover today, many Christian denominations are developing groups whose practices and perspectives are very close to those of the Pentecostals (Schirripa 2012, 2017). One day, accompanied by another American missionary who had come to visit, we went at a site of Meferet Kristos, the Mennonite church of Ethiopia; there was planned a meeting with a group of children who had founded a football team and who was followed together by the two churches. The presence of the American visitor was justified by the fact that he wanted to donate money so that the children could buy uniforms, boots and a ball for the team. Before proceeding with the donation, the man gave a long

speech about football and its educational value. Through a series of biblical quotations from the Old and New Testaments, the visitor exalted the role of football as a metaphor for success in life: that game is important because it teaches us to have a goal, a purpose; it is important because it teaches the value of the group, but above all because it enhances the role of the individual. Only if there are valuable individuals within a group it can win. Speaking of the Bible and football, the American visitor actually proposed a value vision focused on the values of the individual and his success. Sacrifice, teamwork are valued as instruments that lead to success; the group is important as it allows to enhance the individual qualities. The purpose of the game, like life, is to be successful by making the most of your talent. The plot of the individual entrepreneur emerges clearly from the warp of biblical and football metaphors.

I would like to briefly report another case which refers to the development projects of the first Pentecostal church founded in Ethiopia: the *Mulu Wengel* (Full Gospel's Believers Church of Ethiopia). The Mekelle branch, thanks also to funding from a large international FBO, the Compassion, has created a series of afternoon activities for poor children. These are essentially activities related to the study, correct behavior and care of the body. As far as hygiene is concerned, it is in fact basic rules: do not spit on the ground; wash hands and other parts of the body thoroughly; use appropriate places for droppings, and so on. At first it would seem that these are obvious rules, aimed at countering the possibility of contracting more or less serious diseases. In reality, as Foucault has taught us well, the care of the body is a fundamental element in the processes of subjectivation. Such rules often contrast with how children learn at home. New bodily dispositions, new *habitus* would say Bourdieu, which build an individual in a completely different way from the Ethiopian tradition. The care of the body that is proposed, as well as the posture, belongs to a new model: that of the capitalist society. Through specific rules of hygiene and behavior, an individual disposition is created, and the body is tamed to make it fit for the new capitalist order of the country.

By promoting the development of individual talent, as a gift from God, the idea of entrepreneurship is promoted; spiritual growth is combined with speeches on the country's economic development and individual success. In the two cases briefly reported here we can see

how specific pedagogical activities can be seen as practices of subjectivation aimed at the creation of individuals whose horizon of values and practices is consistent with the neoliberal perspective.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The existing bibliography on these movements is very vast, ranging from simple monographs to comparative studies. With regard to the African continent, I refer here for a purely illustrative purpose, in addition to the aforementioned contributions, to Andersson (1958) and Balandier (1963).

<sup>2</sup> Although many Pentecostal churches carry out a strong controversy towards charismatic churches and emphasize the elements that distinguish them from the latter, first of all the exclusive use of the word during rituals, including healing, and the refusal to use religious objects such as candles and incense, considered by Pentecostals as veneration of idols and occult practices.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gifford (1994), Maxwell (1998; 2005), and Smith (2001), just to name a few.

## References

- Andersson, E. 1958. *Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells.
- Balandier, G. 1963. *Sociologie actuelle de l'Afrique Noire*. Paris: PUF.
- Barret, D.B. 1968. *Schism and Renewal in Africa. An Analysis of 6000 Contemporary Religious Movements*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Comaroff, J. 1985. *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance. The Culture and History of a South African People*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Comaroff, J. 2009. The Politics of Conviction. Faith on the Neo-Liberal Frontier. *Social Analysis* 53 (1): 17–38.
- Comaroff, J., and Comaroff, J.L. 1991. *Of Revelation and Revolution. Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*. Vol. 1. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Comaroff, J., and Comaroff, J.L. (eds). 1993. *Modernity and its Malcontents. Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Comaroff, J., and Comaroff, J.L. 1997. *Of Revelation and Revolution. The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Vol. 2. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Dozon, J.-P. 1995. *La cause des prophètes. Politique et religion en Afrique contemporaine*. Paris: Seuil.
- Fernandez, J.W. 1978. African Religious Movements. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7: 195–234.

- Freeman, D. 2013. Pentecostalism in a Rural Context: Dynamics of Religion and Development in Southwest Ethiopia. *PentecoStudies* 12 (2): 231–249.
- Gifford, P. 1994. Ghana's Charismatic Churches. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 24 (3): 241–265.
- Lanternari, V. 1960. *Movimenti religiosi di libertà e di salvezza dei popoli oppressi*. Milano: Feltrinelli.
- Mary, A. 2000. L'anthropologie au risque des religions mondiales. *Anthropologie et Société* 24 (1): 117–135.
- Maxwell, D. 1998. 'Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty?': Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28 (3): 350–373.
- Maxwell, D. 2005. The Durawall of Faith: Pentecostal Spirituality in Neoliberal Zimbabwe. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 35 (1): 4–32.
- Meyer, B. 1995. 'Delivered from the Powers of Darkness?': Confessions of Satanic Riches in Christian Ghana. *Africa* 65 (2): 236–255.
- Meyer, B. 1997. 'Make a Complete Break with the Past'. Memory and Post-colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26 (4): 1–34.
- Meyer, B. 2004. Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 447–474.
- Peel, J.D.Y. 1968. *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ranger, T.O. 1986. Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa. *African Studies Review* 29 (2): 1–69.
- Robins, J. 2004. The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 117–143.
- Schirripa, P. (ed.). 2012. *Terapie religiose. Neoliberismo, cura, cittadinanza nel pentecostalismo contemporaneo*. Roma: CISU.
- Schirripa, P. 2017. Where Christianity is Ancient: Pentecostalism, Evil in the World and the Break with the Past in Ethiopia. In Pavanello, M (ed.), *Perspectives on African Witchcraft* (pp. 145–164). London; New York: Routledge.
- Sundkler, B.G.M. 1961. *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.

**NATION BUILDING  
IN CONTEMPORARY BENIN REPUBLIC:  
THE ROLE OF ART, MUSEUMS, AND CULTURAL  
HERITAGE**

*Emery Patrick Effiboley*  
University of Abomey-Calavi

**Introductory note**

The role of art, museums, and cultural heritage is critical in the process of nation-building, especially in the era of postcolony. This chapter, based on the (cultural) history of the territory of the Republic of Benin, attempts to analyze specifically the collections in the museums as well as the collecting policy from the inception of the modern museum in the country to date. It also reviews the political contexts of production of the materials gathered in the museums. The chapter finally highlights the strategy to build upon local identities in order to achieve a cohesive national identity for the benefit of the Republic of Benin as a whole.

**From cultural objects to museum collections  
in the Republic of Benin**

The modern museum as it has emerged in nineteenth-century Africa is a result of colonialism. But before the arrival of Europeans, African kingdoms had their way of treasuring their heritage. In the former Kingdom of Danxome<sup>1</sup> for instance, a building, the Djexo, that can be literally translated as ‘treasures room’ was devoted to the preservation of royal heritage. Longtime ago in the past, dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in the time of the Kingdom of Kongo<sup>2</sup>, the political entity that covered a large part of Southern Africa *id ex* the contemporary Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the French Congo (or Congo Brazzaville) a large part of Angola, Central Africa, etc., there also were the *nkisi* houses as mentioned by Anne Hilton (1985: 51, 62), or what Malyn Newitt (2012: 116) termed as the ‘great house of idols’. The rise of colonialism has dismantled the cultural organization of the kingdoms by introducing new ways of treating what is seen as heritage and valuable objects to be preserved for the posterity. In the case



of the Benin Republic, the main focus of this chapter, the conquest in 1892 of the Kingdom of Danxome, one of the most influential in West Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has led to the sacking of the royal palaces in Agbome and Cana (King Gbehazin's palace) and the looting of the regalia and other significant objects by the French army under the commandment of Colonel Alfred Amédée Dodds (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Throne of King Gbehazin in the Musée du quai Branly in Paris, part of the regalia to be repatriated from France to Benin (photo by the author).

The French government in endorsing the military campaign has even promoted Colonel Dodds to the rank of General. After the deportation of King Gbehazin to the French colonial Martinique, the complex of palaces<sup>3</sup> in Agbome fell in ruins despite the efforts of his brother Agboli-Agbo enthroned by the colonial administration. The palatial complex has then been abandoned for almost two decades before the first restoration was realized by the colonial administration in 1911.

After the looting of the palace of the sovereign, as war booty, the most symbolic regalia were 'exported' by General Dodds and his acolytes. They sent part of the objects to the then Musée du Trocadéro in Paris and shared the rest among themselves<sup>4</sup>. Several

houses were decorated by these and other African objects in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. But after the passing of most of the colonial personnel, their heirs have been getting rid of the objects related to colonialism giving them to museums or sending them to the art market in Paris and other places<sup>5</sup>.

The rest of the remaining regalia and other cultural objects from Agbome that have been saved from fire, theft and natural destruction have been parked and put under the responsibility of prince Sagbajou

Glele according to the governor Fourn's decision (decision n°148, 23 February 1921) and in prevision of a museum to be established in the palaces of kings Ghezo (1818–1858) and Glele (1858–1889), respectively the grand-father and the father of Gbehanzin who fought against the French army.

Almost another decade had passed when the objects that were used in certain condition according to the cultural system of the kingdom, were documented with little collected information. They were transformed into museum objects likely to be seen by whoever and with no precaution. This development has been conducted by the governor François Joseph Reste de Rocca from 1928 until the opening on 30 December 1930. It is worth giving this detail for two main reasons. The first is that in the 1920s metropolitan France was still suffering under the millions of dead and the huge destruction of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. So building a museum in the empire was not at all a priority for French authorities. The second is that the museum in Abomey is the first opened in French West Africa, even before the creation of the Institut français d'Afrique noire (IFAN) by Théodore Monod in Dakar (Senegal) in 1936. The museum will soon celebrate its one hundred years anniversary, being the oldest one in the region and the first step in French museum policy in West Africa. It is after fourteen years of existence that the museum in Abomey will be put under the responsibility of IFAN in 1943 (see Arrêté n°1520 A. P. A. du 08 octobre 1943, confiant la gestion du palais et du Musée historique d'Abomey à l'Institut français d'Afrique noire, IFAN).

While the first action in French museum policy in the colony of Dahomey will be to transform royal palaces into the museum, this model of museum creation will not continue. From 1949, as indicated in the registration system, the next action will be to collect cultural objects and artifacts from the whole colony and gather them in what has become the Ethnographic Museum of Porto-Novo. The French Institute, IFAN, also encouraged the collecting of objects in the rest of the empire in West Africa. Every colony was supposed to send part of her collected objects to build the federal museum at IFAN in Dakar.

At the independence, each colony has transformed her (local) museum into a kind of national museum while the then president of Senegal, Mr. Léopold Sédar Senghor kept the collections of the former French West African colonies in the 'federal museum' for his

own country with the argument that there was no need for the fellow countries to claim them back because being there is in a way being at home – in Africa<sup>6</sup>.

The Benin Republic has continued with an unwritten national policy that consisted of building progressively a museum in each administrative region. This unsaid policy has not been completely implemented when the regions have now been split into twelve. This increases the challenge of establishing museums in different parts of the whole country.

### **Typology of collections in Benin museums**

Reflecting on typology here will not solely reside on the categories of objects as usually seen in museum works, but it is more talking about the genesis of the objects in the collections (in relation to nation building). This being mentioned, two types of collections are distinguishable in Benin museums.

There are the collections largely from different cultural groups in Benin gathered by the former French Institute (IFAN) that are now in the Alexandre Sènou Ethnographic Museum of Porto-Novo. They have been enriched along the time. A survey in the registration system unveiled the state of the collections as represented in the following table:

<b>Periods</b>	<b>Amount of items</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1949–1960	859	64%
1961–1966	116	9%
1967–1972	158	12%
1973–1990	61	4%
1991–2005	146	11%
Total	1340	100%

Evolution of the collections of the museum from its inception to 2009 (Effiboley 2013: 180).

The first column indicates the time frames, the second the amount of items collected and the third, the percentage these represent in regard to the whole collection of the museum. The first remark is that for a whole museum, the amount looks small, given the number of objects from the Republic of Benin outside the country. One knows for in-

stance that in the Musée du quai Branly, the registration system shows an amount of 5584 objects from the Republic of Benin in its collections<sup>7</sup>. There are also other objects from Benin in local museums in the hands of the heirs of colonial administrators. An analysis of the table in terms of policy shows that the colonial administration for a decade has collected far more objects than the independent state of Benin. The policy of the country will continue to be applied in the post-independence museums. Hardly anything has been collected for the past decade despite the clarion call of the current government to promote tourism through a new policy that focuses on establishing new museums.

Apart from the type of collections in the Ethnographic Museum in Porto-Novo which model is replicated along other publicly owned museums, the second type consists of the Fon<sup>8</sup> cultural objects from the former kingdom and the region surrounding Abomey that are gathered in Abomey Museum. In fact, as the arts of the former Kingdom of Danxome are celebrated and that the tradition is visible till to date in the museum in Abomey, it is important to explain the origin of these arts and crafts. As it is no longer necessary to say, the Kingdom of Danxome was built upon conquest like many others around the world. There is even a traditional song that reflects this. It says:

*Ségálá, ségálá má dó wèn wè  
Ségálá mádó wènwè, kpòlí gálá mádó wèn wè b̀ò àyìxwé è  
Ségálá, ségálá mádó wèn wè  
Ahwàn è gbà Kétù, bó gbà Meko éḡé tò dé kpò à (bis)  
Abèwòkùtá wè nyí tò èkpò é b̀ò mí ná gbá bó wá yì xwé è  
Sègálá, sègálá mádó wèn wè.*

The song translated reads as follows:

*May the Lord help, help me deliver a good message to you.  
May the Lord help me deliver a good message to you; may my Ifa help  
me deliver a good message to you before going home,  
May the Lord help, help me deliver a good message to you  
The war that destroyed Ketu and Meko left aside no localities (repeat)  
Abèwòkuta is the remaining locality to be defeated before we go back  
home  
May the Lord help, help me deliver a good message to you.*

This military song gives an idea of how expansive the Kingdom of Danxome had been before its fall but also about its envisaged borders. Edna Bay confirmed the fact when she wrote that:

The Fon dynasty was pledged to a constant expansion – an augmentation of the nation’s wealth in people, lands and products. A tightly organized bureaucracy assured control over internal production while warfare expanded territorial boundaries and added population. (Bay 1985: 6).

And the policy of the kings during these campaigns was, after the conquest of a kingdom or a locality, to bring to Agbome every object/craftwork that looked nice and that the Kingdom of Danxome did not have at home, as well as the object/craftwork’s makers. As a matter of proof the sculpture of the God of iron Gu that belongs to the objects the Republic of Benin asked in 2016 for repatriation from France was not originally from Agbome. It was brought there after a war at Doume-Tchetti, a town not far from Parakou as well as Akati Ekplekendo that has been identified as the maker. But today, it is claimed as a masterpiece of the cultural heritage of the Benin Republic, as the Parakou area is its part – the borders of the Republic of Benin do not coincide with those of the former Fon Kingdom of Danxome. The same thing goes to the art of appliqué in which the clan of Yemadje in Agbome is specializing. Its origin dated back to another conquest of the Danxome Kingdom by the sovereign Agadja (1704–1732) within the people of Weme earlier in the past. According to Joseph Adandé (1993: 40), those were two young men from Weme that the king brought to Agbome with the specimen of appliqué art. The king changed their name and renamed one of them Hanttan and the other Zinflou. The king also assured that they teach the art the children of Danxome to popularize this know-how. By doing so, the king not only wanted the specific art in his kingdom but he also cared about the posterity beyond his own reign. To put it differently, he wanted future generations to keep enjoying the same art by producing it at home. We could say that the arts of Agbome in general are a kind of crystallization of a sort of national ingenuity and that we should no longer consider these arts as local but as really national despite the context that has given birth to this national art *avant la lettre*. Today the heirs of these two artists are still living and making this art in Abomey.

There are more examples of the story of this kind. So the arts of Abomey are intrinsically cosmopolitan and national to some extent. They have been built from the arts and crafts of the different regions that were conquered by the Kingdom of Danxome and should be seen and treated as such. But more than hundred years later, do we need to keep enlivening the reminiscences of the past? In other regions of the world, wars also were common long ago and those peoples have surpassed this souvenir of this warlike feeling. One should remember the wars among European nations, particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most memorable examples is the case of France and Germany and the war that, the most, had historical impact was the Franco-German war of 1870–1871 that led to the partition of the region of Alsace-Lorraine. In addition, there was also the anger of the Président du Conseil, Georges Clemenceau, against Germany during the 1919 conference for the resolution of the 1914–1918 war in Paris that among other things made the bed for the Second World War (1939–1945) during which Germany occupied France. Despite all these wars, France and Germany have become so close today that the Franco-German couple as they are commonly called weight a lot in the decision-making process at the European Union's assemblies.

### **Rhetoric around cultural objects for building a cohesive nation**

With the type of objects in the Benin museums and their specific biography, how can they be used to strengthen national belonging? The question is particularly relevant at the time the Benin Republic has demanded for the repatriation from France of the regalia exported by the French army in 1892–1894. Among these objects, there are some that remind the glorious past of the Kingdom of Danxome. In the context of repatriation of cultural objects from Danxome, what role could museums and cultural heritage play in strengthening national belonging? There are examples that sound relevant to the matter.

The first one is for instance when the Alexandre Senou Adande Ethnographic Museum in Porto-Novo designed and presented an exhibition entitled *Naître, vivre et mourir en République Bénin* ('Be Born, Live and Die in the Benin Republic').

The project was initiated in March 1998 under the initiative of Ecole du patrimoine Africain (EPA), a regional institution based in Porto-Novo, Benin capital city, with the museum staff and scholars

from the University of Abomey-Calavi. The idea was to use the collections of the museum to tell a story that matters to a large part of the people in the country. Taking into account the cultural groups in the country and the ratio of objects and artworks per group, the team decided to present in the first part of the exhibition the birth of the baby in the Yoruba culture as well as prenatal and postnatal traditional precautions in order to welcome him/her in life and prepare him/her for his destiny. The second part of the exhibition was devoted to the different steps of life in the Otamari, inappropriately called Somba, cultural group by the colonial administration. The last section addressed the theme of death in its multifaceted aspect. And the team has tried with the available objects to make visible the state of being when we are confronted with the departure of our loved ones. One could see among others in this exhibit the *sato*, a funerary drum popular in the southern part of the country, a dark cloth for mourning and the *asen*, iron altars commissioned for deceased family ancestors as well as local authorities<sup>9</sup>.

Owe to its transversality, the exhibition was a real success and lasted about ten years in the museum also because of poor museographic practices in Benin before being removed.

### **Weaving the national thread**

Beside this story, I have recently encountered another example that is also relevant to the current topic. During a study trip with the students of the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Abomey-Calavi to Nikki, a city close to the Eastern borders with Nigeria, in April 2019, we saw in the palace of the king a huge appliqué artwork that describes a scene of the annual ceremony in the region called Gaani (Fig. 2). We were told by the minister of the court that the work was commissioned to Yves Kpede, a contemporary artist originating from Abomey.

The appliqué is made of a blue cloth bordered with red color band with the characters in different colors. The work from left to right shows the king of Nikki on a horse, dressed in a yellow-like cloth with a white turban and a red cap at the top of his head. He is accompanied by his prime minister also transported by a horse and dressed in a singled white turban. The third person is also on a horse. He looks like a musician holding *gangan*, an armpit drum ('talking drum') with a grey-white turban. Apart from those figures, there are three *wasangari*

trumpet players. Simple accompaniers or spectators are a part of the scene in the artwork. What this artwork tells is how a craft originally from Weme, indigenized in Agbome after a conquest war more than a hundred year ago is now decorating the court of Nikki. This is a magnificent way of weaving the national thread for a cohesive existence of the identities therein.



Fig. 2. Appliqué commissioned to Yves Kpèdè an artist from Abomey by the court of Nikki in the Northern Benin (photo by the author).

At this moment when the Benin Republic is asking for the repatriation of the cultural heritage of her territory from France, we need to think how to reweave these cultural objects in their context of production in order to tell a national story that could strengthen our belonging to the same nation. Another alternative may be that, given the fact that the pre-colonial polities to which the cultural objects Africans are claiming back now belonged, do not exist as independent political units any longer, and that the states created by the colonizers are trying to come together to build regional associations like ECOWAS, SADEC, it may be a good idea to open museums that transcend our current small countries to become more in coherence with their context of origin.

### **Concluding remarks**

To conclude, one could say that most of the artworks in the museums of the Benin Republic are to some extent a creation of local nationali-



ties as well as a constructed heritage along the vicissitudes of history. The role of museums in the country should not rest upon the ethnicity of the heritage but on the positive way of weaving these local patrimonies in order to build a national conscience, a kind of ‘national we’ that will keep strengthening our living together. The coming repatriation of the war booty exported by the French army in 1892–1893 is an opportunity to discuss our sensitive common history. This is the challenge to come for our country and others embarked in the project of repatriation. The postcolonial nations need to endorse their common past and reweave it in order to build cohesive nations for the future. But (above all) this work is possible only if we, collectively, care about an ‘economic democracy’ where every member of the national community has a minimum in terms of job, shelter, social security, health care, etc. But we seem to be far from this idealistic view.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this chapter, its author calls the precolonial kingdom ‘Danxome’ and calls it ‘Dahomey’ when writes about the colonial time. He also calls the city that was that kingdom’s capital ‘Agbome’ meaning pre-colonial time and ‘Abomey’ when he discusses later periods, including post-colonial (editors’ note).

<sup>2</sup> The Kingdom of Kongo was a powerful one when the Portuguese came to the African coast at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They helped dismantle it by fueling the intrigues that ended up with the battle of Ambuila in 1661.

<sup>3</sup> I use the term ‘complex of palaces’ to explain the specificity of the Kingdom of Danxome in regard to their conception of the royal power. In contrary to several kingdoms around the world, Château de Versailles in France, Schonbrunn in Austria and even Ife, Oyo and some others in Nigeria, the king in Danxome had the duty to erect his own palace next to the one of his predecessor. This is a special manner to inscribe his power into the space and to mark it by his emblems and personality. And this kind of policy has permitted the implantation of twelve palaces representing the (accepted) twelve kings who reigned in Agbome.

<sup>4</sup> A full detail of the war-related objects sent to the museum in 1893 and 1895 by the members of the Dodds’ campaign of Danxome, according to the documentation of the Musée du quai Branly, is provided in the PhD dissertation of Effiboley defended at Université Paris Ouest Nanterre – La Défense on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 (Effiboley 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Benedict Savoy and Felwine Sarr in the recently commissioned report of African arts in French museums, *Restituer le patrimoine africain* (2018),

highlighted very well how the art market is nourished by this source of acquisition.

<sup>6</sup> I got this information from Professor Alexis Adandé whose father was one of the IFAN staff in charge of collecting (policy) in French West Africa. But despite this expressed will to show African brotherhood, the IFAN museum has never, on its own initiative, involved Benin museums in a program or communicated on the state of Benin collections therein.

<sup>7</sup> See [www.collections/quaibrantly.fr](http://www.collections/quaibrantly.fr) accessed on 15 March 2015. For a larger view on collections in publicly-owned museums in Benin, see Effiboley 2015.

<sup>8</sup> The Fon is one of the dominant cultural groups in the southern part of Benin and they speak the Fongbe language which belongs to the Adja-Fon and under the umbrella of the Niger-Delta linguistic group.

<sup>9</sup> An exhibition of iron altars of the Fon people of the Benin Republic was organized at the Emory University Museum of Art and Archeology in 1985 and gave birth to the catalogue titled *Asen, Iron Altars of the Fon People of Benin* (Bay 1985). The exhibition traveled to the Museum of Natural History in Alabama and the Grinter Galleries, Centre for African Studies of the University of Florida, Gainesville.

## References

- Adandé, J.C.E. 1993. Histoire de l'art et histoire nationale. *Afrika Zamani, An Annual Journal of African History* (pp. 23–52). Dakar: CODESRIA Publications.
- Adandé, J.C.E. 2016. *La toile appliquée ou l'art de faire voir des sons de couleur chez les Fon de la République du Bénin d'hier à aujourd'hui*. Niamey: Presses du CELHTO.
- Bay, E. 1985. *Asen, Iron Altars of the Fon People of Benin*. Atlanta: Emory University Press.
- Couttenier, M. 2018. EO.O.O.7943. *Low Countries Historical Review* 133 (2): 79–90.
- Effiboley, E.P. 2013. *Les Béninois et leurs musées, étude ethno-historique*. PhD dissertation. Nanterre: Université Paris Ouest Nanterre-La Défense.
- Effiboley, E.P. 2015. Les musées béninois: du musée ethnographique au musée d'histoire sociale. *French Studies in Southern Africa* 44: 30–61.
- Gaugue, A. 1999. La mise en scène de la nation dans les musées d'Afrique tropicale. *Ethnologie française* 29 (3): 337–344.
- Hilton, A. 1985. *The Kingdom of Kongo*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Laude, J. 1966. *Les arts de l'Afrique noire*. Paris: Librairie générale française, Livre de poche illustré, série Art.
- Newitt, M. 2010. *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670, A Documentary History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sarr, F., et Savoy, B. 2018. *Restituer le patrimoine africain*. Paris: Philippe Rey/Seuil.

# FROM SOCIALISM TO POST-SOCIALIST TRAUMA: 'PIONEERS' AND 'NEWCOMERS' IN THE GUINEAN FILM INDUSTRY

*Asiya R. Khalitova*

Institute for African Studies  
of the Russian Academy of Sciences

## **Introduction**

Guinea's national cinema was born during the Independence era in the 1960s, under the leadership of its first president, Ahmed Sékou Touré, well known in the Western countries as an authoritarian ruler inspired by Marxism-Leninism, and in Russia and other post-Soviet states – as a leader of the African Independence movement and prominent Pan-Africanist.

Sékou Touré was elected President of the Republic of Guinea in 1958 following the referendum on the country's independence and its refusal to become a member of the French Community. The first Guinean President suddenly realized the need to establish an effective propaganda system in a new, self-declared socialism-oriented state. Alongside the radio and television, the cinema in a country with a low literacy rate was perceived by its authorities as a key instrument for informing and promoting the national ideology in the general public (Chertok 1973; Goerg 2015).

From 1965 (till 1975) Guinea broke all relations, including diplomatic, with France. Before that date the cinema in Guinea had been traditionally patronized by the French. Therefore, during the colonial period, 50% of the movies screened in the country were French productions (Cousin 2017: 10). The first Guinean amateur filmmakers were educated or lived in France (for example, 'the first short film made in Africa by an African' was directed by a Guinean, Mahmoud Touré, in the 1920s; the first Black African feature film, 'Mouramani', was made by the Guinean Mamadou Touré in Paris in 1953) (Cousin 2017: 18). By the time it became independent, French Guinea owned 10 film theatres (Goerg 2015: 143). Ironically, the period when Conakry froze its relations with Paris might be considered as a boom time for the national cinema in Guinea.

The famous Soviet film critic Semyon Chertok told a story about a visit to Conakry by General Charles de Gaulle on the eve of the referendum on Guinean independence from France. Addressing Guineans, the General burst out: ‘If you want independence that much, well have it’. At that very moment he was being filmed by a Guinean cameraman. Later, when French colonial administrators tried to dispute the authenticity of that declaration, Guineans provided them with documentary evidence. This was the first time Guinean filmmakers contributed to the cause of the fight for their country’s independence (Chertok 1973: 36).

It is no exaggeration to state that the cinema and other propaganda instruments of the African-style socialism were established under the influence and with support of the Soviet Union and its satellites. During the Cold War Guinea sent dozens of its nationals to study filmmaking principally at universities of the Eastern bloc countries. (Minot 1983, El Tahri 2018; personal communications: M.K. Diakit , February 25, 2017; S. Barry, December 1, 2017; A. Toukara, July 13, 2017).

This first generation of filmmakers (‘pioneers’) educated within the world’s best cinema schools considerably influenced the development of the Guinean film industry, its course and place among African cinemas.

In contrast with the ‘pioneers’, the post-socialist generation of Guinean filmmakers (‘newcomers’) were either self-educated or in the majority had graduated from Western (mostly French) universities. The objective of this research is to understand the professional and identity cleavages between ‘pioneers’ and ‘newcomers’ as well as their role in the development of the Guinean cinema. As a consequence of the small amount of data and documentary sources in Guinea, the research is primarily based on the empiric data collected in the field by the present author, particularly a series of interviews conducted in Guinea and Russia from 2015 to 2017.

### **Postcolonial cinema and ‘pioneers’**

In the late 1960s, the first professional filmmakers and cameramen came back to Guinea from the countries where they had studied. In 1967, S kou Tour  created the national film production and photography company ‘Syli-cinema-photo’ (‘syli’, ‘elephant’ in the Sousou

language, was a political symbol for Sékou Touré). The company was affiliated with the Ministry of Information and Communications. This institution financed by the government (in particular by the Guinean Film Production Development Fund FODIC) was aimed at national film production and distribution as well as career training for its employees (Décret № 001). ‘Our purpose is to create a Guinean film industry which should be authentically revolutionary and based on the deep-seated belief that it would speed up a change for the Guinean people. It would have a positive influence on Africa and the rest of the world,’ Sékou Touré said (quoted in Cousin 2018: 29).

The successful Guinean experience in the film industry’s nationalization set an example for other countries of the continent such as Tanzania, Senegal, Benin, Madagascar (Diawara 1992: 70; Cousin 2017: 28). At the beginning of the First Republic of Guinea, several dozen public film theatres were operational in the country (Chertok 1973). Every movie screening was accompanied by short reports and documentaries on ideological issues with political and didactical line stories (Décret № 001; A. Tounkara, personal communication, July 13, 2017).

Originally, ‘Syli-cinema-photo’ hired only cinema professionals. Within the framework of the first wave of cultural exchanges between the USSR and the so called that time Third World countries, 11 Guinean nationals graduated from the Soviet All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK, now – The Gerassimov Institute of Cinematography) (J. Cousin, personal communication, March 6, 2017). Other filmmakers studied in Czechoslovakia (Mouctar Bah), Yugoslavia (Sékoumar Barry, Henri Duparc), Romania, Poland, as well as in West Germany (Moussa Kémoko Diakité), France (Mohamed Lamine Akin) and the USA (Gilbert-Claude Minot, Mamadou Alpha Baldé). At the same time, Guinean military servicemen were sent abroad by the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Guinea to study journalism, cinematography and film direction. They returned to Guinea in 1965–1969 (H. Sylla, personal communication, March 11, 2016).

Historically, the contribution by those new Guinean intellectuals to the state propaganda system and the development of the audiovisual sector, as well as their career paths, are different in terms of the period of their professional activities. Thus, we can divide the ‘pioneers’ into two groups. The first group graduated in the 1960s and became foun-

ders of the national cinematography and first media from the late 1960s to the 1970s. The second group came back to Guinea after their studies abroad by the end of the Sékou Touré era which coincided with the beginning of Perestroika in the USSR and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. Both groups of filmmakers were exposed to the *post-socialist trauma* in different forms.

The professional and personal backgrounds of the first wave of ‘pioneers’ were profoundly influenced by the cleavage between Sékou Touré’s intention to launch the most emblematic film industry in Sub-Saharan Africa and his autocratic ambitions threatened by the new Guinean elite educated outside the country.

The same year ‘Sily-cinema-photo’ was created, the Guinean authorities kicked off a debate on the independence of the national cinema from foreign producers, its depersonalization and a high probability of external influence on Guinean people’s minds (Horoya 1105; 1107). As a result of this nationalist rhetoric on the necessity of Guinea’s cultural emancipation, Sékou Touré launched a national film laboratory project. Inspired by the Soviet experience, the Guinean government established the Control Committee for film content responsible for authorizing film releases and their projection in national film theatres (Horoya 1101).

At the same time, the Soviet Union had the greatest cultural influence on cinema development in Guinea. The Eastern bloc countries took part not only in the education of Guinean filmmakers and technical production staff, but massively transferred filmmaking equipment and exported their films to Conakry, sent technical staff to teach Guineans on site (O. Cissé, personal communication, December 18, 2017). In the 1960s, the Czech authorities sent specialists to educate the first Guinean photographers, Poland dispatched projector operators, the USSR – cameramen (M.K. Diakité, personal communication, April 13, 2017). The post-production for Guinean films was provided by film laboratories in the USSR and such Eastern European countries as Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Poland.

From 1966, Moscow had been staging annual Soviet film weeks in Conakry with the participation of popular Soviet movie directors and actors. On the same lines, Guinea hosted a representative of the institution in charge of the Soviet film distribution abroad, ‘Sovexportfilm’ (A. Diarso, personal communication, May 1, 2016).

At the same time, Sékou Touré's paranoia and his permanent fear of plots and coups d'état against him caused the 'institutionalization' of systematic repression against intellectuals who had been created by his own political regime. Suddenly 'pioneers' forming the backbone of 'Syli-cinema-photo' were treated as traitors and enemies of the government (Gomez 2008; Kamara 2012).

For instance, the first charges against the USSR for the 'activities which threaten the Guinean regime' were levelled in 1961. Sékou Touré suspected the Soviet authorities of ideological influence on Guinean students in Soviet universities. One of the countermeasures by Sékou Touré was expelling the Soviet ambassador from Conakry. Later, the Guinean authorities did not support Moscow during the Cuban missile crisis, condemned the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and called for a boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow (Barrada 1984; Mazov 2008; Lewin 2009).

Repressions by the Sékou Touré's regime had started in the early 1960s. Representatives of Guinean political and cultural elites had been imprisoned, accused of dozens of alleged plots. However, the most significant arrests were undertaken after the Portuguese attack on Conakry in 1970 triggering the detention of more than 700 Guineans in prisons in different parts of the country.<sup>1</sup> Researchers call this system of oppression created by Sékou Touré 'Boiro camp' after the name of the biggest camp for political prisoners during the First Republic of Guinea. In 1970–1971, the majority of 'Syli-cinema' staff were imprisoned under charges of attempting to overthrow the regime and collaborating with foreign coup plotters. The company's activities ground to a halt (Gomez 2008; Kamara 2012; [www.campboiro.org](http://www.campboiro.org)).

One of the most emblematic personalities among the 'pioneers' of the Guinean filmmaking of the first wave is Costa Diagne, an alumnus of the Soviet VGIK film school, known in Guinea as Costades. He studied in Moscow from 1960 to 1966. Costades was an honors student and became one of the most prominent foreign alumni of the famous Moscow cinema school (M.K. Diakité, personal communication, March 15, 2017). In 1966, he was awarded the 'Golden Antelope' prize at the prestigious World Festival of Black Arts in Dakar for his student film 'Men of the Dance' (1965), a cinema adaptation of Leopold Senghor's poem 'Prayer to Masks' (personal communications: J. Cousin, March 6, 2016; A. Markov, March 2, 2017). His

films were screened at cinema theatres in the USSR, in particular ‘Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow’ (1968) dedicated to the Guinean history from colonialism to independence, based on the life story of a Guinean student coming back to his country after studying abroad. The film won the prestigious Joris Ivens and International Union of Students’ prize at the oldest documentary festival – International Leipzig Documentary and Short Film Week for Cinema and Television in 1968, as well as the prize of the International Federation of Film Critics FIPRESCI (A. Markov, personal communication, March 2, 2017). Among other illustrious films by Costades are ‘8 and 20’ (1967) ordered by the Guinean government on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Guinea’s Independence and the XXth Congress of the Democratic Party of Guinea (under Sékou Touré’s rule Guinea had a one-party political system), and ‘3/4 of Miriam Makeba’ (1968) on the visit to Guinea of the famous ‘Mama Africa’ singer and South African human rights activist (personal communications: B.T. Diallo, March 18, 2016; S. Barry, December 1, 2017).

In 1967, Costa Diagne was appointed Production Director at ‘Syli-cinema’. During his term at ‘Syli-cinema’ the Guinean film industry set an example for not only Black Africa but also for newly independent countries out of the continent (M. Camara, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Guinean movies were screened abroad, their directors took part in international film festivals, in particular in the famous International Film Festival of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in Tashkent (personal communications: A. Diallo, February 26, 2016; S. Barry, December 1, 2017; O. Cissé, December 18, 2017). In his interview with the Soviet film critic Chertok, Costa Diagne said:

For us cinematography is an instrument of the Revolution and an effective means for creating a new individual. The majority of our people do not know how to read, however the cinema speaks with images. For us the power of cinematography is concentrated in this clarity. It helps people learn about themselves, their richness, their culture and teach all this to others. It teaches people about their dignity (Chertok 1972, the present author’s translation from Russian).

In 1971, Costades was imprisoned and spent seven years at the Boiro camp, which he left physically handicapped, almost blind, with crushed hands because of torture, with a totally changed perception of revolutionary ideas (Fig. 1). After his release until Sékou Touré’s



death, Costa Diagne lived in exile outside Guinea and returned to his country under the military regime of Lansana Conté who appointed him Director General of the National Office for Guinean Cinema (ONACIG) in 1986. Since that date, the filmmaker had written several scripts, which however were never produced for lack of funds (personal communications: A. Diarso, March 1, 2016; E. Diagne, February 24, 2016; A. Diallo, February 26, 2016; S. Barry, December 1, 2017; M.K. Diakité, March 15, 2017; A. Tounkara, July 13, 2017).

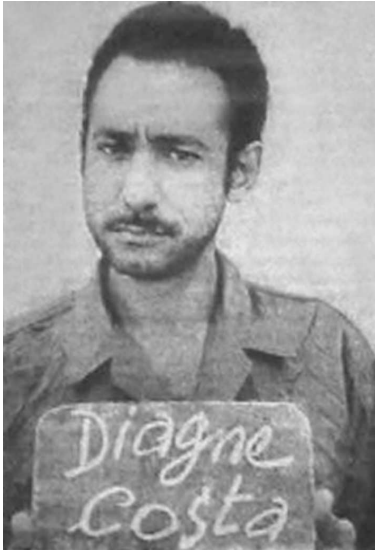


Fig. 1. Costa Diagne under arrest, Conakry, 1971.  
From *Horoya*, a Guinean newspaper.

According to a friend of Costades, former Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Bailo Teliwel Diallo, Costa Diagne invented a new genre for African films – the ‘heroic movie’ which was to replace the common story line of post-colonial African movies on the ‘return’ of an educated African to his native country and the conflict with his origins. Under the new Costades’ concept, an African heroic movie had to give birth to an educated African hero-savior and his ‘return’ to his poor homeland with a *rescue mission*. The topic was addressed in Costades’ last scripts, for instance ‘Milk and Tears’ (B.T. Diallo, personal communication, March 18, 2016).

The most prominent filmmaker of the First Republic of Guinea died in the midst of poverty in Conakry in 1994, several years after the collapse of the bipolar world.

In many years, just before the end of the Second Republic of Guinea, in 2007 the ONACIG Director General, Moussa Kémoko Diakité opened the First Cinematography Meeting in Guinea with an emotional epitaph dedicated to all Guinean cinema pioneers. The filmmaker especially called Costa Diagne one of the most outstanding personalities of the national film industry (M.K. Diakité,

personal communication, February 25, 2017). Today the text of this epitaph represents the only fully documented source of Costades' biography and film list, as other documents had never been classified after Sékou Touré's death.

Among those who went through the Boiro camp were the Minister of Information Alpha Amadou Diallo who patronized 'Syli-cinema', the Director General of 'Syli-cinema' Louis Akin, the Deputy Director General Bob Sow, the President of 'Syli-cinema' syndicate Bakary Camara, the Director General of the film laboratory Thierno Mouctar Bah, filmmakers Mamadou Alpha Baldé Marlon, Moussa Kémoko Diakité, Sékoumar Barry, Thierno Mouctar Barry, scriptwriter Mamadou Barry and dozens of others.

Unlike Costa Diagne, Guinean directors M. Kémoko Diakité and Sékoumar Barry were liberated from prison within a year of their arrests. This decision was taken by Sékou Touré in order to 'recreate Syli-cinema' (M.K. Diakité, personal communication, February 25, 2017). Likewise, in the 1970–1980s, the Guinean film agenda was progressively transformed from didactic revolutionary documentaries to didactic fiction film production (for instance, 'Radical Love', 'Trendy Grandfather' by Moussa Camara, 'Amok', musical movie 'Naitou' by M. Kemoko Diakite) (Diawara 1992: 70–72).

An emblematic figure of that time is the cameraman Bob Sow. During the Guinean cinema explosion he served as a Deputy Director General of 'Syli-cinema'. In particular, he coordinated filming of the documentary on the XXth Congress of the Democratic Party of Guinea by Litton director Ivars Seletskis in 1967. According to Russian documentarian Alexander Markov citing Ivars Seletskis, the filming was intentionally disrupted by the Guinean counterparty. Following the Guinean authorities' restrictions, there were many script episodes that had never been filmed, especially with the participation of the local population (A. Markov, personal communication, October 25, 2017).

Bob Sow was killed on November 24, 1970, just two days after the Portuguese 'Green Sea' operation. He was shot at close range by a soldier of the Guinean National Army during filming havoc caused by the Portuguese intervention ([www.webguinee.net](http://www.webguinee.net)).

Himi Sylla (Fig. 2) is one of the only 'pioneers' who was arrested several years after the Portuguese attack, in 1980 and spent in prison

less than a year. Himi Sylla was born in 1941. At the age of 18, he was recruited into the Guinean army and sent by the Ministry of National Defense to study in Moscow VGIK cinema school in order to work as a military cameraman after graduation. At that time the Guinean authorities established the information unit within the military ministry.



Fig. 2. Himi Sylla, Conakry, 2016 (photo by the author).

In Moscow Himi Sylla was allocated to the same student dormitory as Costades and acted in some of Costa Diagne's student films. His final year student film 'My Friend Sissoko' (1967) telling the life story of a Guinean architecture student in Moscow was screened in Guinean national film theatres when he returned to Conakry. Like many VGIK alumni, Himi Silla took part in the Tashkent International Film Festival (allegedly in 1968).

In Guinea, he worked within the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Information, as well as the National Board in charge of fighting film copyright infringement. Due to his professional expertise and political loyalty, he was promoted to Sékou Touré's personal cameraman. During the Second Republic of Guinea, he served as inspector general of the ONACIG. From 1996 to 2010, he was in charge

of the information unit of the Guinean army. For instance, his team worked on publishing the military newspaper ‘Le Sofa’ the purpose of which was the creation of a positive image of the army among military personnel and the Guinean population (the media was inspired by the Soviet military newspaper ‘Krasnaya Zvesda’).

Nowadays he still does not dare to speak either about his oppressed colleagues under the First Republic or about Sékou Touré’s policies. One of his most vivid memories of that time is an eventual meeting with his VGIK fellows from Ethiopia during an official visit of the Ethiopian President to Conakry. Like him, after graduating from Moscow film school they worked in the president’s press pool (H. Sylla, personal communication, March 8, 2016).

Thus with the example of the Republic of Guinea we can witness the paradox of the political regimes that combine authoritarianism and nationalism. These regimes create elites whose identities are influenced by radical political and social conditions of the time and are torn between two extremes – being an integral part of an authoritarian political regime on the one hand and attachment to freedom of expression on the other.

### **Post-socialist cinema and ‘newcomers’**

After Sékou Touré’s death and the military coup d’état in 1984, the cinema created by ‘pioneers’ was almost eliminated by the new regime of General Lansana Conté. Archives and all the film heritage were set on fire, cynically buried in the Atlantic ocean, or lost (personal communications: B.T. Diallo, March 18, 2016; N. Lamah, Juin 18, 2016; J. Cousin, February 19, 2017; M.K. Diakité, Mars 15, 2017; M. Camara, November 10, 2017).

A Guinean filmmaker of the first wave witnesses, ‘The archives were destroyed not least because of Guineans’ negligence and indifference towards their country’s history’. (M.K. Diakité, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

This negligence towards the cultural heritage might be considered as *post-socialist trauma*, an attempt to bury all that had been connected with the socialist period in Guinea. That trauma brought about the phenomenon of the ‘lost generation’ among ‘pioneers’ who were perceived by the new authorities as ‘products’ of the importation of foreign cultural values to Guinea. According to the method-

ology proposed by the Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka, it is a demonstration of ‘retreatism’ or an obsession with forgetting all that has been created before, denying historical experience (Sztompka 2000a; 2000b, 2004).

Thus in 1984, ‘Syli-cinema’, associated with Sékou Touré through its name, was reorganized, its functions were transferred to the National Office for Guinean Cinema (ONACIG).

In 1995, Lansana Conté signed the decree according to which authors’ rights for the films produced by ‘Sily-cinema’ were no longer granted to the Guinean state, but to their authors (M.K.Diakité, personal communication, June 1, 2017). All the cinema theatres in the country were privatized (except for ‘Liberté’ as the first and the biggest public theatre in the country) (Cousin 2018).

The most exemplary case of ‘retreatism’ of the new regime was its intention to change the Guinean political direction ‘inside out’ – from socialism to liberalism, from the East to the West. Under Lansana Conté, former political prisoners were rehabilitated, although most of them never succeeded in adapting to the new regime whose authorities chose the Western camp.

Two Soviet alumni and prisoners of the Boiro camp, Kaba Camara and Costa Diagne, were appointed the first directors general of the ONACIG (in 1984 and 1986 respectively) (Cousin 2018).

According to the Egyptian director and visual artist Jihan el Tahri, the fact that Costa Diagne had survived the repressions of Sékou Touré’s regime and later was appointed Director General of the National Cinema Office during the ‘democratization era’ under Lansana Conté, made him a symbol of the new Guinean film industry (El Tahri 2018). The paradigm of the conflict between two political systems consists of the contraposition of the intellectuals allegedly victims of Sékou Touré’s regime and their ostensibly high role in Lansana Conté’s state model.

The symbolism of the denial of the First Republic’s heritage was demonstrated during the execution on Lansana Conté’s order of another VGIK alumnus – former Director General of ‘Syli-cinema’ Mandjou Touré. He was an opponent of his VGIK fellow, Costa Diagne, a nephew of Sékou Touré, known in Guinea as one of the most cruel members of the investigation committee of the Boiro Camp commission of inquiry ([www.campboiro.org](http://www.campboiro.org)).

The second generation of ‘pioneers’ were subjected to *post-socialist trauma* as well. The Guineans Dauda Keita and Kalifa Condé graduated from the VGIK in 1983 just before the coup d’état in Guinea.

With the example of these VGIK alumni we can witness the transformation of Guinean authorities’ approach towards the candidates’ selection for film studies abroad. Conakry selected mostly Guineans who had already been professionals. For instance, Daouda Keita (Fig. 3) had worked as a journalist for the national radio ‘Voice of Revolution’ broadcasting for Guinea and other African countries. He was sent to study in the VGIK after the creation of the Guinean national television in 1977. During his studies, he made documentaries in keeping with the Guinean official political line – on the Russia-Guinea relations, the freedom fight in Haiti, etc. After graduation, Daouda Keita worked within the ONACIG and the state channel RTG, and produced dozens of documentaries, in particular dedicated to the new Guinean president and his political activities (D. Keita, personal communication, February 12, 2016). Besides, the majority of these works are TV reports.



Fig. 3. Daouda Keita, Conakry, 2016 (photo by the author).

During his studies in Moscow, Kalifa Condé was well-known to the Soviet audience due to his acting in popular Soviet feature films: ‘TASS is Authorized to Declare’, ‘Golden Slippers’, ‘Pages from Toussaint-Louverture’s Life’, ‘Mark from the Far Island’ (Fig. 4). In Moscow, he

married Irina, a Russian VGIK student. After graduation, they moved to Guinea. In his homeland, Kalifa worked in the field of culture, but never for the national film industry. At the time of the interview, he served as an African elections observer within the ECOWAS association (K. Condé, personal communication, February 18, 2016).



Fig. 4. Kalifa Condé on the set of the Soviet movie 'Golden Slippers', Odessa, 1981 (from Irina and Kalifa Condé's private collection).

Both Daouda Keita and Kalifa Condé have never had an opportunity to contribute considerably to the cinema development of their country that has not been sufficiently financed or institutionally supported after Sékou Touré's death.

As opposed to the 'pioneers', post-socialist Guinean filmmakers ('newcomers') are either self-educated or have studied in the West (first of all in France). Education provided at the only film school in Guinea – the Higher Institute of Arts of Guinea (ISAG) in Conakry – is not up to standard, in particular due to lack of basic film projection equipment (El Tahri 2018).

Among the ‘newcomers’ whose personal backgrounds were deeply influenced by the political regime of the First Republic, are directors Cheick Doukouré, David Achkar, Mohamed Camara, Alsény Tounkara. All these Guineans became filmmakers after the end of the Sékou Touré era. The majority of their films are dedicated to Guinea, especially to immigration issues and other acute social problems. However, the greater part of these movies is produced abroad.

As many other ‘newcomers’, Cheick Doukouré is a self-educated filmmaker. He belongs to the generation that witnessed political repressions under Sékou Touré; besides his director career began in another era and in other circumstances – in France after the end of the bipolar world. In 1962, at the age of 19 he left Guinea following the so-called ‘teachers plot’ and reached Paris on foot. His most successful movie is ‘Golden Ball’ (1993) telling the story of a young Guinean who, inspired by football, leaves his homeland to become a professional footballer in France. In the 2000s, he made a movie on African immigrants in France, ‘Paris According to Moussa’.

Like Cheick Doukouré, the filmmaker Alsény Tounkara left for France after getting involved in the ‘teachers plot’ in 1961. One of his first short films, ‘Mercedes’ (1981), on corruption in the Guinean society had been banned in Guinea for a long time and was publicly screened in Conakry only in 2015.

David Achkar was born in the family of a Guinean diplomat, Marof Achkar, a permanent representative of the Republic of Guinea in the UN from 1964 to 1968. The heritage that David left to the world is the documentary film ‘Allah Tantou’ (1990) dedicated to his father, one of the Boiro Camp’s prisoners – an avatar of all victims of the First Republic of Guinea. His last film (‘The River’) was finished after his death by the French-Guinean director Mama Keita (2003). Mama Keita is a self-educated filmmaker, a graduate from the law faculty of the French Sorbonne. By contrast with the majority of Guinean ‘newcomers’ movies, ‘The River’ is about immigration ‘in reverse’ and describes the story of a mixed-race French man in trouble fleeing to Africa. In 2003, this film won the prestigious Critics Award at the Paris Festival.

Mohamed Camara studied IT and banking, as well as acting at the prestigious Atelier Blanche Salant in Paris. As an actor he participated in theatrical and TV projects, in particular played a role in the famous movie ‘The Camp of Thiaroye’ by Ousmane Sembène. He got several



dozens of international awards in filmmaking, including the FESPACO (Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou) grand prix. The bulk of his works covers provocative themes considered taboo in Guinea (incest in 'Denko', children suicides in 'Minka', homosexuality in 'Dakan') (Sawadogo 2014: 71; Cousin 2018: 98).

Therefore, these 'newcomers' personal backgrounds that had been tragically influenced by the Guinean socialist regime and 'retreatism' by successive authorities caused their orientation to the Western 'liberal' filmmaking scene. Due to the Guinea's traditional cultural ties with its former metropolis, today one can witness the phenomenon of increasing French influence on the Guinean elites. This policy exceeds 'soft power' and expresses a new paradigm of 'French influence diplomacy' (Foucher 2013).

Today's 'newcomers' rarely return to their homelands and contribute to the development of film industries in the countries where they studied. The 'newcomers' living in France belong to the recent trend in the French cinema named 'double wave' which includes 'young filmmakers from the working class and/or with an immigration background' (the term 'double wave' was proposed by the Franco-Burkinabè journalist and film critic Claire Diao) (Diao 2017). One of the most famous Guinean film directors of our time is Gahité Fofana born in France from a Guinean father and French mother. In his movie 'Early in the Morning' (2006) he tells the story of two Guinean adolescents who died in the undercarriage of an airplane in an attempt to illegally leave Guinea for Europe. Another 'newcomer', Cheick Fantamady Camara, studied filmmaking in Burkina Faso and later moved to Paris. His feature film 'Clouds over Conakry' (2007) on the conflict between tradition and modernity in Guinea won several awards at world film festivals, including the FESPACO.

The key aspect of 'French cultural influence' is the creation of institutional instruments aimed at contributing to mentoring and training African filmmakers. At present, one can see a generation of French-speaking African filmmakers educated within the framework of this new form of French cultural influence system. These 'newcomers' are talented and selected by professionals of European film industries, their film projects receive financial support from European public and private institutions. Among them are the French programs implemented jointly with Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Benin film schools,

diverse artistic residences aimed at Africans, specialized funds to support African movie production such as Canal France International (CFI) funded by the Foreign and European Affairs Ministry, etc. (Foucher 2013).



Fig. 5. Thierno Souleymane Diallo during pre-production for his film ‘At the Celluloid Cemetery’, Paris, 2018 (from T.S. Diallo’s private collection).

One of the most promising Guinean young documentary directors is an alumnus of the Higher Institute of Arts of Guinea (ISAG) Thierno Souleymane Diallo (Fig. 5). He won a scholarship of the French Embassy for a Master program at the Institute of Information Technologies and Communications of Niger (IFTIC); he also received a grant from France’s Rhône-Alpes Region to pursue his studies at the Gaston Berger University in Senegal. However, this ‘newcomer’ tries to keep the historical memory of the Guinean cinema explosion in the time of the First Republic. At the moment, he is working on the experimental documentary dedicated to history of

the Guinean cinema ‘Au cimetière de la pellicule’ (‘At the Celluloid Cemetery’). (T.S. Diallo, personal communication, February 23, 2019). The film is financed by French funding institutions. ‘I am making this film in order to try to fix the cinematographic memory of my Guinea, to make it serve as a pedagogic instrument on the film production history in my country and share it with the rest of the world,’ T. Souleymane Diallo says (Cousin 2018: 14).

## Conclusion

To sum up, the principal cleavage between ‘pioneers’ and ‘newcomers’ in the Guinean cinema is caused not only by different historical circumstances, but also by changed perceptions of the cinema’s role in

the world, in particular in the decolonized countries. During the First Republic of Guinea, film production was an essential instrument for political and ideological propaganda. Due to the well-targeted cultural policy and support from the Eastern bloc countries, the Guinean authorities established one of the most spectacular film industries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nowadays, one witnesses the dissolution of national cinemas, their globalization and universalization. These changes are caused particularly by the decreasing role of political concepts in the fight for world influence, as well as the denial by the local authorities of the cinema's purpose as political 'voice', its ideological and didactical tool.

Thus the *post-socialist trauma* of the Guinean cinema after the fall of Sékou Touré's autocratic regime consists not only of the emergence of the 'lost generation' of socialist-oriented 'pioneers', unwanted by new authorities, but also of a new perception of the cinema's role by the 'newcomers' and consequently new film topics (immigration to Europe, human rights, conflicts between tradition and modernity in African societies, etc.). As was mentioned earlier, the Guinean cinema 'newcomers' are more influenced by the French soft power. Besides, this influence contributes not to the development of independent Guinean cinema, but rather to the rise of new African cultural elites, a majority of whom belong to diasporas living in the countries of the Global North.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese attack on Conakry in November 1970 ('Green Sea' operation) was aimed at the overthrow of Sékou Touré's regime and Amilcar Cabral's capture.

<sup>2</sup> A strike by secondary school teachers and students severely put down by the Guinean army in November 1961.

## References

- Barlet, O. 2011. De Sekou Touré à aujourd'hui. Entretien d'Olivier Barlet avec le cinéaste Moussa Kemoko Diakité. *Africultures*, April 20. <http://africultures.com/de-sekou-Touré-a-aujourd'hui-10079> (accessed 01.02.2019).
- Barrada, H. 1984. Sékou tel que je l'ai connu par André Lewin. *Jeune Afrique*. Juin 1984. [https://www.campboiro.org/bibliotheque/andre\\_lewin/sekou\\_tel\\_que/sekou\\_telque.html](https://www.campboiro.org/bibliotheque/andre_lewin/sekou_tel_que/sekou_telque.html) (accessed 18.12.2018).

- Chertok, S. 1972. Kino Chernoy Afriki: problemy i nadezhdy [The Black Africa's Cinema: Problems and Hopes]. In Kapralov, G. (ed.), *Mify i realnost: Zarubezhnoe kino segodnya* [Myths and Reality: Foreign Cinema Today]. Iss. 3 (pp. 278–300). Moscow: Iskusstvo.
- Chertok, S. 1973. *Nachalo: kino Chernoy Afriki* [The Beginning: Cinematography of Black Africa]. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Soyuza sovetskikh kinematografistov.
- Cousin, J. 2017. *Histoire du cinéma en Guinée depuis 1958*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Décret du Président de la République de Guinée № 001 du 2 janvier 1967. *Horoya* № 1100, January 15–16, 1967.
- Diao, C. 2017. *Double Vague: le nouveau souffle du cinéma français*. Vauvet: Au diable vauvert.
- Diawara, M. 1992. *African Cinema: Politics and Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- El Tahri, J. 2018. On Costa Diagne and Guinean Filmmakers. <https://www.hkw.de/en/app/mediathek/project/137651-saving-bruce-lee-african-and-arab-cinema-in-the-era-of-soviet-cultural-diplomacy> (accessed 18.12.2018).
- Foucher, M. (ed.). 2013. *Atlas de l'influence française*. Paris: Editions Robert Laffront S.A.
- Goerg, O. 2015. *Fantômas sous les tropiques: aller au cinéma en Afrique coloniale*. Paris: Vendémiaire.
- Gomez, A. 2008. *Camp Boiro parler ou périr*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Horoya* № 1101, January 17, 1967.
- Horoya* № 1105. January 21, 1967.
- Horoya* № 1107, January 24, 1967.
- Kamara, L. 2012. *La Guinée sous les verrous de la Révolution*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Khalitova, A. 2016. Politika Francii v Gvinee (2010–2015) [French Policy in Guinea (2010–2015)]. *Azija i Afrika segodnja* 12: 61–66.
- Lewin, A. 2009. Ahmed Sékou Touré (1922–1984). Président de la Guinée de 1958 à 1984. <https://www.webguinee.net/bibliotheque/histoire/andre-lewin/sekou-Touré-president/index.html> (accessed 09.10.2017).
- Mazov, S.V. 2008. *Politika SSSR v Zapadnoy Afrike, 1956–1964: neizvestnye stranitsy istorii kholodnoy voyny* [The USSR Policy in West Africa, 1956–1964: Unknown Pages of the Cold War History]. Moscow: Nauka.
- Minot, G. 1983. Toward the African Cinema. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 12 (2): 37–43.
- Sawadogo, B. 2014. Dakan, Destiny. In Stefanson, B., and Petty, Sh. (eds.), *Directory of World Cinema Africa* (pp.71–72). Bristol: Intellect.
- Sztompka, P. 2000a. Cultural Trauma: The Other Face of Social Change. *The European Journal of Social Theory* 4: 449–466.

- Sztompka, P. 2000b. The Ambivalence of Social Change. Triumph or Trauma? *Polish Sociological Review* 131: 275–290.
- Sztompka, P. 2004. The Trauma of Social Change: A Case of Postcommunist Societies. In Alexander, J.C., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N.J., and Sztompka, P. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (pp. 155–195). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- <https://www.campboiro.org/> (website dedicated to the victims of Sékou Touré's repressions) (accessed 25.02.2019).
- <http://www.webguinee.net/blogguinee/2008/09/vie-et-mort-de-lansana-beavogui/> (testimony by the former Guinean Minister of Health M. Beavogui) (accessed 01.08.2018).

### **Personal Communications**

- Barry, Sékoumar. Film director. December 1, 2017. Conakry
- Camara, Mariama. ONACIG Director General. November 10, 2017. Conakry
- Cissé, Ousman. Former Syli-cinema officer. December 18, 2017. Conakry
- Condé, Kalifa. Actor, cultural worker. February 18, 2016. Conakry
- Cousin, Jeanne. Independent researcher. March 6, 2016; April 12, 2016; February 19, 2017. Conakry
- Diagne, Eva. Costa Diagne's daughter. February 24, 2016. Conakry
- Diakité, Moussa Kémoko. Film director. February 25, 2017; March 15, 2017; April 13, 2017; June 1, 2017. Conakry
- Diallo, Aminata. Costa Diagne's widow. February 26, 2016. Conakry
- Diallo, Bailo Teliwel. Retired Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Guinea. March 18, 2016. Conakry
- Diallo, Ibrahima. Photographer, former Syli-cinema officer. November 3, 2017. Conakry
- Diallo, Thierno Souleymane. Film director. February 23, 2019. Conakry
- Diarso, Abdoulaye. ONACIG officer. March 1, 2016; May 1, 2016. Conakry
- Keita, Daouda. Film director. February 12, 2016. Conakry
- Lamah, Noel. ONACIG Deputy Director General. June 18, 2016. Conakry
- Markov, Alexander. Documentary film director. March 2, 2017; October 25, 2017. Saint Petersburg
- Sylla, Himy. Cameraman, former officer of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Guinea. March 8, 2016; March 11, 2016. Conakry
- Toukara, Alsény. Film director. July 13, 2017. Conakry

### **III. Legacy of the Past and Political Processes in Contemporary Africa**



# THE INFLUENCE OF INDIGENOUS ADMINISTRATION ON POST-INDEPENDENCE ADMINISTRATION IN TANZANIA

*Jason Nkyabonaki*

Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy,  
Karume Campus, Zanzibar

## **Introduction**

In pre-colonial times, communities in today's Tanzania each had their own administrative systems which included legal system, land administration, administration of justice based on respective customs and practices. These customs were enforced by elders, clan leaders (and in some areas kings/chiefs) who performed both civic and spiritual duties. This was done in both centralized and less centralized communities (Gumede 2016). The current assessment of public administration in Tanzania reveals many particular predicaments and evokes various conceptual and practical challenges between indigenous and modern administration principles. Tanzania has over 120 tribes and each tribe's cultural orientation seems to shape individuals who join the public service (Glickman1995). To lump these tribes' cultural orientations together can be misleading because differences are often conspicuous, even remarkable (Tordoff 1962).

The political analysts emphasize the main distinction of indigenous administrative systems in Tanzania to be based on a continuum line between centralized authority and loosely coupled authority (Low 1965). The general shared feature of pre-colonial administrative systems in highly decentralized and less decentralized communities was the administrative behaviour of the power wielders rather than the structure (Fourie 2016). The fluid nature of the administrative systems in that epoch led to fusion of power to the administrators, non-impartiality between office and personal life, favoritism to ethnic or clan relatives and marginalization of women in administrative positions (Pratt1965; Schapera 1970). These variables are gauged on post independence administration power wielders behavior in order to liaise the influence of indigenous administration on modern administration principles of public governance realm. The examples of chief-



tainship are drawn from certain communities such as – Buhaya kingdom (Kagera region of today), Mangi chieftainship in Kilimanjaro region of today. Meanwhile, the Hehe chieftainship under Mkwawa in today's Iringa region, as well as Mtemi chief among the Sukuma communities in today's Mwanza region. The indigenous structures of governance whether altered or sustained have positively or negatively influenced the post independence administrative behavior. The chapter therefore, zeroes on the conventional evidence that post-independence administrative behavior in the public governance realm connotes indigenous administrative behavior.

The framework of the debate is on two perspectives. One perspective views the indigenous administrative systems to have had no foundations to qualify them to be called governance systems. The scholarship that considers pre-colonial Africa to have had no organization has made scholars such as Mair (1962) to explain that pre-colonial African governments were 'primitive' as she puts it aptly, 'it is a fact of history that it was the European peoples who discovered the others, and in most cases established political dominion over them, and not vice versa, and the reason is not difficult to find... they possessed technical superiority in a number of fields'. However, these views are disqualified by scholars on the other perspective who argue that, indigenous administrative systems were well institutionalized and had a replica to some extent with the later colonial administrative structures and behaviors that were imposed. This is correctly presented by (Pratt 1965) who argues that the history of indigenous administration provides a good illustration of the role of pre-colonial institutions during the colonial period. On the other hand, the indigenous administration had various unifying ceremonies and symbols such as the harvest festivals and prayer day. For example, among the Haya tribe, *omukama* referring to a chief, was in charge of offering sacrifices on the chosen big tree mostly local beer *rubisi* in order to please the gods in case of disease eruption, extended draught or floods. Indeed, British colonial officials were impressed by these systems in Tanzania and therefore applied the indirect rule in most communities with efficient administration. Therefore, from this anecdotal evidence one appreciates that Tanzanian indigenous administrative systems were well established and capable of yielding common good to the civilians to use the concept. Indigenous administrative systems refer to a whole set of aspects

in the administration of public affairs including the structures, behavioral patterns, rules, procedures, norms, role occupants and the relationships among them. These administrative systems did not operate in a vacuum. The major determinant of the administrative system was the economy environment which influenced other variables such as population size, soil fertility and rain variance.

The type of economy had a reciprocal relationship with an administrative system. For example, pastoral economy communities had had a decentralized administrative system while agricultural economy societies with permanent crops fell under centralized administrative systems. The pastoralists were always on their toes in search for grazing grounds and the farmers were settled on permanent premises. In this regard, the Haya and Chagga tribes engaged in agricultural economy, whilst the Sukuma were mainly pastoralists, and thus acquiring centralized administration for the former two tribes and decentralized administration for the later. The debate is pushed further by political scientists, who notice the presence of a dual authority structure in Africa, where central governments (be they colonial or independent) had to confront with the power of precolonial leaders (Mamdani 1996; Boone 2003). In independent Tanganyika, the post independence leadership abolished chiefdoms in 1962 one year after independence in 1961. However, the behavior of public administrators in the public administration despite of the abolition of chiefdoms structures continued to reflect the behavior terrain of former traditional rulers. Scholars such as Busia (1951) argues that, pre-colonial institutions heavily shaped the quality of government, and hence the success of modernization efforts, in colonial and post-colonial Africa. Also Keulder (1998) argues that modern institutions work better when there are strong traditional institutions to build upon. In fragmented groups, where such accountability mechanisms were weak or absent, modernization gave unprecedented power to abusive local leaders, leading to tyranny and disorder. In other words, the colonial experience did not simply mould, for better or worse the institutions of the colonies but was itself heavily influenced by the institutions that colonizers found upon their arrival (Gumede 2016).

### **Characteristics of pre-colonial administration**

African indigenous administrative systems are classified under two forms less centralized and centralized states. The ultimate end of tradi-

tional authority was to yield common good. In pre-colonial times, communities in Africa had had their own legal system based on their customs and practices (Basheka 2015). These customs were enforced by elders, clan leaders (and in some areas kings/chiefs) who performed both civic and spiritual duties. The community determined the powers exercised by the clan elders. These powers included keeping peace, settling disputes (involving marriage, divorce, the marital status of women, the rights of children, inheritance, election of customary heirs and land), performance of rituals, protection of gods and shrines and guarding against drought, famine and other disasters (Lee-Smith 1997: 123–124). According to Schapera (1970) the managing of these functions needed an administrative system that was to ensure the implementation of these activities.

The following section highlights the influence of indigenous administrative behavior to post independence administrators.

### **The Influence of indigenous administration to post-independence administrators' behavior**

The eminent administrative behaviour in indigenous systems was power centralization. The chiefs centralized administrative powers to their personal heads and decentralization or devolution of power was avoided. Post-independence Tanzania saw the founder of the nation Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere concentrating all powers over his head. He abolished the chiefdoms in 1962 and above all the administrative powers of other centres were all accorded to him. The establishment of a single party constitution in 1965 resulted to over centralization of power as it was in the chiefdoms epoch. The father of the nation, whose attributes towards nation building are lauded, became the president of the country, head of the state and government, chairperson of the only existing party and assumed office for 24 years from 1961–1985. This evidence of post-independence administration behavior reveals the influence of indigenous systems behavior. The king or chief was to rule permanently till death. The constitutional terms of tenure for the president were entrenched in the constitution in 1984. According to (Makinana 2016) most post independence public leaders were having power centralization hangover memories as found in the indigenous administration system.

Furthermore, Tanzanian history shows a clear continuity of pre-colonial institutions, and stresses their crucial role in modernization.

Historical accounts from both the colonial and the postcolonial periods support a 'indigenous administrative system' to be compatible with modern public administration in Tanzania and the western values for modernization should be taken positively as the hybrid allows to accommodate indigenous Tanzanian social systems in the ecology of the globe administration. It is in this area where Ekeh (1975) described African public administration to be embedding two 'publics'. The two publics refer to informal and formal public whereby patronage and partisanship prevail as were in indigenous administration. Hence, I argue that, Ekeh (ibid.) with his two publics misses a point on administration development which is a product of strong indigenous Tanzanian administrative systems.

Hence, Tanzanianization which was taken to be a re-modification of ineffective imbalance in the post independence administrative practices was a mile stone towards the establishment of administration congruency between indigenous and modern principles. The few areas to consider in the portraying of congruency entail administration of justice, land administration and recruitment of personnel in the public duties.

Traditional patterns of politics influenced the nature of the post-colonial state itself (Englebert 2000). Elsewhere, pre-colonial institutions continued to play an important role at the local level, where postcolonial African regimes (like their colonial predecessors) could not achieve their objectives without the cooperation of traditional power holders. Accordingly, Ake (2000) observes that, post-colonial heads of state often had to come to pacts with traditional authorities in order to be able to govern the country. However, in Tanzania the chiefdoms were abolished formally as units of governance though communities remained loyal to their chiefs informally.

### **Administration of justice**

Starting on the legal system and administration system one may learn that the two systems are congruent. In indigenous system of administration, a king was a sole source of justice and the appointed officials of the king to ensure justice were liable and accountable to him (Schapera 1970). The punishments were set and established by the king who was a chief administrator of the public service. People believed more on the negotiations and mediation as well as revenge

where need be. The colonial government in Tanzania merged the administration of justice systems and allowed the customary practices to continue and civil practices to be practiced. Administration of justice must provide stability in the society/polity which is through rule of law that is indispensable for a just society for the preservation of the life, liberty, and property of its citizens (Martin 2003). There was neither property nor citizens' rights for the people and in many cases the people were not citizens but subjects. In addition to the absence of the rule of law, colonial laws were by themselves very notorious and in many cases entitled, as colonial 'administrators to imprison any African *sujet* indefinitely and without charge or trial' (Njoh 2006). The general use of native chiefs, selected not in line with traditional legitimacy but according to loyalty to the European administrator in what is described as indirect rule in British Africa, has been described by Professor Mahmood Mamdani as 'decentralized despotism'. In regions where there were no chiefs, Europeans invented chiefs and imposed them on the people, and always stressed tribal differences, thereby creating differences amongst the people. Chiefs had to enforce forced labor, ensure compulsory crop cultivation, recruit labor, collect taxes and fulfill other state requirements. These chiefs were made to rule as if they were the law and the people were under their jurisdiction. The chiefs were prosecutors as well as judges, who employed the jailer to hold their victims in custody as it pleased them: Thanks to the command and support, chiefs had more power than any oriental despot (Mamdani 1996). However, this reveals a congruency between indigenous administration of justice and modern administration in Africa.

In the post independence era a president takes a charge of ensuring justice through appointments of court officials and in most cases the independence of the judiciary is questioned in practice as the executive (administration) seem to influence the judiciary. In Tanzania, this has been a phenomenon from independence to date<sup>1</sup>. Nyerere for instance said if one was caught engaged in corruption, the administration did not leave the punishment to be issued by the court but the administration was to ensure that the magistrate implements administrative order. The order was for the guilty individual to be imprisoned with 12 strokes on his/her buttocks on the day he/she starts her punishment and 12 strokes on the day of ending her imprisonment<sup>2</sup>. It's of no difference from the

traditional administration of justice in modern public administration. Therefore, in that aspect the administration of justice is congruent between the two systems. The fifth phase government that came to power in 2015–2020 under President John Pombe Magufuli has revealed more the influence of indigenous administration to modern administration. The words of leaders/administrators without circulars are implemented as laws. For example, when the president ordered all vehicles that would transcend and pass through the fast bus tracks/roads to be busted the tires by traffic police officers, an order was implemented while it was against the rule of law. The behavior reflects the powers of a king or chief in indigenous administration who at his pleasure would decide anything at any time, as he was the law and the law was him. For example, in the Haya tribe, *omukama* if he walked around and admired a married woman, the husband of that woman had two choices to accept or die. This influence of indigenous administration behavior has made the modern administration in post independence Tanzania to be problematic. The institutions of governance rely more on personal values rather than established principles. The public administrator has discretion of whom to employ or fire without observing the principles. Recruitment based on ethnicity, religious inclination or other personal relationships with a chief administrator determine how one may far be successful in modern Tanzania. Meritocracy stands a second chance against personal relationship. The ties between an individual and an administrator determine how much one has to receive the public service. This is a reflection of the Mangi in Kilimanjaro who used to grab land from the people and grant it to the clan mates. This is of no difference with the current administrators' behavior whereby personal relationships matter for one to secure an employment or public service.

Post-independence Tanzanian political class and administration endeavored to foster the congruency between the two systems. Hence, the Tanganyikanization, intended to have modern legal system that adhere to indigenous systems whereby Tanzania has succeeded to do so through ensuring customary laws are entrenched in the civil law. Therefore, this has increased the potential of the Tanzanians to have a better system of administering justice (Riggs 1964).

The next section discusses the land administration in indigenous era and modern times of administration.

## **Land administration**

In pre-colonial Africa land belonged solely to the king and the powers of the king to own land was rooted in the customary principles. The dwellers of the kingdom or chiefdom were all to pay tribute to the king/chief through presenting the harvests they made from the land. This was called a service to the majesty. Traditional authority was the repository of political-administrative power in the pre-colonial period. To this effect, provision of services such as land administration, construction of feeder roads, latrines, dispute resolution, wells, etc. were all the sole prerogative of traditional leaders during this period. The resources for the provision of these services were in the form of levies, donations, royalties and tributes. In Tanzania, a president is constitutionally pronounced as the owner of the land and people should pay tribute through taxation. Through this line of argument, one finds out that there is a congruency between the indigenous and post independence administrative system of land in Tanzania. What Riggs (1964) calls the prismatic society trend, is through assessing these countries as having modern values of administration amidst traditional values. The rainbow of the indigenous and modern administrative behavior is explicit in Tanzania's public sector. A practical experience of land administration both under customary and civil law is provided by Tanzania after the decision to nationalize land under the president<sup>3</sup>. Tanzania during the Ujamaa period land was declared as an asset of the government or president and the president would evacuate people from one area to another. This is a replica of the indigenous administrative systems under Mtemi in Sukuma tribe or Mangi in Kilimanjaro. In the year 2012 after the Dar es salaam floods of December, the municipal Council of Kinondoni in Dar es Salaam, claimed to be having no land to settle the floods victims. The president by then, Dr Jakaya Kikwete ordered the authority of Kinondoni municipality to allocate land at Magwepande to all flood victims. Therefore, this shows the congruency between the indigenous land administration under the king and modern African administration under the president.

In modern administration during colonialism and post-independence, appointment was of no difference because those appointed to join public service were mainly sons of the chief or king. The hybrid-established system was congruent with the traditional personnel recruitment system. The post independence African administration

found itself having the extension of the congruency between the indigenous and colonial administrative system. Recruitment in the public service was done under patronage and personalismo, which observed no principles of western modern bureaucracy of specialization and merit. The only merit was African and closeness to the employing authority. To reveal, this in Tanzania from 1977 after the party supremacy the powers the criteria to employment included one to be a party member. This implicitly makes this presentation to argue that because of the need to extend the powers of recruitment at liberty like in the traditional administration, the president who was the head of state, commander in chief and chairperson of the only ruling political party decided to increase the scope of his control and influence on recruitment<sup>4</sup>. The culture of administration favoritism is also congruent between the indigenous and modern administration. The spoil system was applied in Africa's public administration and this fitted the already indigenous administrative system. This is also observed in post-independence Tanzania through what Mukandala (2001) calls personalismo or technical know who and not know what. The reflection of the pre-colonial favoritism in the public service is still vivid to date. For example, in Tanzania public service, recruitment is done by the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat which should be trusted by the job applicants. However, most job applicants look at the Secretariat as being overshadowed by the politics of *who knows whom*. Patrimonialism rather than academic merit has been the base for public service recruitment and promotion in post-independence Tanzania.

The problem that Ekeh (1975) and others from a Eurocentric perspective present regarding those practice is that, the administrators' recruitment in Africa does not observe merit as Europe. Nevertheless, I think is a fallacy of comparison as each society should have its own way of reaching its service provision target. This African network establishment is easy and less costly than what the new Public Administration propagates on social capital development. The congruency in the two systems is realizable, but as far as it does not encroach in total the Western elements, Ekeh tends to think and analyze it as resulting to administrative inefficiency.

To escalate the discussion, the congruency of indigenous and modern administration has led to a debate concerning whether Africa's current administrative malaise is a function of her pre-colonial



legacy. On the one hand some scholars suggest that because Africans value kinships and tend to empathize with one another, Max Weber's principles of bureaucracy do not sit well with them. Therefore one hundred years of efforts to graft western derived public administration models on Africa has been a fruitless exercise (Keulder 1998). On the other hand, other scholars dismiss such lines of argument by asserting that colonialism has dented and in some cases completely destroyed the underlying foundations of Tanzanian value systems, especially in so far as they relate to systems of governance. Therefore, if the introduced Max Weber-based administrative systems are not working the explanation may lie elsewhere, including their having been introduced in a half-heartedly manner. Note that before colonialism, Tanzania had thriving governance systems that were very well developed, with many of them having Max Weber's attributes of a rational bureaucracy (Martin 2012). In Tanzania's most tribes there existed democratically managing Elders Council based on Age sets.

The colonial scramble for Africa indiscriminately cut across all these varying systems of administration and proceeded to rule and administer Tanzania in ways that were not only different from indigenous systems, but were on the basis of the colonizing power. The British administration made some use of indigenous systems of administration. For example, the British colonial system of 'indirect rule' was used in Tanzania. Local chiefs were to administer their areas of jurisdiction and promote loyalty to the colonial government. Where indirect rule was practiced, the ethnic groups on which it was applied had their native systems strengthened and entrenched giving rise to feelings of superiority.

## **Conclusions**

Tanzania before colonialism was characterized by a large degree of pluralism and flexibility. The country consisted not of closed reproducing entities, equipped with unique unchanging cultures, but of more fluid units that would readily incorporate outsiders (even whites) into the community as long as they accepted its customs, and where the sense of obligation and solidarity went beyond that of the nuclear family.

Pre-colonial Tanzanian societies were of a highly varied nature. They could be either stateless, state run or kingdoms, but most were

founded on the principles of communalism in that they were self-governing, autonomous entities, and in that all members took part, directly or indirectly, in the daily running of the tribe. Land was held commonly and could not be bought or sold, although other things, such as cattle, were owned individually. In those societies that were not stateless, the chiefs ran the daily affairs of the tribe together with one or more councils. These councils simultaneously informed the chief, checked his powers and made policy by reaching unanimous decisions. If unanimity was not reached, a village assembly would be called to debate the issue and majority ruling would now apply.

The role of the chief during such meetings was to sum up what had been said and attempted to form some consensus among the diverse opinions. Hence, the chief's decision became bounding and final. Many tribes, especially those that were stateless, had no central authority and no class system, and many of those that did could depose a chief that was thought to have abused his power.

In many parts of Tanzania, the indigenous system of government survived and was used by the colonial powers alongside the colonial system. This is one of the reasons why the structures of such political and administrative institutions still exist in Tanzania today, though informally after official abolition in 1962. Although mostly in a more fixed and static form, due to the colonial powers having rearranged the tribal landscape and employed chiefs as virtual colonial administrators that served as buffers between themselves and the masses, the indigenous leaders gained prominence in modern administration.

While pre-colonial indigenous Tanzanian systems had many appealing qualities, something that has been widely advocated, if not practiced, by many post-independence African leaders and Africanists generally, they have some obvious weaknesses when attempting to build a centralized state around them. The fact that chieftaincy is mostly based on kinship, for instance, is problematic because of the exclusive nature of leadership that this entails, which is especially problematic in countries with ethnic antagonisms. Secondly, some of the customs of indigenous Tanzanian society might have been effective in relatively smaller-scale societies but are less likely to be so in the larger states of present day Tanzania.

It is therefore important to realize that the relevance and usefulness of traditional or pre-colonial African institutions and customs de-

pend upon whether one views African culture, or any culture for that matter, as static, or whether African culture is deemed to have evolved and changed, to some extent because of outside influence and colonialism. Culture must be seen as dynamic, and pre-colonial Tanzanian cultures seen to be historical manifestations that are relevant in their entirety only to that specific period of time. Otherwise, they are useless as sources of inspiration for contemporary societies. Therefore, any discussion of Tanzanian public administration has at least few courses from the indigenous administrative system today despite the challenges of colonialism. Chieftaincy, though abolished in 1962, has informally co-existed and its impact is reflected through individuals who serve as administrators in the public realm.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> APRM Report 2010: Good Governance Indicators in Tanzania.

<sup>2</sup> Hotuba ya Mwalimu J.K. Nyerere 1992 – Msasani, Dar es Salaam.

<sup>3</sup> Arusha Declaration Document, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> ECA (1989) African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Scio-Economic Recovery and Transformation. Addis Ababa. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

### References

- Ake, C. 2000. Deeper into Original Sin: The Context of Ethical Crisis in African Public Services. In Mukandala, R.S. (ed.) *African Public Administration: A Reader*. Harare: AAPS Books.
- Audrey, R.I. (ed.). 1960. *East African Chiefs: A Study of Political Development in Some Uganda and Tanganyika Tribes*. London: OUP.
- Basheka, B.C. 2015. Indigenous Africa's Governance Architecture: A Need for African Public Administration Theory? *Journal of Public Administration* 50 (3): 466–484.
- Boone, C. 2003. *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Busia, K.A. 1951. *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*. London: OUP.
- Ekeh, P. 1975. Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17 (1): 91–112.
- Engelbert, P. 2000. Solving the Mystery of the Africa Dummy. *World Development* 28 (10): 1821–1835.
- Fourie, D. 2016. Good Governance in Relation to Public Administration: Future Implications for Service Delivery Performance. *Administratio Publica* 24 (1): 31–44.

- Glickman, H. 1995. *Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in Africa*. Atlanta, GA: African Studies Association Press.
- Gumede, W. 2016. Africa's Dual Governance System. <http://democracy-works.org.za/africas-dual-governance-system/> (accessed 5 July 2016).
- Keulder, C. 1998. *Traditional Leaders and Local Government in Africa: Lessons for South Africa*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Lee-Smith, D. 1997. *My House is My Husband*. Lund: Lund University.
- Low, D.A. 1965. Uganda: The Establishment of the Protectorate, 1894–1919. In Harlow, V., and Chilver, E.M. (eds.), *History of East Africa*. Vol. II. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mair, L. 1962. *Primitive Government*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Makinana, A. 2016. Traditional Leaders Seek Immunity from Law. *City Press*. 21 August 2016.
- Mamdani, M. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism, Nationalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Martin, D.F. 2003. *Rethinking the Design of Indigenous Organizations: The Need for Strategic Engagement*. Discussion paper no. 248/2003. Canberra: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University.
- Martin, G. 2012. *African Political Thought*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mukandala, R. 2001. *African Public Administration in Africa: A Reader*. Harare: African Association for Public Administration and Management.
- Njoh, J.A. 2006. *Tradition, Culture and Development in Africa: Historical Lessons for Modern Development Planning*. Abingdon: Ashgate.
- Pratt, R.C. 1965. Administration and Politics in Uganda, 1919–1945. In Harlow, V. and Chilver, E.M. (eds.), *History of East Africa*. Vol. II. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Riggs, F.W. 1964. *Administration of Developing Countries*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Schapera, I. 1970. *Tribal Innovators: Tswana Chiefs and Social Change, 1795–1940: The Administration of Change in Africa*. New York; London: Dunellen.
- Tordoff, W. 1962. The Ashanti Confederacy. *Journal of African History* 3 (3): 399–417.

# THE IMPACTS OF PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL POLITICAL TRADITION ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES IN PRESENT-DAY CÔTE D'IVOIRE

*Jean-Claude Meledje*

Federal Department of Industry,  
Innovation and Science, Canberra

## **Introduction**

How can the people of Côte d'Ivoire re-launch themselves from the world of pre-colonialism to the world of post-colonialism? How can they recuperate their lost land, employment and power? These are fundamental questions crying out for a response, requiring historical approaches and analytical observation of specific *dossiers*. This chapter examines the impact of pre-colonial and colonial tradition of wage and unemployment that were introduced by the French imperial power. It also demonstrates their effects on political and social systems in contemporary Côte d'Ivoire and suggests improvements to policies that will assist Ivorians in reclaiming their lost land and facilitate their employment.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the current land conflicts that are occurring across the southern half of the country and the rise of unemployment need to be analysed from an historical perspective because the seeds of these conflicts were planted by French colonialists. In the past, people in Côte d'Ivoire integrated themselves harmoniously in the economic fabric of their societies without the necessity of seeking paid employment. Its introduction as a cardinal value has triggered the rise of unemployment which is still significantly impacting the Ivorian youth today. On the other hand, the notion of paid employment and land rights, which were relatively unknown from the nation's economic, political and social landscape were imposed upon the consciousness of the Ivorian populations (see also Leonard and Ibo 1994).

In the past 30 years, at all levels, the Ivorian political elite has been involved in a never-ending battle for power. This includes verbal and physical violence, the restriction of fundamental freedoms, conscience purchases, real political blackmail, rebellion, civil-military war, coup d'état, and so forth (Meledje 2016). This chapter suggests

that since Côte d'Ivoire has lost its foundational values and Ivorians face all manners of economic, social and institutional insecurities, the country needs a fundamental change of paradigm in the way it does business. It is time to turn the page on this sad chapter in the nation's history and move toward modernity, and democratic governance through deliberative democracy.

Despite the relevance of these topics, the primary literature is limited concerning the origins of paid work and land ownership disputes in Côte d'Ivoire. Hence, this chapter will draw on secondary information, specifically in relation to the country's historical background. This includes contemporary administrative *dossiers*, as well as publications of historians or ethnologists, contemporary evidence from diverse academic journals and Internet sites.

### **Did wage and unemployment exist during the pre-colonial period?**

After a significant period of prosperity during the first two decades of its independence declared on 7 August 1960, Côte d'Ivoire has been dangerously going through a disastrous period since the 1980s. This is dominated by poverty and misery which ratio seems to never stop growing. According to DSRP (2009), while it was almost negligible in the past, the household poverty ratio was 10% in 1985. This strategic document for poverty reduction suggested that by the mid-90s it was 36.8% and 48.9% in the second half of the 2000s. (It must be acknowledged that poverty in Côte d'Ivoire manifests itself particularly in people's inability to insert themselves into the nation's economic fabric [DSRP 2009: 1]). In 2008, youth unemployment was 24.2% for those who were between 15 and 24 years old and 17.4% for those who were between 25 and 34 years old. The tabloid press of Côte d'Ivoire talked about 4 million unemployed, which is one-fifth of the total population, but almost half of the economically active population (Loba 2016; see also UNHRC 2015: 9).

Faced with those bewildering statistics, it is important to ask how a country which was cited as an example for development model in the 1980s has reached as high a level of unemployment (Meledje 2016). Furthermore, unemployment which was only a residual reality in the past, has now become an unavoidable trap for young Ivorians. To understand how the issues of paid work and unemployment emerged in the Ivorian social and economic landscape while they were

completely unknown beforehand, we need to look at the pre-colonial period.

Côte d'Ivoire was under the French colonial control from around 1880 until independence. As Samir Amin noted in his interview with Lucien Degoy, there is a strong link between colonialism and capitalism and the two systems are inseparable as capitalism was colonialist and more precisely imperialist throughout every step of its development (Degoy 2005). As a part of an essential component of capitalism, French colonisation quickly established in its conquered territory a system to organise civil society and its own production activities beneficial for France. However, one of the main characteristics of this system remains the notion of paid work and consequently unemployment. As Loba (2016) observed, before the colonial system was imposed on them, the people from what is now called Côte d'Ivoire did not have the notion of work. Surely, they could not all have the luxury of remaining idle and that everyone could have a job at some point. Nonetheless, was it an employment as such?

While the concept of work is linked to the idea of torture, suffering, intense effort and pain, which cannot be rewarded, employment adds to the notion of work the relative aspect of decency and remuneration. Economically speaking, work is a simple factor of production and fits in the slavery example. On the other hand, employment is the result of a voluntary agreement between a person who sells his/her work-related skills to another individual who is a consumer running his/her business and therefore buying the skills. It is a social activity enabling individuals to realise their potential, earn an income and live decently (Loba 2016: 144).

One can argue that based on the definition above, employment could not be known among the populations of pre-colonial Côte d'Ivoire. They were pre-capitalist societies with a subsistence economy for most of them (Loba 2016: 145). Even if we admit that some of those societies had already developed a commercial exchange system and currency, many households and lineages were able to satisfy their needs thanks to multiple activities and trade-off. This occurred in a social and economic context where currency as an exchange mechanism was not well known or not known at all. Furthermore, employment in terms of a remunerated work done for yourself or for an individual could not exist, and individuals were capable of being

inserted in the economic fabric of pre-colonial society because of family traditions. It is worth noting that those who could not work were supported by the community. Paid work and unemployment were only introduced in Côte d'Ivoire by the Europeans. Immediately after the establishment of their domination, they introduced the local populations to the capitalist system of production, making remunerated work one of the cardinal values of the new order, followed by the subsequent monetarisation of the economy, and the rise of individualism (Loba 2016: 146).

### **The colonial context: Employment and unemployment**

Firstly, it needs to be said that employment originated in Côte d'Ivoire during the colonial era. On one hand, there was the rise of entrepreneurship dynamic among the local populations. On the other hand, there was the action of the colonial administration. Since Côte d'Ivoire was declared a French colony, it was up to France to develop its territory. The construction and protection of colonial military-administrative sites, the installation of a formal business and private enterprises were strongly encouraged by the French authorities, the opening of large infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, telegraph lines, railways, etc.) required a workforce that could not be satisfied by the number of Europeans in the colony (Adjami 2016). It is fair to note that even if this number of Europeans was enough to cover the demand, certain activities were considered as less interesting for the white person and could only be given to local indigenous people who were ready to do, or otherwise made do, the dirty work. This was a driver of France's so-called 'massive recruitment' strategic policy in the country.

However, we need to be careful about the notion of 'recruitment' since there was no job advertisement, let alone a selection criterion or an employment bureau. One of the strategies used for recruitment was coercion and whip used first informally and then systemised by the legal practice of the chore, initiated in Madagascar in 1896. This practice was extended to all the French colonies in Africa. Mainly in *Afrique Occidentale Française* (AOF), French West African colonies, the practice of chore and forced labour which were already informally in place was institutionalised by an order of the Governor General of the colonies in 1900. According to this order, each colony



should have a financial autonomy and should not cost the metropolis (France) anything. This was recognised and reinforced by the 1904 decree (Fall 1993). This was a period followed by the economic, social and cultural transformations due to transatlantic contracts (Loba 2016: 150).

Therefore, since the initial stage of the colonisation, compulsory labour related to chore or forced labour executed within the framework of great work of public interest, the management of civil and military administration on behalf of private operators was the dominant form of employment. To satisfy such a labour market, what was required for the colonial master at the beginning was just to enter the territory of a certain tribe with a few security guards to capture dozens of brave indigenous people who were later flogged or otherwise compelled into forced labour. Beside this brutal and alienated form of employment, a relatively free style of employment was developed despite the introduction of the ideas of coercion (Fall 1993).

It is evident that initially Europeans were forbidden to venture further on the coast because of the legitimate criticism and hostility of the local populations against Europeans. It must be acknowledged that if 'business' was successful from the Europeans perspective, it must be because local brokers and indigenous people also played a significant part by taking advantage of all the business opportunities that were available for them. Obviously, the products such as palm oil or native rubber and all other products were more unlikely to end up in the offices of European traders without the contribution and skills of local workforce (Meledje 2016).

For instance, Bernard Belin Dadié was probably one of the most prolific writers within the neo-African literature. At independence, he served as Chief of Staff for the Ministry of National Education, Director for Cultural Affairs, and Inspector-General for Arts. Then in 1977–1986, he served as the Ivorian Minister for Arts and Information. However, his grandfather Belin Dadié contributed to the penetration of France in Assinie, a dependent territory in the Agni-Sanwi kingdom of Krindjabo. An African-French, war veteran and junior officer, he was denied by the French authority the same basic rights that were so freely granted to other French people to enjoy. However, he was also committed to improve the status of the colonial masters without hatred, without complex and without anger (Banco.info 2019).

Ultimately, as Loba (2016) argued, it is worth keeping in mind that the birth of the issue of employment in the Ivorian context is due to the instauration of the colonial system. In contrast, although a certain number of individuals among the floating population who were unable to get themselves hired soon after arrival, unemployment is practically an unknown reality prior to independence. Equally, it is also worth pointing out that in order to tackle the movements of re-ventication in the immediate post-war period, the colonial administration adopted the labour code of French overseas territories by allocating numerous social advantages to employees from the modern sectors while abandoning the rest of the population including employees from the so-called traditional sectors. Those advantages included, among other things, the *salaires minimal interprofessionnel garanti (SMIG)*, or minimal wage and family allowances conferring them a so-called privileged status associated to modern life and social success (Bazin and Ghabéli 1997). As a result, paid work became the sector of activity that attracted anyone who was illegible for work and triggering a massive rural exodus principally toward Abidjan, the nation's capital. Since no one could afford to remain unemployed for a long period in urban centres like Abidjan, the number of modern sector employees related to economic activities as well as administrative officers and those from the private sector reached the astounding number of 181,000 on the eve of independence for a national population estimated at 3, 815 181 in 1963. In 2019, the national population is estimated at 24, 661 311 (Countrymeters 2019).

### **The unresolved agricultural land problems**

It should be stressed that the current land conflicts occurring in Côte d'Ivoire should be examined from the perspective of the movements of large-scale agricultural colonisation which marked the Ivorian rural history since the colonial period, and singularly since the nation's independence (Chauveau 2000). As many commentators have rightly pointed out, the so-called 'development' of Côte d'Ivoire as a colony was possible partly through the exploitation of its potential land-forest. To guaranty himself the exclusive exploitation rights, the coloniser proceeded by negating the rights of local populations from 1904 (Verdeaux 1997).

This was followed by the first decree adopted on 23 October 1904, which was published in an article stating that vacant lands and lands

without owners in the French colonies and territories of West Africa belong to the state. According to the second decree of 24 July 1906, the French authority had the right to award concessions or full ownership of the lands to companies or individuals once those lands had been registered. This was carried out in accordance with strict administrative procedures. It should be noted that the colonial land tenure legislation adopted by the General Government of French-speaking West Africa at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was guided by two general principles: on the one hand, it was entirely up to the French administration to manage land ownership rights and accesses, but on the other hand, the delivery of those rights depended on the ‘development of the land’ as a key criterion (Bonnecase 2014).

Forestry resources of southern Côte d’Ivoire largely contributed to the Ivorian economy because it was divided between colonial agricultural exploitations, tropical timber production, and land-ownership processes (Léonard and Ibo 1994; Verdeaux 1997). Yet as a common practice, only agricultural land that has been already exploited and constituted the village territory was given to the indigenous people with strict restrictions against expansion (Verdeaux 1997).

While the southern part of Côte d’Ivoire had a high capacity and enormous potential for producing natural agricultural products, there was a labour shortage. Therefore, colonisers requested cheap labour largely from the northern part of Côte d’Ivoire and Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso. Nonetheless, the desertions of worksites by employees due to bad treatment and those who were running away from forced labour triggered the first spontaneous migrations towards the villagers’ plantations in the South-East (Verdeaux 1997).

It was in that region of the country that in 1880, Verdi and De Bretigniere introduced coffee and cocoa growing. It was also in that region that the work of migrants in the plantations was exchanged for a piece of land, as migrants could not afford it (Verdeaux 1997). This appeared to mark the beginning of land access for West African foreigners. The colonial authorities supported the agrarian colonisation movement that followed because it enabled the production of exportable crops such as coffee and cocoa. Moreover, they contributed to the *mise en place* of significant migration flows predominantly in the central-western part of Côte d’Ivoire by creating six villages of colonisation for Upper Volta people in 1934 (Chauveau

2000; Chauveau *et al.* 2006; Kouadio and Desdoigts 2012). What we can observe is that those migrations prior to becoming free and economically motivated depended on the development of the resources of the colony.

Consequently, during the colonial era, the indigenous people in the concerned regions suffered from a lot of frustration caused by the weakening of their agricultural revenues because of the dispossession of their lands-forests that were given to the state. In addition to this challenge, the indigenous people were forced to compete with new migrants who were imposed in Côte d'Ivoire as a result of the 'development policy' of the colony of Côte d'Ivoire. A study by Adjami (2016) also explains the colonial history of Côte d'Ivoire and the migration movements towards the country during that period:

Côte d'Ivoire had been a magnet for settlement of peoples from neighboring West African areas now constituting Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Liberia, and Ghana since pre-colonial times. It became a French colony in 1893 and comprised a population of 1,959,360 people in 1901. Côte d'Ivoire possessed fertile and uncultivated agricultural land but had low population density. The French therefore began to forcibly recruit laborers from neighboring colonies for resettlement in Côte d'Ivoire. The largest source of manual laborers was in Haute Volta (Upper Volta), now Burkina Faso, which became a French colony in 1919. In 1932, France annexed part of Haute Volta to the land mass of Côte d'Ivoire. This facilitated the mass forced recruitment of Burkinabè to work on major projects, like the rail line between Abidjan and Ouagadougou and ports in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as develop Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa and coffee plantation economy. Although the colonial system of forced labour was abolished in 1946 and Haute Volta became again a distinct French colony in 1947, the number of Burkinabè migrants resettling to Côte d'Ivoire steadily grew in the decades to come (Adjami 2016: 7–8).

During the struggle for independence, the ownership of the presumed *terre vacante, sans maître (terra nullius)* moved from the French state to the future Ivorian state. When Côte d'Ivoire became independent in 1960, the new Ivorian elite followed step by step what was put in place by the French authority with regards to the development policy through forest exploitation, export-orientated agriculture and incitement to mass immigration. While the forestry code excluded farmers from logging in the area of the state or in the

spaces belonging to the villagers, the 1963 law regulating the use of public lands, *Code Domaniale*, had yet to be enacted. It is argued that it was due to the resistance of customary owners, traditional and community leaders or because the first President Houphouët-Boigny found the text inapplicable (Kouadio and Desdoigts 2012). Despite this legal vacuum, Houphouët-Boigny declared on 30 October 1970 that the land belongs to those who cultivate it, what quickly became a slogan (Meledje 2016). Côte d'Ivoire was not ready for another round of struggle.

This decision was widely viewed as a policy to build a modern and economically strong Ivorian state. This move has also been regarded as a more vigorous integration policy as 26% of the Ivorian population who were used by the French administration for the economic valorisation of the colony of Côte d'Ivoire were foreigners. However, this policy has triggered a massive movement of migrants to the West, which the Houphouët-Boigny government was unable to control, increasingly unbalancing the customary reception conditions for migrants as soon as the land ownership issue became politicised (Chauveau *et al* 2006).

Côte d'Ivoire's recent history has been dominated by numerous land ownership crises. Those tensions are one of the consequences of the national implementation of the road map for the forestry industry in Côte d'Ivoire. In the process, the Central-West and the South-West have received an important number of immigrants, especially in the 1960s and 70s (McCallin and Montemurro 2009).

The development of the Ivorian forestry industry by the colonial and post-colonial authorities had a huge impact on the regions concerned and even at the national and international level since it also involved whole West Africa. This development resulted in a relative economic success for those involved and the nation. However, it has at least caused an ecological crisis. Furthermore, this has led to social disintegration, based on a policy that forced immigrants to rush to fertile lands then exploited in a disorderly fashion, followed by land saturation and land shortage. Other factors caused by this context are sources of land ownership conflict between individuals, between communities, and between communities and the state. While some of those factors are unanimously recognised as such, others are assessed differently.

## **The controversial Land Ownership Law**

The Ivorian Land Ownership Law No 98-750 of 23 December 1998 was adopted unanimously with only one abstention by the Ivorian parliament composed of the ruling party, the *Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI), and the opposition, at that time the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI). Its adoption period coincided with a national political context marked by strong violence, which occurred due to the controversial Ivorian nationality of one of the presidential contestants.

In fact, on the one hand, the exclusion of non-Ivorians from landowners that the Law stated was assimilated with xenophobia. On the other hand, this law was generally perceived as being unfair. It can be argued in this context that not only the land ownership law opposed Ivorians and non-Ivorians, but it also reinforced the ethnonationalist revendications on ownership rights. This law did not provide any form of security for women, young indigenous, and non-Ivorians. It was also seen as a law that ignored the multiple rights acquired by foreigners in the past with landowners.

The Ivorian 1998 law was designed to find solutions to many land issues. As the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) on Côte d'Ivoire based on publicly available information, studies and commentaries highlighted:

It aimed to convert customary rights into private ownership via certificates issued by the state over a period of ten years. Implementation was poor, however, and confined to Ivorian citizens, meaning that only 817 certificates have been issued, accounting for less than one per cent of rural land. Recurrent land disputes have driven tensions and conflict since the beginning of the 1990s. During the 2010 to 2011 post-election crisis, both sides tried to use ethnicity and its relevance to land disputes to their political gain, and local youth saw the law as a license to reclaim land their elders had sold or ceded to migrants (Cited in UNHCR 2017).

One of the objectives of the above-mentioned law was to modernise customary rights and facilitate access to the land for operators (Kouadio and Desdoigts 2012). Unfortunately, the Ivorian law No 98-750 of 23 December 1998 concerning rural land regulation modified by the law 2004-412 of 14 August 2004 is not yet implemented in practice for several reasons. For some, since immigrants were excluded, the implementation of the law could cause dramatic consequences. For others, the political instability (1999 coup d'état, 2002 rebellion which caused the

withdrawal of major donors and banks) is the reason behind the inapplicability of the law (Chauveau and Bobo 2005).

Whatever the reasons behind this inaction, what is certain is that the law is not being applied. Fundamentally, people's practices in terms of rural land management remain still the same over the quasi-totality of rural lands. More recently, in Bongouanou (South), the Regional Council headed by Mr. Pascal Affi N'guessan, the leader of one of the opposition parties – *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI), organised a meeting to resolve a land ownership dispute through mediation. The conflict opposed the Offoumou Baka family and many families from the Agni ethnic group. This conflict is about 3,000-hectare parcel of land. Many people have been killed, hundreds of people wounded and became homeless so far in this conflict since January 2019.

At the origin of this conflict, an economic operator Edward Offoumou Baka who claims to be the owner of 3,000-hectare land inherited from his father decided to evict many families from the parcel in 2017. A committee that was formed recognised Mr. Baka as the landowner. However, farmers could continue working on the parcels which have already been cultivated without exploiting new ones. This decision was rejected by several farmers. Kings, chiefs and other traditional leaders also took part in the conference to find a common solution to resolve this conflict (AIP 2019).

As Human Rights Watch (HRW) 'That Land Is My Family's Wealth' report regarding land politics in Côte d'Ivoire shows:

Land and ethnocentric politics have proven an explosive cocktail over the last 15 years in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in the country's volatile west. As the economy recessed and productive land grew scarce as a result of rising populations, Ivorian politicians exploited the resulting tensions between ethnic groups 'native' to the west and 'non-native' migrants who had come from neighboring countries and other regions of Côte d'Ivoire to work the region's cocoa and coffee fields. When armed conflicts erupted from 2002-2003 and again from 2010-2011, deep inter-communal tensions linked to land were one factor in why western Côte d'Ivoire played host to many of the worst atrocities (HRW 2013).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter took an historic approach focusing on contemporary administrative documents regarding the *mise en place* of paid work and

unemployment as well as land ownership problems by the French colonial system. It demonstrated that they remain hot issues dominating the social, political and economic debate in Côte d'Ivoire for decades. An analysis of these historical documents suggests that the demand of the colony workforce was largely superior to the offer. Furthermore, apart from a few individuals among the floating populations from the urban centres who could not find work soon after their arrival in the city, unemployment was practically an unknown reality.

Following the abolition of forced labour in 1946, and the introduction in the colony of the labour code of French overseas territories, the dichotomy between modern work and indigenous work has been reinforced. The latter indicates all activities related to crafts, farming and village agriculture (Bazin and Gnabéli 1997: 689). It was around these modern paid activities that the individual strategies of social promotion were developed. It is also around these modern paid activities, although one can cite a few steps to revalorise 'traditional employment', that the first public policies to promote employment were elaborated. However, their failure caused the exponential rise of unemployment and poverty in modern Côte d'Ivoire. According to the World Bank's 2015 report on regional inequalities in the region:

Côte d'Ivoire's inequalities persist today. Regarding all four indicators (the proportion of people with access to electricity; the level of MPI; the proportion of females without education; and the under-five mortality rate) [...], it is clear that the northern regions are performing much worse than the southern regions. For example, while in 2012 on average 56 percent of the Ivorian people had access to electricity, in the north (the Savanes region), northeast (the Zanzan region), and northwest (the Bafting, Worodougou, and Denguélé regions), only 31 percent, 40 percent, and 39 percent of people were connected to the national electricity grid. Similarly, while on average 53 percent of Ivorian females had no formal education, in the north a much higher proportion of women were uneducated; 75 percent in the north, 63 percent in the northeast, and 83 percent in the northwest regions. Under-five mortality rates were also much higher in the north compared to the national average, especially in Savanes, Worodougou, and Denguélé regions. The main reason why the region of Vallée du Bandama, which is quite far north, is doing considerably better than its surrounding regions is because the country's second largest city (Bouaké) is situated in the southern part of this region (World Bank 2015: 21).



It is also true that in the countryside in Côte d'Ivoire land reforms have continued to be the most controversial issues since the colonial era. Land management, whether it is urban or rural, remains confronted to various problems, sometimes causing bloody conflicts. There is no doubt that efforts were made by the government in recent years to modernise the agricultural sector, what was an indication of a right step in the direction of land reform. But the most serious immediate issue raised by rural communities relates to the fear of land grab. This issue goes back to the 1960s and 70s when the land was given to immigrants who cultivated it, intrincating political issues (Meledje 2016). Since the modern land law reform affected only 2% of rural land, more needs to be done by the government in collaboration with the Ivorian people to resolve land issues in order to win the fight against rural poverty and the decentralisation of political as well as economic activities in the rural sector. But the big question is what can be done to facilitate land lost claim and create jobs.

French colonisation attempted to transform the Ivorian society, but it failed. French colonisation, it must be said, was generous in terms of ideas, making promises but *au final* they could not deliver. Therefore, Côte d'Ivoire is abruptly confronted by a central problem. In their current configurations, the Ivorian land ownership and employment policies are set to fail unless action is taken. It is difficult to achieve good outcomes as it requires good leadership, but it is not impossible as we got so many talents to build a new Côte d'Ivoire. This is where deliberative democracy becomes relevant. So, what is deliberative democracy?

Deliberative political theories, and more broadly the important role devoted to deliberation in politics, have been imposed in the last few years in contemporary political philosophy. Despite the incessant and growing quarrels around it, the theory can be explained the following way: the notion of deliberative democracy has its roots in the intuitive ideal of a democratic association in which the justification of the terms and conditions of association proceeds by public debate and reasoning between equal citizens. In such a political order, citizens share a commitment to resolve collective problems through public reasoning and considered their basic institutions as legitimate as they provide a framework for a public and free deliberation (Cohen 1989).

The advantages are that it provides a greater degree of social inclusion, involving citizens in public life, restoring public confidence towards political institutions, development of well-considered ideas, etc. Different experiences proved, in effect that ordinary citizens can have a more nuanced and carefully thought on certain complex problems and then make some useful and concrete propositions.

One could suggest that the objective of the deliberative democracy should be two-fold: it should adopt a policy that enables businesses to grow and create prosperity across the nation. In addition to adopting a policy that drives Ivorian growth and job creation, the country needs to adopt a policy to secure rural land. The aim of this policy will be to reinforce at the national level the government capacity to implement its rural land security program. This also includes putting in place more efficient operations to secure land rights in selected zones. There are good reasons to believe in the nation's future. If work focuses on these priorities, Côte d'Ivoire can once again become an economic power in the West African region, delivering real economic and social benefits for all Ivoirians.

However, the challenges facing deliberative democracy are also enormous. For instance, a detailed methodological framework is important to ensure an efficient conduct of proceedings. To avoid potential frustrations of participants, it is also important to pay attention and ensure that the results are ultimately considered by politicians. It is also necessary to include elected politicians to the mini-public at the initial stage to guarantee more concrete impacts.

## References

- Adjami, M. 2016. Statelessness and Nationality in Côte d'Ivoire. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/58594d114.html> (accessed 14 March 2019).
- AIP. 2019. Une réunion lundi pour le règlement d'un conflit foncier à Bon-gouanou. <https://news.abidjan.net/h/653520.html> (accessed 4 March 2019)
- Banco.info. 2019. 'Je vous remercie mon Dieu, de m'avoir créé Noir' Qui était Bernard Binlin Dadié? <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco37053.htm> (accessed 12 March 2019).
- Bazin, L., and Gnabeli, R.Y. 1997. Le travail salarié, un modèle en decomposition? In Contamin, B., and Memel-Fotê, H. (éds), *Le modèle ivoirien en questions. Crises, ajustements, recompositions* (pp. 689–705). Paris: Karthala; Orstom.

- Bonnetcase, V. 2014. L'État, les étrangers et la terre en Côte d'Ivoire sous la colonisation: la construction d'une autochtonie à échelle variable. In Tolan J., El Annabi H., and Lebdaï B. (eds.), *Enjeux identitaires en mutation* (pp. 61–96). Paris: Peter Lang.
- Chauveau, J.P. 2000. Question foncière et construction nationale en Côte d'Ivoire: les enjeux silencieux d'un coup d'Etat. In Côte d'Ivoire, la tentation ethnonationaliste. *Politique Africaine* 78: 94–125.
- Chaveaux, J.P., and Bobo, K.S. 2005. Crise foncière, crise de la ruralité et relations entre autochtones et migrants sahéliens en Côte d'Ivoire forestière. *Outre-Terre* 2 (11): 247–264.
- Chaveaux, J.P., Jacob, J.P., Colin, J.P., and Lavigne Delville, P. 2006. Modes d'accès à la terre, marché foncier, gouvernance et politiques foncières en Afrique de l'Ouest. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303786950\\_Modes\\_d%27acces\\_a\\_la\\_terre\\_marches\\_fonciers\\_gouvernance\\_et\\_politiques\\_foncieres\\_en\\_Afrique\\_de\\_l%27Ouest\\_resultats\\_du\\_projet\\_de\\_recherche\\_CLAIMS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303786950_Modes_d%27acces_a_la_terre_marches_fonciers_gouvernance_et_politiques_foncieres_en_Afrique_de_l%27Ouest_resultats_du_projet_de_recherche_CLAIMS) (accessed 17 March 2019).
- Cohen, J. 1989. Délibération et légitimité Démocratique. In Girard, C., and le Goff, A. (eds.), *La Démocratie Délibérative* (pp. 207–241). Paris: Hermann.
- Countrymeters. 2019. Population Côte d'Ivoire. [https://countrymeters.info/fr/Cote\\_d%27Ivoire](https://countrymeters.info/fr/Cote_d%27Ivoire) (accessed 15 March 2019).
- Degoy, L. 2005. Clonisme et le capitalisme sont inséparables. *Humanite*. <https://www.investigacion.net/fr/Le-colonialisme-et-le-capitalisme/> (accessed 18 March 2019).
- Fall, B. 1993. Le travail forcé en Afrique occidentale française (1900–1946). *Civilisations* 41: 329–336.
- HRW. 2013. That Land Is My Family's Wealth: Addressing Land Dispossession after Côte d'Ivoire's Post-Election Conflict. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/10/09/land-my-familys-wealth/addressing-landdispossession-after-cote-divoires-post> (accessed 19 March 2019).
- Kouadio, H., and Desdoights, A. 2012. Déforestation, migrations, saturation et réformes foncières: La Côte d'Ivoire entre résilience rurale et litiges fonciers. MPRA Paper No. 49938. <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/49938/> (accessed 15 March 2019).
- Léonard, E., and Ibo, J.G. 1994. Appropriation et gestion de la rente forestière en Côte d'Ivoire. *Politique Africaine* 53: 25–36.
- Loba, R.G. 2016. Aux origines de la question de l'emploi salarié et du chômage en Côte d'Ivoire. *European Scientific Journal* 12 (2): 140–158.
- Meledje, J.C. 2016. *Conflict in Côte d'Ivoire: A Crisis of Leadership from Houphouët-Boigny to Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara*. PhD dissertation, Flinders University. <https://theses.flinders.edu.au/view/83c5eed3-9eeb-4d6b-a948-12fc0bf73f4c/1> (accessed 18 March 2019).

- McCallin, B., and Montemurro, M. 2009. *Whose land is This? land Disputes and Forced Displacements in the Western Forest Area of Côte d'ivoire*. Abidjan: Norwegian Refugee Council.
- UNHCR. 2017. Côte d'Ivoire COI Compilation. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/60075> (accessed 15 March 2019).
- Verdeaux, F. 1997. La filière bois à travers ses âges : une coupe longitudinale dans l'économie politique de la zone forestière ivoirienne. In Contamin, B, Memel-Fotê, H (eds.), *Le modèle ivoirien en questions: crises, ajustements, recompositions* (pp. 265-290). Paris: Karthala; Orstom.
- World Bank. 2015. Regional Imbalances, Horizontal Inequalities, and Violent Conflicts: Insights from Four West African Countries, 2015. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22514/Regional0imbal0t0African0countries.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed 14 March 2019).

# HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT IN SUDAN'S DARFUR REGION

*Sergey V. Kostelyanets*

National Research University Higher School of Economics  
Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences  
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia

## **Introduction**

The armed conflict in Sudan's Darfur region is duly considered to belong among the most significant humanitarian disasters of the 21st century. In 2019, the conflict is still ongoing, yet its most active phase, with the highest intensity of hostilities, was observed in 2003–2006. About 400 thousand people have died in the course of the conflict, while further 2 to 3 million (from the total of 7.2 million people inhabiting the region) have become refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the warfare.

The political history of Sudan is a history of uprisings and civil wars, superimposed on each other and rooted deep in the pre-colonial and colonial history of the country. To a large extent, this also refers to the three most acute political crises in Darfur, which flared up in 1987, 1995, and 2003.

Many researchers have qualified the latest crisis in Darfur, which began in 2003, as an internal confrontation between the two groups of Darfurians – Arabs and Africans. This is not quite correct, as amongst the causes and prerequisites of the conflict, which also include the economic and political marginalization of the region and the disproportionately weak representation of Darfurians in national power structures, the reason for conflict that stands out particularly is the growing competition between herders and farmers fighting for access to natural resources under the increasingly harsh conditions of drought and the onset of the Sahara. Indeed, nomadic pastoralists are mainly represented by Arab tribes, while sedentary farmers are mostly *Furs* and other African tribes. However, the ranks of both of these 'professional' groups are filled with large numbers of Arabs and Africans, who, furthermore, easily and regularly alternate their spheres of activity, or even combine them.

It should be noted that in recent decades there has been an active development throughout the world of political and armed protest movements whose members fight not just for expanding the rights of previously marginalized ethnocultural groups to participate in political and economic life, but also question the very foundations of the existing state. In fact, they cease to operate within the latter's framework, unlike it was the case in past centuries, and begin to act outside the common socio-economic and political space. This is what happened in Darfur, where the applicable government rules and regulations facilitate the prevalence of the interests of certain groups over all others.

At present, racial and tribal affiliation and the problem of 'us versus them' represent a confluence of the most powerful centrifugal forces in Sudan, in general, and in Darfur, in particular. Accordingly, racial self-determination in Darfur remains a strong factor of the conflict, albeit contrived and unnatural, since most Arabs in the region are not genetic Arabs, but Arabized Africans who have adopted Arab culture and language. Until the secession of the Republic of South Sudan in 2011, self-identified Arabs constituted a substantial minority of Sudan's population – 45%, while self-identified Africans – 55% (Natsios 2012: 10).

The policy of 'Arabization' pursued by the authorities in Khartoum caused the opposite effect: instead of unifying the country, this policy divided Sudan, predetermined permanent political instability and accelerated the centrifugal forces, which it had originally intended to counteract.

## **The Sultanate of Darfur and the Mahdist movement:**

### **The two 'cradles' of Darfur conflict**

The modern Republic of Sudan is the third largest African state, whose territory is comparable to the area of Western Europe. Along with the peoples of Egypt and Ethiopia, the ancestors of modern Sudanese are the founders of some of the most ancient states of the world – Nubia, Meroe, Napata, Aksum, and others. First Arabs arrived in North Africa (from Arabia) as far back as the 10th century BCE. At the turn of the first and second millennia, Arab migration intensified. Part of them settled in Ethiopia, while some, descending along the Blue Nile and the Atbara rivers to Nubia, rushed further west – to Kordofan and Darfur. Islam spread rapidly in the Nile Valley, penetrating further and further south.

In their path, the Arabs encountered many indigenous African tribes, some of which lagged behind the newcomers in cultural development, while others, on the contrary, surpassed them. The Arab invasion of Africa had a significant impact on the historical development of the peoples of Sudan, where in the 16th–17th centuries CE a number of state entities formed, the largest of which were the sultanates of Sennar and Darfur.

The Sultanate of Darfur, which encompassed the territories of present-day Darfur, western areas of North Kordofan, as well as parts of the Central African Republic and Chad, developed rapidly over three hundred years. For several centuries, the court of the Sultan spoke both Arabic and *Fur* languages. Islam was adopted by the *Fur* people as the state religion in the 16th century CE, and Sufi Islam has dominated the religious rites of the people of Darfur for the following five centuries. Today, the absolute majority of Darfurians are Muslims. Therefore, unlike a number of other African regions, where interfaith contradictions remain acute, in the context of the conflict in Darfur the factor of religious affiliation does not hold much significance. At the same time, divisions in the ranks of the Islamists and their different understanding of the situation in Darfur and the ‘center-periphery’ collision contributed to the exacerbation of the political crisis.

The *Furs* comprised the ethnic foundation of the Sultanate (although it is believed that the mother of Sulayman Solong, the founder of the *Fur* Keira dynasty, was Arab, and he was married to an Arab woman (Mamdani 2010: 91)), but there were also other large ethnic groups: *Zaghawa* and *Midob* lived in the north, *Tunjur* – in the central part of the region, *Daju* and *Bigo* – in the east and south, and many smaller tribes. The development of the Sultanate took the form of a gradual expansion from the Jebel Marra region toward the present-day central regions of Darfur, more abundant with water and fertile lands. There took place a peaceful incorporation of local tribes into the Sultanate and its opening for trade with other states. The rulers of Darfur had created an effective management system that withstood frequent invasions of neighbors, droughts, and famines until the events in the 19th century weakened the state and led to its final collapse in 1916.

The *Furs* and their neighbors – Arab nomads – made armed raids into adjacent territories, primarily to capture slaves who not only worked the fields, looked after the cattle, or served in households, but

also acted as collectors of taxes and duties, steered caravans, or became warriors. The Sultan's personal guard was made up of slaves, who also served in the standing army, which in Darfur numbered 2,000. *Furs* living on the territory of the Sultanate were becoming soldiers immediately after the declaration of war, but the most combat-ready units of Darfur's army consisted of Arab nomads. Such relatively peaceful coexistence of Arabs and non-Arabs in Darfur continued until the beginning of colonization, but in the post-colonial period the contradictions between the two groups came to be characterized by the state of permanent conflict.

In the 19th century, Darfur ceased to be a constantly warring state. From 1800 to 1874, there was only one large military expedition, which took place in 1837 against the Wadai Sultanate (in present-day Chad). Military operations were almost completely limited to raids to capture slaves, carried out by a relatively small number of soldiers. Targets of the raids were predominantly 'black' inhabitants of the southernmost regions of Darfur (and Sudan), and this 'historical legacy' has made a significant contribution to the course of the current confrontation. As a rule, women, children, and, less often, young men were kidnapped. They were brought from southern regions of the country to the north, where they were either exchanged for various goods, sold, or became household servants. Young men were sent to the army (Spaulding and Kapteijns 2002: 51).

Slave raiders were represented mainly by three groups: *Fur* units working on the orders of the sultan, Arab pastoralists (*Baggara*) from South Darfur, and immigrants from West Africa (mostly *Fulani*) (O'Fahey 1971: 92-93). It must be acknowledged that the slave hunt revealed the violent nature of the Sultanate, which has not been lost to this day, as manifested in the course of the conflicts in Darfur. Indeed, for at least three centuries, the state of the *Furs* existed thanks to the plunder and seizure of slaves and their subsequent sale on the Mediterranean coast. On the other hand, both Arabs and non-Arabs could be slaves or slave owners: in fact, society was divided into the sultan's subjects, who were exempted from slavery, and residents of the periphery, who could be turned into slaves. Slave raiding as a basis for the well-being of the state and its individual citizens indicates that violence was a daily reality in the region, while militarization was the most important component of the Sultanate's development.



Nonetheless, the transformation of the region into a large slave-owning plantation and the appearance of prominent, well-armed and independent slave-traders with sizable military units and bases led to a weakening of the sultan's monopoly on the slave trade and, accordingly, the decline of the Sultanate as a whole. In the early 19th century, the independent historical development of East Sudan was interrupted. In October 1820, the Egyptian army under the command of a son of Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt, invaded the region.

In the middle of the 19th century, British expansion began in Sudan. Simultaneously with the gradual conquest of the southern areas of the region, the 'development' of Kordofan and the neighboring independent Sultanate of Darfur commenced. The strategic importance of the Sultanate of Darfur for the British rested in the fact that main caravan routes connecting the eastern, western and northern regions of the continent passed through there. Excessive tax levies by the Anglo-Egyptian authorities of Sudan, the compulsion to grow sugar cane and cotton – the main articles of Egypt's exports – instead of grain crops, and the artificial reduction of prices on locally produced goods led to the depletion of fertile soils, impoverishment of the population and the depopulation of large swaths of land (Smirnov 1968: 50).

The movement directed against the British and Turkish-Egyptian colonialists was led by the Muslim preacher Muhammad Ahmad bin Abd Allah (1844–1885). He managed to raise up peasants, nomads, artisans and slaves. In August 1881, he proclaimed himself the 'Mahdi' (Messiah) and called on all Muslims to begin to engage in civil disobedience against the Anglo-Egyptian authorities and in the armed struggle against the infidels, among whom he included not only Europeans, but also Egyptian and Ottoman rulers (Vasiliev 2010: 348). The years of the uprising and the rule of the Mahdi witnessed further militarization of the region and the development of a 'military culture', which modern-day Darfur rebels have in effect inherited.

Armed clashes between the Mahdi units and the Anglo-Egyptian army took place near Khartoum, in Kordofan, in the Nuba Mountains – wherever the Mahdists could count on the support of local tribes. Many Darfur people, but primarily Arab tribesmen – particularly from such *Baggara* tribes as *Rizeigat*, *Habbania*, *Messiria*, were excited by the news of the victories of the Mahdi and left their homes, with whole families joining the rebels. Others assembled in units under the

leadership of local leaders and attacked military posts and government officials. All this took place in accordance with the military traditions and skills of the inhabitants of the region, which were rooted in the times of the first sultans of Darfur.

As a political campaign, the Mahdist movement was a combination of liberation struggle and repressive practices. In this sense, the present-day Darfur insurgencies are worthy followers of Mahdism. Meanwhile, the Mahdi uprising united – on the basis of Islam and the anti-colonial struggle – divided peoples to a much larger extent than any other movement that the colonial authorities had faced in the region. At the same time, the anti-colonial movement unleashed forces that were directed against those who opposed the Mahdists or even tried to stay neutral. The brutality of the violence carried out by the Mahdists against the ‘non-aligned’ population was comparable only to the cruelties of the modern-day Janjaweed<sup>1</sup> militiamen, which can hardly be called a product of the 21st century. Indeed, the actions of the Mahdists testified to the traditions of political violence in the region that formed at the height of the movement. Relations within the Mahdist state itself were also characterized by a high level of violence (Burr and Collins 2006: 9).

In Darfur, the Mahdist uprising engulfed both Arab groups dominated by southern *Baggaras* and non-Arab groups, led by *Furs* from the Jebel Marra plateau. Much of the Mahdist army, like the Janjaweed in the early 2000s, was represented by Darfurian *Baggara* herdsman. They also constituted most of the Ansar – the followers of the Mahdi, who on 5 November 1883 destroyed approximately 10 thousand Egyptian soldiers in the famous Battle of Shaykan. On 23 December 1883, Darfur was liberated from the Anglo-Egyptian troops.

In January 1885, the Mahdists captured Khartoum. The Mahdi died on 22 June 1885 – the next day after the victory. For most of its existence – from 1885 to 1898 – the Mahdist state was ruled by the Mahdi’s second in command – Abdullah Ibn-Mohammed Al-Khalifa – a descendant of West African immigrants and a member of the *Ta’aisha Baggara* tribe (Mamdani 2010: 163).

The Mahdist state largely originated in Darfur, with *Baggara* and other nomads who had been peripheral before the uprising becoming a significant force after its culmination (Ibrahim 1977: 36). In the South Darfur town of Shakka, on the border with Bahr al-Ghazal, a Mahdist

garrison was permanently stationed, and mobile detachments were sent further inland to raid for slaves. Consequently, the Mahdists established a *de facto* second capital in Darfur, as a result of which the militarization of the region accelerated.

The development of the military organization of the Mahdist state was characterized by the replacement of tribal militias by the regular army, albeit most military units were still formed on the tribal principle. Tribal militias included all men capable of carrying arms. Women would accompany detachments during the campaigns and take care of their husbands, prepare food, etc. As a rule, women would take along children of different ages, and those that were older would be given the opportunity to acquire military skills. The army was supplied through voluntary assistance or the 'expropriation' of food from the local population and was constantly on the move, as prolonged stops led to the devastation of settlements and an acute shortage of food. The congruent principle of the formation and functioning of tribal militias and rebel movements in Darfur persists still today.

Al-Khalifa carried out a mandatory mobilization of men from local tribes to his army; any dissent or opposition would be cruelly suppressed. The region witnessed a large-scale displacement of various tribes and ethnic groups, which coincided with the famine and epidemics of 1889–1890. Over the 18 years of the existence of the Mahdist state, almost one third of the population of Darfur died of violence, hunger or disease (Young et al. 2005: 5–6). The Mahdist movement had other important implications for the region: an Islamic political movement was forged; the 'culture of violence' became institutionalized; a powerful political dynasty emerged, the descendants of which founded the Umma Party in 1945 with a large support base in Darfur and Kordofan; and the policy of controlling the Sudanese periphery through repression and seizure of the territory was put in place on an unprecedented scale.

As a result of the war of 1896–98, the Mahdist state was destroyed by the British. According to the convention concluded between Great Britain and Egypt in January 1899, Sudan was declared a condominium, i.e. a jointly owned territory of Britain and Egypt, and became officially called the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Darfur, which was revived in 1898 as a protectorate within the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, was

liquidated by the colonial authorities after the uprising and death of the last Fur Sultan Ali Dinar in 1916. In 1922, Darfur was incorporated into the colony of Sudan.

**The problem of racial and tribal identity:**

**The contribution of the British Empire to the conflict in Darfur**

It is generally believed that the main purpose of colonization was the economic exploitation of the occupied lands, the reorganization of production in order to meet the needs of the metropolis, and the transformation of the colonies into a large market for European products. In this sense, the symbol of the colonial policy in Sudan was the creation of the Gezira project for the production of long-staple cotton in the fertile lands between the Blue Nile and the White Nile (Rodney 1974: 3). However, the collateral aspect of colonization was the formation of new identities of the inhabitants of the colony, sometimes in the form of re-identification of entire peoples. In turn, these processes could contribute to the rise of older, more exclusive identities as historically legitimate. It was in Sudan, more than anywhere else, that the British colonial administration was associated with the formation of identity – by conducting a census, rewriting history, and creating corresponding legislation. The political goal of Great Britain was not just the creation of specific relations between the metropolis and the colony: it took part in the restructuring of the self-consciousness of the colonized peoples and of their self-identification.

The colonial authorities sought to wipe out all traces of the Mahdist tribal alliance from the land of Darfur. The first step towards the implementation of this strategy was the formal restoration of the Sultanate of Darfur as a client political entity of the British authorities. Yet while the historical Sultanate was polyethnic, the one that was led in 1898–1916 by sultan Ali Dinar was already a *Fur* ‘state’. The last sultan strived to achieve the independence of Darfur and the internal balance of power in the Sultanate. Unlike the Mahdist leaders, who relied to a large extent on mobile nomad groups (to augment their military power) and balanced forces between sedentary groups and nomads in favor of the latter, Ali Dinar, having become the sultan in 1898, tried to bridge differences between the two groups by ousting nomads from agricultural areas (O’Fahey 1980: 90, 126-128), thence creating prerequisites for later conflicts.

The British divided the population of Sudan on racial and tribal principles. Sir Harold McMichael played the greatest role in the process of re-identification of Darfurians. He served in Sudan for nearly 30 years (1905–1934) and in 1922 wrote the colonial history of the territory – the two-volume *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*. Seven years later, he prepared the *Tribes of Sudan* memo, which outlined ways to conduct a population census, which should be based on collecting ‘tribal information’ to identify tribal differences. He proposed three main classifications: ‘race’, ‘group of tribes’ (which assumed a common language), and ‘tribe’ (according to McMichael – an administrative unit) within the group (Census 1953).

As a result, each Sudanese was asked to which tribe he belonged to, and then the officials who were conducting the survey distributed the ‘tribes’ into ‘groups of tribes’ and ‘races’. At the beginning of the census, 450 ‘tribes’ were identified; by the time of its completion in 1954–1955, there were 570 ‘tribes’, which were divided into 57 groups: as the number of administrative units increased, the number of ‘tribes’ grew as well. The concept of ‘tribe’ in Sudan came to have a dual meaning – cultural and administrative. That is, for the colonial state, the tribe was both an administrative category and a cultural identity that could be changed, especially on an individual level. According to the British anthropologist Gunnar Haaland, *Furs* could become Arabs, Arabs become *Furs*, and the tribal affiliation was determined primarily by the vocation of a person (Haaland 1972: 151–52, 162–63, 168).

Namely, *Furs* and *Masalits*, for instance, were considered sedentary farmers, while *Baggara* and West African *Fulani* were ascribed to nomads. However, Haaland also discovered *Fur* and *Masalit* pastoral communities. Curiously, not only many farmers would undergo the process of nomadization due to various natural processes (depletion of soil, reduced rainfall, etc.), but also herders and camel breeders would begin to cultivate land. These transformations affected not only their employment, but also their ‘tribal affiliation’: *Furs* could become, for example, *Zaghawas* (non-Arabs) or *Baggaras* (Arabs), and, conversely, *Zaghawas* or *Baggaras* could begin identifying themselves as *Furs*.

When a *Fur* farmer began to raise livestock, the herd population under favorable conditions could reach such proportions that the income from cattle breeding would exceed the amount of income from selling crops, and this could predetermine his decision to change not

only his field of activity, but also his lifestyle. The farmer could leave the village and relocate to the area of pastures, for example, along the route of *Zaghawa* migrations, for a period of time or forever. Frequently, *Furs* would become *Baggaras*, and hence – ‘Arabs’. In water-stressed areas, where *Furs* and *Baggaras* lived along each other, the former would be identified as the latter the day they left the village and began to migrate with the cattle. Moreover, their lifestyle also evolved towards the cultural standards of pastoralists. For example, the *Furs* always considered milking cows to be women’s work, humiliating for men. On the contrary, among the *Baggara* it is usual for both men and women to engage in this activity. The final point of the transformation of a *Fur* into a *Baggara* was his transformation into an ‘Arab’. In the tribal whirlpool of Darfur, even those *Furs* or *Zaghawas* who still retained their identity would inevitably adopt many elements of the culture they had previously considered ‘foreign’.

The compilers of the colonial census also identified the race of representatives of each tribe, dividing the Sudanese into ‘Arabs’ and ‘Negroids’. It was decided to define the race according to language. According to the census, Arabic turned out to be the language of 51.4% of the Sudanese and 54.6% of the Darfurians, however, when it came to attributing the country’s inhabitants to a particular race, 38.9% of the Sudanese and 28.2% of the Darfurians were considered Arabs. Non-Arabic languages were spoken by 44.2% of the population of Darfur, but according to the census, 65.3% of the Darfurians were classified as Negroids (Mamdani 2010: 180). The confusion in figures and their interpretation indicated that the ‘racial segregation’ was carried out exclusively for political purposes – in order to separate the ‘indigenous’ Africans from the ‘Arab settlers’ and thus bolster the colonial system.

The census laid down the basis for deepening the split between individual groups of Darfurians, dividing them into ‘indigenous people’ and ‘newcomers’, the latter inevitably becoming objects of discrimination. In other words, the results of the census led to the exacerbation of inter-tribal tensions in the region.

Having established control over Darfur, the British divided its population into separate tribes and tribal groups (defining tribal identities quite arbitrarily), putting some in a privileged position over others, thereby exacerbating the differences between them. The formal

‘retribalization’ of Darfurians and the division of the territory among tribal administrations were accompanied by the transfer of the right to distribute land to these administrative units, whose decision-making was determined by tribal identities and the division of the population into indigenous people and those who arrived later. The ‘primordial’ tribe gained ownership of the land and was assigned posts in the local administration. Regardless of the length of their stay in the region, the representatives of the tribes which were considered ‘immigrant’ were denied civil rights. When it came to the provision of land, the administration would exclude those who did not originally belong to the tribe that had supposedly lived on this land ‘from time immemorial’ (Tubiana 2007: 80-81).

The most disenfranchised were the camel breeders of the north and the herders of the south. While herdsmen would typically graze their herds in close proximity to agricultural settlements, the camel breeders were completely mobile and temporary inhabitants of any territory. Their lack of settlements meant that they did not have a tribal land – a *dar*. They were always immigrants, so they did not get any rights within the framework of the tribalized system. At the same time, the restrictions on the movement of nomads that were imposed by sedentary tribes undermined the very basis of the nomadic way of life (Khalaf 1965: 37-38, 44).

The very concept of the *dar* itself underwent an evolution. At the time of the Sultanate, it was ‘home’ in many different senses of the word – a location, an administrative unit, a specific territory of the tribe, the entire Sultanate or a part of it. During the colonial period, the *dar* became identified with the tribal territories governed according to colonial legislation. Tribal land became known by the name of the main tribe that lived on it, for example, Dar Zaghawa. As a result of this principle of ethnonymity, a plot of land became not only an asset of the tribe, but also a marker of its identity.

The system of *dars* tilted the regime of discrimination in favor of the ‘indigenous’ inhabitants at the expense of all the others, which came to be considered immigrants. The inevitable consequence of the establishment of tribal administrations that ruled polyethnic societies was the implementation of discrimination within each individual administrative unit. The right to participate in government was also tied to tribal identity. The superimposition of the system of tribal *dars* on

the polyethnic population led in each *dar* to a confrontation between landed and enfranchised residents and those who had neither land nor rights. The transformation of such a situation into an open conflict was only a matter of time.

The system drove a wedge between sedentary and nomadic tribes, although the bifurcation between landowners and landless people in the region was of even greater importance. It was these divisions that resulted in the Darfur crisis that began in the mid-1980s.

The British not only ruled the colonized population as an ensemble of tribes, but also tried to group these tribes into several races. The division of the population into the 'indigenous' and 'immigrant' races provided a justification for the introduction of legal disparities between 'indigenous' and 'foreign' tribes. In 1927, a law was passed by which small tribal units were to merge or join large tribes. In the 1930s, efforts were continued to establish two tribal confederations: one of the Arabs and another of the *Zurga* (blacks in Arabic) (Ibrahim 1977: 456-459).

After World War II, the rise of Arab nationalism, which took place in Sudan, particularly intensified after the overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy in 1953 and the advent of a group of young officers to power in Egypt. In the postcolonial period, the process of 'Arabization' sponsored by the independent government of Sudan led not only to the strengthening of the Arab core, but also to an increase in resistance to the center, which began in the south of the country, but then spread to other marginalized areas.

It is believed that the people of Darfur are divided into representatives of two races – the Negroid and the Mediterranean (a sub-race within the Caucasian race). The first includes non-Arabs, Africans, *Zurgas*, represented by the largest Darfur tribes (*Fur*, *Masalit*, *Zaghawa*, etc.). The second one comprises the representatives of the Arab tribes in Darfur. However, there is another point of view, advocated by, for example, the well-known Ugandan researcher Mahmoud Mamdani, who believes that the separation of the Sudanese into Arabs and non-Arabs is a product of colonial and nationalist science, which studies the interaction between the 'indigenous' inhabitants of Sudan – Africans and the 'newcomers' – Arabs as a separate phenomenon. As a result of the process known as 'Arabization', a hybrid race has emerged – the 'Sudanese Arabs'. Drawing from the history of indi-



vidual tribes, as well as works of a number of anthropologists and political scientists, Mamdani argues that it is impossible to speak of a separate history of the Arabs in Sudan. Even the Arabs who live in the Nile Valley have come from different places: some were immigrants, although most were local; many descended from slave traders, while others – from slaves who became Arabs by accepting the identity of their masters. Meanwhile, as Mamdani notes, the contrast between the Nile Arabs and the Darfur Arabs is obvious. While Darfur was marginalized within Sudan, the Darfur Arabs were discriminated against in Darfur. Consequently, the Darfur Arabs were doubly marginalized (Mamdani 2010: 80), which also became one of the preconditions of the conflict.

And yet, it is wrong to believe that the conflict in Darfur is a conflict between Arabs and non-Arabs, since in reality it is a conflict between the tribes which owned their land (*dar*) and those that did not possess their own territory. The conflict spread in two directions: along the north-south axis – between the northern landless tribes and the southerners who owned the land, and along the south-south axis – between landed and landless residents in the south, and in the latter case both parties to the conflict could identify themselves as Arabs. That is, at the heart of the conflict lay several interrelated, but still different factors: the deficit of resources, cultural differences, the centuries-old militarization of the region, support rendered by the Arab government against non-Arabs, etc.

### **The rise of the opposition to the regime in Darfur**

As the Arabization of Sudan progressed, the Arabic language acquired the status of the language of the official administration, legislation, trade, and religion. However, there was considerable resistance to Arabization (but not Islamization) in peripheral provinces.

In the late 1950s – early 1960s, two underground groups were founded in Darfur, which came to head the resistance to the center – the authorities in Khartoum. The first of them was ‘Red Flame’. It was mainly involved in distributing leaflets containing threats against *Jallaba* (Arab merchants) in the main shopping centers of the region. The second one was formed in 1963 by the army rank and file and was called ‘Suni’ after a town just south of the Marrah Mountains (Jebel Marra). Vowing to fight *Jallaba* for the interests of

the Darfurians, Suni also used slogans of Darfur nationalism (Harir 1994a: 156).

As a result of the activities of these groups, a discussion began among the educated Darfurians about the advantages of a legal organization that would lead an open struggle to advance the interests of Darfur in Sudan. This discussion led to the creation in 1964 of the Darfur Development Front (DDF) under the leadership of Ahmed Ibrahim Diraig, who later became governor of North Darfur. Nearly all leadership of the DDF were members of the Umma Party, which enjoyed strong support among both *Furs* and *Baggara* Arabs. While this party viewed Darfur as a traditional support base, the second major Sudanese party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), relied mainly on merchants-*Jallaba* from the Nile Valley.

The DDF opposed the usual practice of appointing politicians from Khartoum, who were little aware of the situation in the region, to positions of power in Darfur, especially since the Front successfully mediated local disputes. The DDF viewed the Darfur problem as a struggle between the poor majority of the province and the privileged minority consisting of *Jallaba* and corrupt officials. The activities of the DDF, directed against the central government, led to an increase in crime and various violations of law and order in Darfur's cities, mainly due to the actions of Suni, which was considered the military wing of the Front. At the same time, the DDF had a polyethnic base, and its goal was to unite the entire region (Harir 1994a: 89).

In 1972, the government of Gaafar Nimeiri (1969–1985) issued a law on regional autonomy, which, however, granted corresponding rights only to South Sudan. In 1980, the law was applied to all regions of the country. The introduction of the law paved the way for to the appointment of the governor of Darfur, but an attempt by the authorities to appoint a non-Darfurian to this post provoked mass protests, which resulted in bloody clashes with the police. Darfurians called the events an *intifada* (uprising). Khartoum was forced to appoint Ahmed Diraig to this position, who became the first Darfurian to rule the province since independence (Daldoum 2000: 82). Yet this success of Darfur's people had unintended consequences: it led to the further tribalization of regional politics. As long as the region was controlled by persons designated by the center, resistance to external meddling and the movement for autonomy united all Darfurians, keeping the lid on

the boiling pot of inter-tribal rivalry. However, the appointment of a *Fur* to the position of governor and the granting of limited internal autonomy to Darfur in 1981 destroyed the region's relative internal unity. Some signs of the internal split became noticeable already during the *intifada*. There were Darfurians who participated in the unrest and those who tried to subvert it (Harir 1994a: 160). Tensions were fueled by rivalry over natural resources. It was now further aggravated by the problem of access to power. In the past, such conflicts had been relatively easily resolved by tribal courts with the support of the government interested in maintaining order.

The new regional authorities, led by Diraig, were not neutral (Diraig represented the Umma Party) and governed in conditions of inter-tribal tensions and environmental crisis. As soon as the regional cabinet was formed, there appeared two rival factions. One represented the alliance of all nomadic groups (*Zaghawas* and Arabs) and relied on the Muslim Brotherhood doctrine. The second one was the union of large sedentary groups, mainly *Furs* and *Tunjurs*. The first was led by Mahmoud Jamaa (*Zaghawa*), the then Deputy Governor of the region, whereas the second – by Governor Ahmed Diraig (*Fur*) (Harir 1994b: 47).

The internal dynamics in Darfur after 1981 led to the intensification of local conflicts in the region, primarily to the Arab-*Fur* conflict of 1987–1989 under Sadiq al-Mahdi (1986–1989) and the Arab-*Masalit* one of 1996–1999 under the incumbent president Omar al-Bashir. The appointment of a governor-*Fur* politicized the civil service and led to the dominance of *Furs* in the new regional government. Darfurian Arabs feared the return to the policy of *Fur* dominance of the times of sultan Ali Dinar (Hamid 1979: 63).

In 1989, as a result of the military coup that removed the government of Sadiq al-Mahdi, the National Islamic Front (NIF), led by Omar al-Bashir, came to power. During his rule, many representatives of Darfur's political elite were able to integrate into national politics. They formed a faction inside the NIF led by Islamist ideologist Hassan al-Turabi. 'Islamism', in contrast to 'Arabism,' received great support in Darfur because, unlike Arabs, who were a minority in the region, Muslims here constituted the majority.

The NIF attempted to reform the system of local government by giving *dars* to tribes that had not had them before. In March 1995, the government of West Darfur issued a decree according to which

Sultanate Dar Masalit would be divided into 13 emirates, nine of which would be ceded to landless Arab groups. With the creation of new local administrations, the power of the sultan of the *Masalits* shrank. In addition, some of the emirates came to be completely outside the jurisdiction of Dar Masalit (Young, Osman, Aklilu, Dale, Badri and Fuddle 2005: 42). If the division of Darfur in 1994 into three states separated the *Furs*, then the separation of the *Masalit* Sultanate should have led to the fragmentation of the *Masalits*. In response to their protests, the central government replaced the civilian governor with a military one, and leaders of the protestors were arrested and tortured. As a result, there began skirmishes between Arabs and *Masalits*.

In 1995, these conflicts were still local in nature and concerned local government, tribal territory, and access to resources. The central government fueled the conflict through reform, which did not change the system as a whole, but was biased in favor of Arab tribes at the expense of the *Masalits* and *Furs*. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms had already been destroyed, and new ones had not been created. The more the government turned into a 'side' in what had previously been local conflicts, the more the latter flared up, as various tribes began to form, train and arm militias. It all began with the restoration of traditional village militias, which in former times had been used to carry out hunting parties or work together in the fields and during harvest (Fadul and Tanner 2007: 302).

### **The transformation of land-use culture as a conflict factor**

Droughts in the Sahel and the desertification resulting from the onset of the Sahara had the strongest effect on North Darfur, but then these natural factors began to permeate farther south, triggering large-scale displacement. It is not surprising that *Furs* began to demand respect for their rights as indigenous people. Besides, the rights of migrants were not based on the region's tribalized system, but on nationwide civil law. When the holders of these incompatible rights met face to face, the entire arsenal of modern weapons was already at their disposal. As it proliferated, the conflict became more complex: more and more disagreements emerged between landed and landless sedentary tribes, between farmers and herdsmen, between pastoralists who wielded grazing rights and camels breeders who had no rights at all, etc.

Not just in Darfur, or in Africa in general, but also in other parts of the world, conflicts are inevitable if neighboring communities (settlements, regions, states) exploit the same natural resource that is nearing depletion. The causes and nature of the transformation of local disputes into a full-scale conflict are largely determined by measures taken by the central government and local authorities to resolve contradictions. If rulers, as has been observed in Sudan in recent decades, rely on the divide-and-conquer paradigm in the course of their actions, they will inevitably contribute to fomenting political turmoil in the region, which in Darfur was particularly aggravated by the destruction of the traditional mechanism of intra-tribal dispute resolution. As a result of the government's discriminatory policies, the land issue descended on the region, which had had long and effective traditions of land use that had been systematically undermined in the colonial and postcolonial periods, like a devastating natural disaster.

In the Sultanate of Darfur, the landlords – the sultans – distributed plots with clearly defined boundaries among the *Fur* chiefs and their retinue, leaders of other ethnic groups that were vassals of the *Furs*, as well as Muslim priests and scholars (O'Fahey and Abu Salim 1983: 12-21). Frequently *Furs* and representatives of other tribes that lived on the land that was granted to individuals continued to use it collectively. The territory belonging to one or another tribal leader was considered his tribe's *dar*. However, this did not exclude representatives of other tribal communities from the process of land distribution and management. Although the Sultanate was known as Dar Fur (the land of the *Furs*), in fact it was a polyethnic mosaic territory divided into *dars* belonging to both *Furs* and non-*Furs*.

After the conquest of Sudan in 1898, the British created a large state irrigation system in Gezira, at the same time enlisting the support of local leaders by introducing new or reaffirming their old rights to tribal *dars*, as well as grazing rights for nomads. After the independence of Sudan, this land policy underwent certain changes. The military regime of G. Nimeiri in 1970 adopted the Unregistered Land Act, according to which all 'free' land, i.e. unregistered land, would automatically become the property of the Sudanese government. In practice, much of the land in Sudan in general fell into this category, and in Darfur this applied to almost all the land. Officially, traditional land use rights in Darfur lost their value, *dars* remain un-

registered, and lands in the province belong to the state, which is the only legitimate institution entitled to transfer it from one owner to another. However, in practice, the state rarely uses this right. As a result, attempts to create independent Arab *dars*, as well as illegal land grabs, to which the government turns a blind eye, lead to local conflicts of greater or lesser intensity. Thus, if we consider the unresolved land issue as one of the causes of the conflict in Darfur, it should be acknowledged that in the pre-colonial and colonial periods this issue was resolved naturally, so the roots of this particular conflict factor date back to the more recent history of Sudan as an independent nation.

Indeed, due to the remoteness of the region and the existence of long-term, if not centuries-old traditions of land use, in the postcolonial period the Sudanese governments in fact did not seek to find a solution to the land issue in Darfur. In particular, the authorities have never required to register land. Until the start of the conflict in Darfur, the system of land use in the region itself was not put into question, and Darfurians themselves resisted any revision. Moreover, the supreme *Fur* leaders possessed documents going back to the Sultans' rule and confirming their land ownership rights, with clearly defined boundaries and maps created by the colonial authorities. Even during the period of independence, governments turned to these papers to resolve local land disputes. In the course of the conflict, many documents were destroyed during *Janjaweed* attacks on non-Arab villages. It is difficult to say whether this destruction was intentional or the papers were lost along with other property, but since they served as confirmation of land tenure, *Furs* thought that Arabs intentionally destroyed them, which provoked further clashes.

Relations between Arabs and non-Arabs kept deteriorating as local disputes over land and other resources were spreading, with conflicts becoming increasingly more difficult to resolve. The provision of a plot of land for living has never been a problem in the region; conflicts arose when Arabs tried to register the allotment in their own name. Meanwhile, the Arabs in general did not confront the 'indigenous' Africans during the conflict. On the contrary, many Arabs in Darfur opposed the *Janjaweed*, and some of them fought against the central government in rebel movements and tribal militias of the *Fur*, *Zaghawa* and other non-Arab tribes side by side with Africans (Kos-

telyanets 2015: 80); some Arabs even rose to become field commanders of *Fur* rebel units. On the other hand, many non-Arabs supported the government, served in the regular army and even in the *Janjaweed*. In addition, various tribes that were subjected to reciprocal attacks often belonged to the same race and even ethnic group. Due to the large number of mixed marriages, they did not differ from each other in physical features. The main differences between them consisted in the way of life and employment (herdsmen and nomads or sedentary farmers). It was the divide-and-conquer policy that contributed to the politicization of differences between Arabs and Africans, since the definitions ‘Arabs’ and ‘Africans’ became political identities and mobilization mechanisms: those who supported the rebels became ‘non-Arabs’, while those who took the side of the government became ‘Arabs’ (UN 2005: 130-131).

### **Traditional marginalization of the region as a conflict factor**

The marginalization of Darfur also has historical roots. From its very inception, due to its separation from other regions with natural barriers – desert, mountains and jungle, the *Fur* Sultanate developed the capability to provide itself with all necessities, which was made possible by the abundance of fertile and grazing lands and the institution of slavery. Due to the remoteness of the region, it was incorporated into the ‘colonial empire’ later than other Sudanese territories.

Darfur’s further marginalization was in part a result of British colonial policies. For instance, in 1922, the Closed Districts Ordinance was introduced in Darfur, formally aimed at controlling migrant Islamic preachers, West African refugees and pilgrims, as well as merchants and hunters from other regions. In order to maintain the order and implement the Ordinance, the local authorities were granted practically unlimited powers (De Waal 2005: 191). The real purpose of the Ordinance was to isolate areas most imbued with Mahdist liberation ideas from the rest of the colony.

As a center of the Mahdist ideology, Darfur was turned into a sort of ‘backyard’ of the colony, managed by several officials, and a ‘labor reserve’. Young people sought to leave the region to settle in the cotton areas of Gezira, and later in Libya, or to join the colonial army and police. The region, which exported slaves during the Sultanate, in the colonial period became a supplier of cheap labor (O’Fahey 2006: 25).

After the country gained independence in 1956, only a few positive changes were observed in Darfur. In 1959, a railroad from Khartoum to Nyala was built to transport agricultural products, but throughout all subsequent years Darfur has remained one of the poorest Sudanese provinces (Young, Osman, Aklilu, Dale, Badri and Fuddle 2005: 21). In the 2000s, the transfers from the federal budget to the three states of Darfur were not only the smallest in the country, but also had a tendency to decrease. The level of accessibility of health care was far below the average for Sudan. In 1996, Sudan's universities graduated about 9,000 students from Darfur, but less than 600 of them got regular jobs over the next 10 years (World Bank 2007: 15).

Sudan's national economic statistics is not reliable, but it is estimated that almost half of the national income is absorbed in the capital, where about 20% of the total population lives. The economic and political dominance of the center and the marginalization of the regions is perhaps the main feature of the current political life of Sudan. Khartoum and its suburbs are an enclave where a significant proportion of its sizeable population earns high and medium incomes. The metropolitan area is surrounded by provinces that are noticeably lagging behind the center in their economic development. The center has enormous political power, an extensive stratum of highly-skilled professionals and a significant contingent of qualified labor, as well as a historically formed political culture with strong liberal traditions. The periphery is not only poor, but is also an object of political suppression and economic exploitation, so it remains deprived and impoverished even in peacetime.

Another important factor that determined the features of the political development of Sudan and reflected on the situation in Darfur was the inability of any political faction, including the ruling National Congress Party, to effectively manage the state as a whole. The center has a relatively developed economic, social, cultural and political infrastructure capable of supporting not one but many elite groups, but these factions are in a situation of constant rivalry for power and influence in the country, and the confrontation has not stopped since the first day of independence of Sudan, which predetermined chronic political instability. However, the lack of internal cohesion in the government did not prevent it from maintaining socio-cultural and economic domination in Sudan, as well as control over all political and



economic institutions of the country. In turn, provincial elites could not independently create the political infrastructure necessary to undermine the dominance of the center, or establish a firmly regulated and stable system of clientelism (Kostelyanets 2014: 79).

Marginalization and underdevelopment, experienced by all Darfurians, regardless of race or tribal affiliation, were cited by Darfur's rebels as the reasons for fighting with the center. True, non-Arab Darfurian people more acutely perceived their lack of involvement in political governance. Especially *Furs*, once powerful and independent, resented their peripheral status within Sudan, which itself was a relatively recent and unstable polity. *Furs* also lost faith in political parties that enjoyed their support but never did anything in return. The government did not want to assume the role of mediator in land disputes, but, on the contrary, acted as a land manipulator, and this led to the transformation of individual clashes into large-scale anti-government demonstrations and armed confrontations between Arab and non-Arab groups in the region.

## **Conclusion**

The conflict in Darfur has its ultimate and multifaceted roots in the region's historical past. Darfur's history may boast many fairly glorious periods: the formation of the flourishing Sultanate of Darfur; the struggle against the colonialist invaders, led by the sultans and the Mahdi; the introduction of effective administrative and judicial systems and a fair system of land-use, etc. However, most successes were achieved through wars, plundering, raids on neighboring tribes, repression against peaceful representatives of 'unfriendly' tribes, the exploitation of slave labor, and so on. Thus, since the days of the Sultanate of Darfur, militarization and the formation of a kind of culture of violence have been taking place in the region, and the methods and ways of organizing militias and insurgents have been handed down from generation to generation and are employed still now. The main difference between modern armed anti-government groups, self-defense units and criminal structures and their prototypes from previous centuries is the possession of modern firearms by the former.

To a lesser extent, the racial and tribal composition of the region can be considered a historical root of the conflict. First, because in previous centuries, belonging to different racial or tribal groups did

not exalt or diminish the dignity of a man: after all, even slaves participated in the administration of the Sultanate of Darfur and married relatives of the sultan! The fact that it was the southerners who were enslaved more often was primarily due to the military prowess of the northerners and the demand for cheap labor that was necessary for trade and economic development of the Sultanate. The racial and tribal delimitation of the Darfurians was a product of colonial and later postcolonial policies.

Secondly, even if the farmers and pastoralists of Darfur belonged to the same race, same tribe and used the same language, the conflict would still be inevitable amid the growing scarcity of arable land and pastures, the narrowing of thoroughfares for livestock and the drying of wells due to droughts and desertification. Although, perhaps, the confrontation could be less violent. However, these tribes spoke different languages and identified themselves as ‘Arabs’ or ‘Africans’, which threw further fuel on the fire of confrontation in this already inflamed region.

Racial and tribal identity in Darfur was much more volatile than in other regions of Sudan. When changing occupation, Darfur's people would often change their self-identification, but this all has changed with polarization and politicization of tribal affiliation during the uprisings, when first the Mahdi, then the colonial authorities, and finally the governments of independent Sudan began to set Darfur's tribes against each other in order to achieve their goals.

For centuries, *Furs* – farmers and pastoralists – had their own lands (*dars*), while smaller Arab tribes, who were more exposed to natural disasters and had no rights to the land, gradually began to realize that their very existence was under the threat of extinction, especially that their population increased exponentially, greatly outpacing the growth of livestock. Thus, their grievances were also valid, although this in no way should justify violence and racist ideology.

The efforts made by the regime in reforming the traditional administration in Darfur did not contribute to resolving political crisis in the region, but, on the contrary, engendered additional reasons for the outbreak of conflict. Meanwhile, despite the many changes that have occurred in Darfur's society, traditional rulers are still respected in many communities, which is not surprising given that many Darfurians remain committed to traditional values.

Undoubtedly, the traditional administration as an institute of power has undergone a major evolution over the past decades, and now it is perceived very differently by the populace. In order to meet the needs of modernization and to improve communication with the outside world, including the central government, many groups of the rural population began to nominate young educated tribesmen to governing bodies. Successes of the traditional administration in the past were mainly associated with the resolution of conflicts and their management, so the destruction of the institution of traditional tribunals contributed significantly to the exacerbation of inter-tribal differences. It can be said that the traditional structures are those historical roots of the Darfurians that, for all their flaws, are today the only institution that can function effectively amid the ongoing crisis.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Janjaweed is an Arab militia that participated in armed clashes with Darfuri-  
an insurgents and in raids on lands of mostly non-Arab tribes during the  
main phase of the Darfur conflict – from 2003 to 2010.

### References

- Burr, J.M., and Collins, R.O. 2006. *Darfur: Long Road to Disaster*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Census of Sudan*. 1953.
- Daldoum, H.M. 2000. *Dynamics of Ethnic Group Relations in Darfur: A Case of the Fur-Arab Relations in Western Darfur*. Khartoum: University of Khartoum Press.
- De Waal, A. 2005. Who Are the Darfurians? Arab and African Identities, Violence and External Engagement. *African Affairs* 104: 181–205.
- Fadul, A.J., and Tanner, V. 2007. Darfur after Abuja: A View from the Ground. In De Waal, A. (ed.), *War in Darfur and Search for Peace*. (pp. 284–313). London; Cambridge, MA: Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University, and Justice Africa.
- Haaland, G. 1972. Nomadisation as an Economic Career among the Seden-  
taries in the Sudan Savannah Belt. In Cunnison, I., and James, W. (eds.)  
*Essays in Sudan Ethnography presented to Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard*.  
(pp. 149–172). London: C. Hurst & Co.
- Hamid, A.A.A.-M. 1979. *Local Authorities and Social Change with Refer-  
ence to South Darfur Province* (Master's thesis). Khartoum: University  
of Khartoum.
- Harir, S. 1994a. 'Arab Belt' versus 'African Belt': Ethno-Political Conflict in  
Darfur and the Regional Political Factors. In Harir, S., and Tvedt, T.

- (eds.), *Short-Cut to Decay: The Case of the Sudan* (pp. 144–185). Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Harir, S. 1994b. Recycling the Past in the Sudan: An Overview of Political Decay. In Harir, S., and Tvedt, T. (eds.), *Short-Cut to Decay: The Case of the Sudan* (pp. 10–68). Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Ibrahim, A.A.-R.A. 1977. *Development and Administration in Southern Darfur* (Master's thesis). Khartoum: University of Khartoum.
- International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur. 2005. *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General*. New York: United Nations.
- Khalaf, N. 1965. *British Policy Regarding the Administration of the Northern Sudan, 1899–1951* (PhD diss.). Durham: Duke University.
- Kostelyanets, S.V. 2014. *Darfur: istorija konflikta* [Darfur: A History of the Conflict]. Moscow: Institute for African Studies Press.
- Kostelyanets, S.V. 2015. Konflikt v sudanskom regione Darfur: regional'nyj aspekt [Conflict in Sudan's Darfur Region: the Regional Aspect]. *Vostok / Oriens* 1: 76–89.
- Mamdani, M. 2010. *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and War on Terror*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Natsios, A.S. 2012. *Sudan, South Sudan, and Darfur: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- O'Fahey, R.S. 1971. Religion and the trade in the Kayra Sultanate of Dar Fur. In Hasan, Y.F. (ed.), *Sudan in Africa* (pp. 87–97). Khartoum: University of Khartoum Press.
- O'Fahey, R.S. 1980. *State and Society in Dar Fur*. London: C. Hurst & Co.
- O'Fahey, R.S. 2006. Conflict in Darfur: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. In O'Fahey, R.S, and Saeed, B.O. (eds.), *Environmental degradation as a cause of conflict in Darfur: conference proceedings, Khartoum, December 2004* (pp. 23–32). Addis Ababa: University for Peace, Africa Programme.
- O'Fahey, R.S., and Abu Salim, M.I. 1983. *Land in Dar Fur*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rodney, W. 1974. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press.
- Smirnov, S.R. 1968. *Istorija Sudana (1821–1956)* [A History of Sudan (1821–1956)]. Moscow: Nauka.
- Spaulding, J., and Kapteijns, L. 2002. Land Tenure and the State in the Pre-colonial Sudan. *Northeast African Studies* 9 (1): 33–66.
- Tubiana, J. 2007. Darfur: A War for Land? In De Waal, A. (ed.), *War in Darfur and Search for Peace*. (pp. 68–91). London; Cambridge, MA: Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University, and Justice Africa.

- Vasiliev, A.M. (ed.). 2010. *Afrika. Entsiklopedija*. [Africa. Encyclopedia]. Vol. 2. Moscow: Entsiklopedija, INFRA-M.
- World Bank. 2007. *Darfur – Dimensions of Challenge for Development: Background Volume*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/12576> (accessed April 28, 2019).
- Young, H., Osman, F.M., Aklilu, Y, Dale, R., Badri, B., and Fuddle A.J.A. 2005. *Darfur: Livelihoods under Siege*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University.

# FROM MORAL ETHNICITY TO MORAL ANARCHY: THE COLONIAL IDEOLOGY OF ORDER AND POLITICAL DISORDER IN POSTCOLONIAL KENYA

*Nicholas K. Githuku*

York College, City University of New York

## **Introduction**

Generally, people's attitudes, set of ideas, values, and beliefs, and how they conduct themselves and work for survival and reputation – their sense of purpose, and of being in the world – is determined by the ecological, socio-political, cultural, and ideological circumstances in which they find themselves. Or, as John Lonsdale (2019) eloquently puts it, a people's foundation of their ethnic culture, their ethnic morality, what he has called 'moral ethnicity,' is determined, as it is, by how they learn 'to manage their struggle with nature.' This chapter concerns itself with a range of such evident conventions, ideas and practices governing individual responsibility and self-conduct in society. They include moral ethnicity, householder ideology, working class consciousness, the ideology of law and order or the tendency toward moral anarchy and subsequent political disorder characterized by runaway corruption in the absence of redistributive civic virtue and reciprocity. While my work (Githuku 2016) extensively examines the first three aggregated under 'the *mentalité* of struggle in Kenya,' the ideology of law and order that, in the postcolony protects metropolitan economic interests and those of the wealthy and ruling elite, is minimally treated. This chapter is, therefore, dedicated to unmasking this hegemonic ideology. It is a close analysis of the various manifestations of this surviving and ever-evolving colonial ideology of order in contemporary Kenyan politics. This is with the aim of reflecting on the importance and impact of these manifestations for social and political processes.

All human history, and that of any political society or entity, is the history of human struggle, with the forces of nature and/or over the process of the allocation of natural resources and the resultant products when the former are mixed with human labor (Thiong'o 1987; Lonsdale 2019), a struggle determined in the realm of politics. Hence

the definition of politics as the process of determining who gets what, when and how (Lasswell 1936), or the *authoritative* allocation of values for a society (Easton 1965). It, of necessity, follows that ‘political societies are characterized by the practice of political competition’ hence multivocality within any social formation reflecting competing oppositional and divergent political perspectives horizontal but, for the most part, vertical (Odhiambo 1987: 178–179). And since the distribution of resources in society is a function and/or dynamic of authority or power, the be-all and end-all of the political process in the modern state, is the pursuit and capture of state power. As a theoretical abstraction, as an ideological expression (Odhiambo 1987: 180), the state in general, and the Kenyan state in particular, is a product of competing ideological constructions (Githuku 2016: 4–5). The capture of state power, within the political arena of established rules of structured consensual interaction characterized by dialogue, discourse and/or bounded conflict, is the objective of different groups, classes or factions working exclusively, or in combination – struggling, as it were, ‘for the agenda,’ in a struggle that is for both ‘positions of power and for programs on the basis of issues’ (Zartman, 1986). Only then can the triumphant group construct the state in its own ideological image at the expense of its political competition.

Historically, reaching back to its early beginnings in the early 1890s onwards, the Kenyan state, its institutional, legal and policy architecture, has consistently evolved and developed informed by the ideological leaning of two triumphal groups: its erstwhile British white settlers and the African bigwigs who replaced them at independence. The Kenyan state, by design and construction, is, therefore, suffused by a logic that still points to London as the state’s *raison d’être* (Githuku 2016: 4). It remains a conquest state (Lonsdale 1989b) whose sole *raison d’être* remains domination attested to by its ‘instrumentalities ... manifested ... variously as force, authority, bureaucracy, or power’ (Odhiambo 1987: 180). This investment of force or the deployment of violence on a scale that was locally unprecedented (Lonsdale 1990: 395–396) was necessary in order ‘to drain’ the African ‘people of all sovereignty and to transfer this from’ their ‘rulers and the myriads of institutional networks to a single State’ (Ajayi 1983: 193). The envisioned result of domineering conquest, institutional and systematic preponderance of the British colonial state was

absolute subservience of the subjugated colonial people or imperial subjects (Githuku 2016: 12). The deployment of force was also necessary, furthermore, for this revolutionary colonial construct to build a capacity that would allow it to ‘coerce obedience, exact labor, and extract surpluses’ (Odhiambo 1987: 180).

Suffice it to say that the British colonial state, in what would become Kenya colony, created a law and order understood and seen through imperial and European settler eyes but one that was hotly contested and disputed first by Indians, Asians and Arabs, and by Africans themselves. A mature and effervescent African ideology of bread and butter politics (*mentalité* of struggle) would continue to oppose the colonial ideology of order that survived independence in postcolonial Kenya. This is the subject of Odhiambo’s masterfully analytical chapter, ‘Democracy and the Ideology of Order in Kenya,’ in Michael G. Schatzberg’s edited volume, *The Political Economy of Kenya* (1987). Odhiambo’s chapter is a clinical analysis attended to by rare and succinct theoretical clarity of the twin legacies of the state (the colonial state that succeeded itself at independence dictated to by the ideology of order) and its countervailing opposing ideology, the *mentalité* of struggle between 1963 and 1987. What follows below are some of the main highlights of Odhiambo’s penetrating analysis of the preponderant ideology of the colonial and postcolonial Kenya state – how the state has been transforming itself since 1895 to 1987; what underpins the ideology of order; the group, class or factions behind it; and why this ideology is preoccupied with the search and preservation of power as a hegemonic project (Odhiambo 1987: 191). This brief summary is then followed by my own attempt at examining this prevalent ideology and its socioeconomic and political implications for the country since 1987 to the present.

Odhiambo (1987: 179–192) aptly observes that, both, the intrinsic instinct seared and embedded in the human spirit of freedom and self-mastery that drives the undying quest for democracy (*politics*), and the state with its hegemonic stamp or imperative, are legacies of decolonization. The most distinctive element of the Kenyan state is its coercive character and an ongoing process of power accumulation (Schatzberg and Zartman 1986). Citing Lonsdale (1989a: 13–14), Odhiambo elucidates that the state as a function of power, simultaneously, survives because it is external to society, and is, therefore,



above it; but also works only because it is internal to society, and is, for that reason, within it. Moreover, reading from Lonsdale (1981), Odhiambo argues that the state is a process – ‘it is not a fixed entity.’ Rather, ‘the state continually morphs’ as it ‘is constructed and reconstructed, invented and reinvented, through its interaction as a whole and of its parts with others’ (Migdal 2001: 23). As such, the Kenyan state ‘must be seen as an apparatus transforming society’ while, at the same time, ‘also being transformed by society’ (Odhiambo 1987: 181). This chapter is an examination of the way the state (and its ideology of order) has historically transformed Kenyan society and how the latter has in turn, transformed the state.<sup>1</sup> In the interim, it is important to focus on another important aspect of the state as a process *Viz.* – its various stages of evolution.

### **The state as a process:**

#### **The state producing society while transforming itself**

Odhiambo (1987) argues that not only have the society and the state been acting upon each other but, simultaneously, and crucially, the latter has been transforming itself throughout its life since its inauguration in 1895. He aptly observes that, in its inceptive form,

When initially launched by an early multinational corporation, the Imperial British East Africa Corporation in 1888, the state was essentially a tribute-gathering apparatus, collecting ‘the goods of nature ... such as ivory and ostrich feathers. The failure of The Company saw this apparatus transform itself into a conquest state (Lonsdale 1977; 1986; 1989a; 1989b) between 1902 and 1920, ‘pacifying’ such diverse groups as the Kikuyu and the Turkana. It was also a mediating state, claiming wardship over Africans, under the code name of Trusteeship ... as against more blatant settler demands for coerced labor.

During the interwar years this state transformed itself yet again into a settler-dominated social formation, engaged in organizing production and marketing for capital, while at the same time mediating between the European, Asian, and African races. In its post-World War guise, this state initiated the ‘second colonial occupation’ (Low and Lonsdale 1976), and engaged in introducing rapid agrarian change in the African reserves through the twin processes of soil conservation and cash crop development. This phase ushered in agrarian reforms, significantly the Swynnerton Plan. Its reformist activities were punctuated in the mid-1950s by the military operations during the Mau Mau war but otherwise

continuing to the present. At the end of this phase, from 1964 to 1986, this interventionism ... functioned under a presidential system and the state ... governed through an executive presidency. This process ... involved 'regime-building ... and presidency-building .... By the mid-1980s, the state is the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the security apparatuses (Odhiambo 1987: 181–182).

From the foregoing, five stages of the consistent evolution of the Kenyan state are notable including the fetal stage of primitive accumulation (1888–1896); the phase of the deployment of the instrumentalities of the state namely force, authority, bureaucracy and/or power (1896–1914); the phase of the capture and configuration of its social organization of power in favor of white settlers when the Colonial Office in London temporarily lost the policy-making initiative at the opening of the First World War (Maxon: 1993); the post-1945 'second colonial occupation' phase qualified by crucial agrarian reforms to respond to, and ease, pressing African socioeconomic grievances and, ultimately, after the outbreak of the political crisis of the early 1950s, to reorder and reconfigure the political economy thereby building a substantial 'middle class of all races to be the backbone of the country' (Githuku 2016: 33); and the postindependence era during which time the now newly reconfigured colonial order and state, characterized by the conflux of moderate African elite and British commercial interests, matured into a political entity dominated by an executive presidency, an overweening bureaucracy and a security apparatus on steroids, otherwise aptly described as the 'bureaucratic-executive state' (Branch and Cheeseman 2006).

Indeed, at the turn of the twenty-first century, one can talk of a multi-level hybridized form of this state. That is, the contemporary state onto which a dash of salutary democratic and constitutional reforms, institutions, and deconcentration and devolution of power, have been grafted against the background of what can only be described as the Third Colonial Occupation<sup>2</sup> characterized by unprecedented corruption scandals coupled to massive indebtedness to foreign governments. Infused with the profuse influx of foreign direct capital to which the comprador national elite act as middlemen, the bureaucratic-security state has, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, been given a new lease of life. For this reason, the return to multipartism in the early 1990s, the writing and implementation of the 2010 constitution that engendered

the devolution of government and deconcentration of power and provisional of public goods from the center, have been a thin veneer of democratic change presenting a beguiling façade on what remains an unaltered and strengthened bureaucratic-security state. Granted, there has been notable improvement in the distribution of public services and infrastructure development. Nonetheless, the essential character of the bureaucratic-executive state remains the same. At any rate, devolution and deconcentration of power to the various county governments only serves to reproduce and replicate it into mini-county-level bureaucratic-executive forms. At the national level, the continuity and longevity of the colonial order/state with its underlying ideological foundation and insistence on law and order, the hybridized bureaucratic-security state underscored by moral anarchy and political disorder, is attributable to the reproduction of the elite group, class and the factions behind it. The people behind this ideology of order and the bureaucratic-security state have, over time, reproduced themselves both in terms of their class and commercial interests and, also, literally – that is, dynastically. This merits attention.

### **The first corruption – vulgarization of power:**

#### **The (re)production of big men**

As Lonsdale observes (2019: 17), early British state-building, the second phase of the evolution of the state, required the transformation of traditional African authority into power. Harnessing African traditional economies onto a fairly developed modern British colonial economy required the incorporation of the pre-European economic and political institutions and structures into the newly created colonial order. The colonial conquest state, put differently, ‘needed African allies in the work of conquest, tax-collection, and labour recruitment’ (Lonsdale 2019). Eventually, the forces of the new British colonial political economy produced economic, political and social changes that destroyed traditional patterns of authority and production (Lonsdale 1989a: 21–22). In effect, whatever little legitimacy the early colonial state hoped for, muster and claim, was appropriated or borrowed, better still, ‘from such African authority as already existed’ (Lonsdale 2019a: 17; see also Robinson 1972: 117–142). Indigenous African authority by this very fact of allowing itself to be appropriated for British colonial ends, was irrevocably corrupted.

This is what Lonsdale (1989a; 1989b) refers to as ‘the vulgarization of power.’ The admixture of a colonial social organization of power which privileged the small white settler community with indigenous authority corrupted it.

Thus, African authority which had been traditionally beholden through civic virtue and householder individual responsibility to communal or ethnic clients, aligned and allied itself with the burgeoning colonial state-building enterprise. This hybridization, the subsuming of the African householder ideology and practice under the new British colonial order through the policy of indirect rule, produced a collaborating class of African big men who Odhiambo (1987: 183) calls ‘insiders,’ whose loyalty was not to kinship networks and ties or their traditional clients. Rather, they owed their loyalty to the newly established colonial government. And instead of drawing legitimacy primarily from the demands of civic virtue and mutual obligation, this newfangled chiefly power and leadership of men like Koinange wa Mbiyu, Karuri wa Gakure, Njiiri wa Karanja, Mumia of Wange, Ole Murumbi of the Maasai, Owuor Kere of Nyakach, Kinyanjui wa Gathirimu, Muhoho wa Gathecha, Michuki wa Kagwi, Ogola Ayieke, Kioi, derived it from ‘processual reproduction within the colonial system’ (Odhiambo 1987: 183; Clough 1990; Wamagatta, 2016). No one has advanced our understanding of the (re)production of this African class more than Kipkorir (1969; 1974). Overtime, under the aegis of the colonial state, the first crop of chiefly big men reproduced itself, eventually, providing a ready-made socioeconomic and political class to whom independence and state power could be, and is, presently, entrusted in the postcolonial era.

As Odhiambo observes, by the 1920s, missionary boys, the Western/missionary-educated sons, cousins and some of their unwitting clients replaced the first crop of African chiefly men. These patriarchs such as Waruhiu wa Kung’u, Josiah Njonjo, Joel Omino, Musa Nyanusi, Mwendwa Kitavi (of Kitui) among others,

further consolidated and refined the patrimony, while simultaneously educating their sons in upper primary schools, at Alliance High School, Kabaa-Mangu, and at Government African Schools like Kakamega, Kagumo, and Kisii, which were built during the interwar period. A few of the grandsons of the pioneers received some higher education in Makerere and overseas. They joined the civil service and the professions be-

tween 1946 and 1962. They became the real heirs of the colonial state at independence. Their names stood out: Charles Njonjo, Simeon Nyachae, Peter Shiyukah, Kyale Mwendwa, ... Michuki. Kipkorir (1974) argues that the grandfathers had 'seen far,' educated the sons, whose sons in turn inherited the state. From within these ranks had been nominated the first African members of the Legislative Council: Eliud 'half loaf is better than none' Mathu in 1944, B.A. Ohanga in 1946, and D.T. arap Moi, the most enduring of them, in 1955 (Odhiambo 1987: 184).

From these political dynasties of the colonial era derives their biological scions, politicians and senior government administrators, who have dominated the high echelons of government and the civil service such as Simeon Nyachae (son of Chief Musa Nyandusi), Joab Omino, the Mwendwa brothers (Eliud Ngala Mwendwa, who served as the Minister of Labor in Jomo Kenyatta's cabinet and Kitili Mwendwa, the first African Chief Justice of Kenya), John Njoroge Michuki, Kariuki wa Njiiri, Peter Mbiyu Koinange (son of chief Koinange who also served as a powerful Kenyatta minister), to mention but a few. It is important to point out that consciously or not, Jomo Kenyatta married wisely into chief Koinange wa Mbiyu's family, and, later, that of chief Muhoho wa Gathecha thus inaugurating one of Kenya's foremost and what promises to be a long-lasting political dynasty. Moi, his immediate successor, established his own that similarly demonstrates the same political tenacity. Ditto; Mwai Kibaki, Kenya's third president.

Indeed, there is no surprise that all of President Kenyatta's men (Moi, Kibaki and Uhuru Muigai wa Kenyatta, who is more so than the first two) have read from the same refrain on the eve of independence, the very script of the ideology of law and order *Viz.* – the principle of 'willing seller, willing buyer' with regard to land ownership. But it was Moi who, waxing lyrical early during his presidency in the 1980s, and through a masterful stroke of political genius, movingly repackaged the colonial ideology of order into the populist appeal of his *Nyayo* philosophy of love, peace and unity. There was, however, precious little love lost when his government was rocked with Kenya's first largest corruption scandal, Goldenberg in which no less than US \$600 million was funneled out of the Central Bank of Kenya (Branch 2011: 217–221; Hornsby 2012: 291–292, 302, 506; Burbidge 2015: 33–35; Githuku 2016: 344, 345–347). Similarly, charged with the task

of sustaining a unified nation – as the state ‘has the particular function of constituting the factor of social cohesion between the’ different ‘levels of ... social formation’ (Poulantzas 1975: 44) – President Kibaki, for his part, hinted at the same ideology of order by reminding people that Kenya was a working nation. In a public address on June 1, 2013, Kibaki told his audience that the era of free things, if ever there was any, was over. Kenyans had, therefore, to work hard. The Kenyan state has had, therefore, at whatever stage of its evolution, a steady hand at the helm ensuring the continuity of the ideology of order thus promulgating and overseeing the status quo. This, political stability and the peaceful maintenance of the *status quo* enshrining the twin pillars of capital, the protection of life and private property, is the single objective of this class of big men. Consequently, ensuring the survival of this vision and political reality of the Kenyan state, with its concomitant veneer of (guided) democracy, demands the suppression of alternatives articulated and championed by the opposing *mentalité* of struggle characterized by a long history and lineage of political dissent. Besides its preoccupation with the preservation of power, the ideology of order is also committed to protecting the Kenyan state and its brand of democracy from the people.

### **‘The danger to democracy is the people’**

One of the colonial state’s greatest fears was the masses. Colonial authorities, and independent Kenya’s African ruling elite, were afraid that the madding crowd of have-nots could, as they had in 1952, leap over the barriers and invade the pitch of sanitized politics of ‘law and order.’ The final order of colonial business and, by natural default, the first order of Kenyatta’s post-independence government, was to protect the colonial/postcolonial state by creating political ‘order in society by either incorporating, excluding, or liquidating all discordant political noises in society’ (Odhiambo, 1987: 190). This is a task that the political heirs of the colonial state led by Kenyatta and other scions of chiefly power such as his attorney general Charles Njonjo fulfilled to the hilt.

The former, having already been recognized as the rallying political symbol through whom the hopes of the European community, London’s commercial interests and continued military presence, and the ideology of order could be secured, just before his release, early in

his premiership and presidency, had his task already cut out before him. Kenyatta faced-off with Mau Mau elements, dubbed the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, hellbent on challenging and reconfiguring colonially inaugurated social relations of power to create an equitable political economy. This dissenting group, among others, on the eve, and during the early years, of independence was committed to disrupting the evolution of the state in a political economy that privileged a select few by any means necessary including violently. Unsurprisingly, much of the time early during Kenyatta's tenure at the helm was spent coaxing such radical dissenting groups, and members of the original forest fighters of the Mau Mau movement, to leave the forest and surrender their weapons. On the whole, the Father of the Nation attempted to temper the high expectations of ordinary Kenyans with his calls for *Harambee* (pooling together); pleading with all to forgive and forget the evils and experiences of the past; and, consistent with the ideology of order, which he understood only too well, charging people to celebrate and embrace '*uhuru na kazi*' ('freedom and work') – an appeal echoed by Kibaki who, towing the same line, would tell his listeners that Kenya was a working nation where nobody should expect free things.

Toward the end of Kenyatta's tenure, at a time when the president's faculties were dulled by age, reading from the same script, more or less, his ideological lieutenant, Njonjo, a chiefly big man in his own right, would hold guard against 'dangerous agitators,' political activists and petitioners of a now firmed-up bureaucratic-executive state. Njonjo openly threatened to jail the radical novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o who had just penned his incendiary novel, *Petals of Blood*. Both London and Nairobi feared that the novel would inspire a revolution. The vast crowd of virtual spectators who, time and again, threatened to leap over the barriers and invade the pitch of sanitized politics of order, could very well do so at the invitation and encouragement of their wilder spirits such as this writer who epitomized the spirit of political dissent. An establishment man such as Njonjo was under no illusions about the dangers of the crowd joining in.<sup>3</sup> This palpable and shared crowd-phobia of London and Nairobi demonstrates that the forces of the ideology of order understood that 'the danger to democracy is the people' (O'Brien 1972: 372), who had to be thwarted at every turn possible using the instrumentalities of the state. After all,

the injunctions of the ideology of order were clearly spelled out (Odhiambo 1987: 189–190):

The need for obedience among the governed rather than any profound acceptance of the rulers; the crucial role of the political elite in the sustenance of this ideology; the necessity of lowering newly acquired expectations and levels of activity of the ruled; the entrusting of the management of the state to a bureaucracy; the need for accumulation and concentration of power in the hands of the political elite, and not its dispersion into society and legal lawlessness by the ruling class. Order, institutions, and elite are the basic components of this construct, while ‘the danger to democracy is the people’ ...

The people are perceived as a danger to order because they insist that there ought to be accountability in society. ...

The ideology of order mediates between the people’s freedom and the ruler’s irresponsibility.



Fig. 1. The injunctions of the ideology of order dictate the search, accumulation and perpetuation of power. Hegemony is the be-all and end-all of the state. Source: ‘The Emperor Drunk with Power,’ Gado Cartoon, @Igaddo, Twitter, February 20, 2018.

Only through strict adherence to these injunctions can the state, not only search for power, which is its single most important objective, but also continue to accumulate and perpetuate power. Hegemony is the be-all and end-all of the state – ‘the common core of ideol-



ogy among the leaders of transformative states has been to create a hegemonic presence – a single authoritative rule – in multiple arenas, even in the far corners of society,’ the goal being ‘to penetrate society deeply enough.... The organization of the state has been to effect such a far-reaching domination’ (Migdal 2001: 125–126). Thus, vested class interests of both the colonial and post-independence state saw in ‘the state a potential instrument for extending the hegemony of their specific class interests on the rest of society.’ This endless ‘quest for hegemony by the state in all spheres of national life’ is an established pattern that Odhiambo (1987) sought to explain with reference to the work of prominent social and political science specialists.

### **The second absolute corruption – the state’s quest for hegemony: The reign supreme of moral anarchy**

Citing Goran Hyden (1980), Odhiambo (1987: 191) writes that ‘in a peasant society such as Kenya, where the economic base’ was fragmented, ““the common political response to existent structural contradictions was to create a unified, coercive super-structure.”” As such, post-independence

regimes that took over state power were bound ... to be responsive to the forces generated by various peasantries that, presumably, were articulated at the level of contradictions with the state system rather than in harmony with it, since peasants are guardians of their autonomy and therefore duty-bound to be wary of the state systems. The state, then, ‘had no choice but to create political structures capable of containing the divisive effects of these contradictions’ (Hyden 1980: 26).

However, the best rationale behind the process of the search, accumulation and perpetuation of power was elaborated by Donald Cruise O’Brien (1972). O’Brien presented an explanation that traced this tendency back to the colonial system. According to O’Brien, the intrusion of the colonial system in traditional African societies proved effective in undermining established normative patterns which, subsequently, resulted to moral anarchy. Pre-European normative patterns, principles and practices were so effectively undermined to the extent that there was little basis left for the construction of a new moral system. Where ‘the old social sway of interdependence’ (Lonsdale 2019: 17) had prevailed, moral anarchy now reigned supreme.

Furthermore, Odhiambo (1987: 191) continues, returning to Hyden, ‘the primordial moral public realm (read ethnic community) commands the prior loyalty of African leadership, as against the civic public realm (read territorial society).’ The former, the ethnic realm, is a reservoir of moral obligations which one works to preserve whereas the latter, the civic realm, is a place from which one seeks to gain, if possible, in order to benefit the moral primordial public realm (Hyden 1980: 27). This, then, is the prism through which, the grand corruption that is the bane of Africa, and Kenya in particular, should be seen. In this sense, political tribalism is the driver of this hegemonic quest of the state elite (Leys 1974: 198–206), which then explains corruption scandals in series that are a part of the general run-of-the-mill. Bringing his insight to bear on this, Nyong’o (1983) argued that the absence, or the lack of a strong civil society, not only exacerbates this tendency, but is what necessitates this hegemonic tendency. Indeed, according to Nyong’o, on the one hand, the repressive state apparatuses are introduced in order to create civil society while, on the other, the same instruments are contradictorily deployed ‘to negate civil society.’ As such, there was no civil society at Uhuru that could have compelled representatives to be representatives hence the search for, and accumulation of, power<sup>4</sup> without accountability (Odhiambo 1987: 192). Lastly, Odhiambo points to Jackson and Rosberg (1984) who offered the argument that political regimes are not only primarily institutional and procedural but are also ‘essentially personal and ... discretionary.’ As such, the ‘mistrust of rivals and fear of competition,’ also act as drivers for the state’s quest for hegemony. This is O’Brien’s ‘the danger to democracy is the people’ explanation come full circle. This mistrust of rivals and fear of the people is what then dictates that the tradition of political dissent, read the archetypal Mau Mau *mentalité* of struggle, must be constantly held in check and be emasculated (Odhiambo 1987: 192). The state’s incessant quest for hegemony; the demise of moral ethnicity, the disruption, unravelling, rupture and irretrievable breakdown of African village life with its customs and values, and social fabric of mutual networks of support that left a vacuum that was now filled by moral anarchy; and the pillaging and looting of the civic public realm in order to reward the moral primordial public realm, and, therefore, how political tribalism and corruption bleed-into each other, has:

- i. Hybridized and transformed the colonial ideology of order into a brazen and vaunted all-pervasive culture of impunity.
- ii. Limited the authoritative allocation and distribution of value in quite distinctive ways during the Kenyatta and Moi regimes (see Fig. 6 and 7 on the configuration of state patronage under the Kenyatta and Moi regimes below).
- iii. Perpetrated the twin tyranny of the masses on their respective ethnic elites and that of the latter on the former.
- iv. Weakened and stultified the political party system.
- v. And, the combination of (i) and (iii), ensures the overlordship of political tribalism and corruption.

The rest of this essay is dedicated to an examination and discussion of some of the implications of the supreme reign of moral anarchy in Kenya.

**Moral anarchy and the culture of impunity:  
A corruption of the moral economy of affection**

As observed above, the ideology of law and order, like the state, is not static. Indeed, as conceived and performed by the state and its agents, the ideology of order is self-legitimizing and justifying. After all, the state is erected upon the unlawful and, indeed, criminal foundations of the colonial state which was an imposition effected through the investment of force. At the very inception of the state, therefore, there was need for ‘pacification,’ for obedience among the British imperial subjects ‘rather than any profound acceptance of the rulers.’ Put differently, the colonial state was built not through consensus as a democracy, but by fiat. Not only did the colonial system vulgarize or corrupt African traditional authority and contribute to the demise of established normative patterns leaving no basis for the construction of a new moral system (thus creating moral anarchy) but it also sowed seeds of a political culture of impunity. Indeed, it was, itself, an act and/or as a result, of impunity.

This colonially inaugurated culture of impunity can be seen at work, for instance, in how the British colonial authorities went about imposing a tax regime where there had been none, and alienating land and labor, two key factors of production upon which the economic viability of the state was dependent. The African ecological arena was curtailed, and the African body subjected to colonial discipline, and to imperial struc-

tures of systematized violence, through legal prestidigitation. That is, through the writing and implementation of illegal colonial laws. The subsequent imperial order and colonial order was, naturally, detested and contested. This witnessed the birth of the tradition of political dissent counterpoised against the ideology of order. The morphing of this ruling class ideology into its unmasked colonial original cannot be said to be a case of chickens coming home to roost. Flagrant and rampant corruption in the post-independence era has surprised even Kenya's erstwhile rulers. Reacting to Anglo-Leasing, Kibaki government's 'multi-faceted graft project on par with Goldenberg' (Burbidge 2015: 37), Sir Edward Clay, then the British High Commissioner to Kenya, lamented that top figures of the hegemonic regime were eating 'like gluttons' and vomiting 'over all our shoes' (Penketh 2009).

Kenya's first two largest corruption scandals, Goldenberg and Anglo-Leasing attest the murky-black shark infested liquid mass of local, national and international networks gnarled by a culture of impunity that has its headwaters in the criminal foundations of the colonial state (Githuku 2016: 339). The Goldenberg scandal, which occurred under the Moi imperious presidency between 1990 and 1993, entailed the government paying Goldenberg International 'special compensation for earning foreign exchange reserves by exporting' non-existent 'gold and diamonds to the international market.' At least US \$600 was funneled out of the Central Bank of Kenya then returned with a 20% bonus (Branch 2011: 217–221; Hornsby 2012: 302, 291–292, 506; Burbidge 2015: 33). This marked the height of the vulgarization of power, far from conventional leadership and management principles. Fiscal wisdom was out of the window. Ethical norms such as responsibility and accountability and demands of civic virtue and mutual obligation were pushed to the margins or ignored altogether. As a result, the margins of universal norms were pushed to the limit and ruptured with impunity. As a result of this scandal, Kenyans were made 30% poorer, and the country's gross domestic product slashed by 10% (Lonsdale 2009: 61).

Anglo-Leasing, which occurred between 1997 and 2003, involved payments to a British company 'under the guise of investing to improve Kenyan security services, such as US \$36 million for' new high-technology 'tamper-proof passports' (Burbidge 2015: 37) – however, the scandal also involved payments to other fictitious corporate entities that were paid to supply naval ships and forensic laboratories (see Menya and

Misiko 2019). The fact that this scandal straddles both the Moi and Kibaki administrations is quite telling. This scandal was unfolding since 1997 when the first ‘contracts’ were signed, and again in 2003 with payments going out until May 2015. What this means is that high-level corruption in the country is entrenched deeply in the bureaucracy and is, therefore, systemic or institutionalized. Alluding to this repugnant systemic morass of corruption, John Githongo, the former anti-corruption tsar and whistleblower who served in the first half of Kibaki’s first administration as the Governance and Ethics Permanent Secretary, sadly observed in a public personal statement on May 2, 2019 that:

... The Anglo Leasing model of misappropriation of resources from the Kenyan people has continued unabated since 2001. ... Over the past six years in particular the plunder of public resources has accelerated to levels unprecedented in Kenyan history since independence. Increasingly the economic, political, social and very personal cost of this plunder by officials in positions of authority has been borne by the Kenyan people directly.<sup>5</sup>



Fig. 2. Ordinary people have been diminished by their inescapable complicity in corruption and disqualified, therefore, from cleansing the state themselves. Their languid attitude ensures that, collectively, ordinary people are unsafe and are, often, not at the table but, rather, on the menu. Source: Gado.

Burbidge (2015) describes this systemic decay as ‘an established method of state-sponsored corruption’ (Burbidge 2015: 37–38). Bur-

bidge's book subtitle, *Widespread Expectations of Widespread Corruption*, could not be more apt in describing the situation in Kenya. Presently, the level of corruption is such that no citizen trusts their fellow citizens. There is, therefore, no prospect of a united demand for clean government.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, one would even venture to argue, aptly, that only a meagre number of Kenyans qualify to make such a demand. Ordinary people have been 'diminished by their inescapable complicity in corruption and disqualified, therefore, from cleansing the state themselves' (Berman and Lonsdale 2016: 7). Kenya scored 27 points out of 100 on the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index and ranks at 145 out of 174 countries according to Transparency International's global corruption perceptions index.<sup>7</sup> It is not surprising that skyrocketing corruption under President Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, the country's fourth, dwarfs all previous corruption scandals.

The Uhuru Kenyatta government has been rocked by several corruption scandals including the mysterious disappearance of over US \$1 billion after Kenya issued its first sovereign bond in 2014. Two years after the country made the biggest debut of any African country on the international bond market raising US \$2.75 billion, the national treasury – under the government ministry which formulates financial and economic policies and oversees effective coordination of Government financial operations – could not account for these monies. The government, however, claimed that the money had been allocated to various government departments. Findings of a government audit, though, revealed that, contrary to this claim, there was no proof of 'receipt of expenditure' of this money anywhere in government. For instance, the department of water and irrigation was reported to have received KES 11.2 billion but there was neither documentation showing receipt nor expenditure of said funds (Wafula 2016). Criticizing the government mismanagement of public finances, the opposition leader and former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga accused the Kenyatta administration of an 'elaborate scheme of deception' (Kuo 2016).

According to Odinga, \$999 million of the proceeds from the Eurobond was transferred from the government's account with JP Morgan Chase in New York to one with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York on Sept 8, 2014, according to transfer receipts. He claims the money has not shown up in auditor reports for the last two years and that it was never deposited in the government's public funds account. Odinga also called on US

banks to give a full account of the funds and prove that they were ‘not part of this grand theft.’ ‘Nobody knows whose account it ended up in or whether it came into Kenya at all,’ he told reporters.

... Kenya’s Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission said it found no proof that any money from the Eurobond had been stolen. Treasury secretary Kamau Thugge said that the missing money was not on the budget for last year because it has been allocated for this financial year. ‘CORD’s is an issue of misreading the tables,’ he told Bloomberg last month (Kuo 2016).

Dubbed the Eurobond corruption scandal, this suspected misplacement of funds intended to lower interest rates, reduce inflation, and raise funds for infrastructure projects like geothermal plants, expanded airports, or a railway between Nairobi and the port city of Mombasa (Kuo 2016), remains a mystery.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, this scandal appears to betray the new *modus operandi* of grand corruption that employs what Kenyans humorously describe as ‘tenderpreneurs.’ Bureaucratic functionaries and top-level government officials are, increasingly, targeting huge sums of money earmarked for infrastructure and other construction projects. It came as no surprise, then, when it emerged that an Italian construction company, CMC di Ravenna, was paid KES 21 billion as down payment even before it began work on two dam projects in Elgeyo Marakwet County of the Rift Valley region (Gisesa 2019; Kipchumba 2019). According to private investigations by a *Daily Nation* team, this ‘tenderpreneur’ scandal is part and parcel of an apparent construction of a host of dams under the government’s Engineering, Procurements, Construction and Financing (EPCF) scheme. Since the Kenyatta administration assumed office in 2013, various government agencies have signed or were planning to enter into contracts worth over KES 700 billion for dam construction (Gisesa 2019). Amounts of money said to have gone missing during the administration of Kenyatta are staggering. In Kenya, as in Rob Marsh’s South Africa, it is white-collar crime that is most likely to ‘bring the country to its knees’ (Marsh 1999: 178). But criminal and corruption instincts of authorities pervade Kenyan society and all sectors of the economy. This top-level ‘eating’ culture, in various levels of bureaucracy and high echelons of government, is mirrored throughout society. Corruption permeates Kenyan society because it is the sort of society that the predatory state has fashioned. In 2015, exas-

perated by rampant corruption, Dr. Willy Mutunga, then Kenya's Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Kenya, concluded that Kenya had become a 'bandit economy.' The respected and high-ranking jurist complained that corruption stretched from the very bottom to the very top of society (Lindijer 2011). As an apparatus transforming society, the Kenyan predatory state has transformed society into a *Sukuma wiki* bandit economy characterized by survival by any means necessary.

Indeed, corruption so permeates society like an unavoidable hydra that scarcely leaves anyone untouched or unaffected. The unwritten code is expressed in the African proverb, 'the goat eats where it's tethered.' It is, therefore, not surprising to find corruption and the 'trading of favors,' *bakshish*, among lawmakers; among revenue collection officials; among parents, teachers and students in schools and universities; among doctors, nurses and staff in hospitals; in corridors of justice among judges and magistrates; and even in the so-called 'disciplined armed forces' including the police *etc.* Poor remuneration of public servants, a poor incentive system for hard and honest work (due to nepotism and ethnic discrimination) and socioeconomic frustrations occasioned by unemployment or underemployment, forces ordinary citizens to resort to corruption. Socioeconomic struggles, like the quest for hegemony behind the production of the state spurred by the political elite, bear the hallmarks of the rush for spoils in which all actors – both rich and poor – participate in the world of shady corruption networks. Working people, not unlike a tethered goat, tend to eat where they are 'tethered,' or, put differently, use the nature of their work *to look after themselves*. State-sanctioned corruption is, therefore, not only institutionalized and systemic, but it also stems from cultural repertoires, which, according to Bayart (1999), are a composite element of the felonious or predator state. A great example is Jomo Kenyatta's apparent tacit acknowledgement of petty corruption using traditional Kikuyu folklore. According to Wamwere (1992), Jomo did so by alluding to a popular Kikuyu childhood play song to apparently tell corrupt officials that if they were 'careful' not to get caught, he did not mind whatever they did:

*Kanyoni gakwa wihithahithe  
Na wonwo, nduri wakwa  
(My little bird, conceal yourself  
and if you allow yourself to get caught  
you are not mine i.e., you will be on your own).*



Similarly, overseeing a corruption-rampant DRC-Congo, President Mobutu Sese Seko once warned people against brazen corruption. Using a similar cultural repertoire sanctioning corruption, Mobutu, like Jomo, urged them to *bana mayele* ('steal cleverly'). Professional people, therefore, do not only find it necessary but also *easy* (morally) to exploit their professions or their workplace because of such tacit African cultural sanction of *bakshish* – acceptance of relatively small gifts or money in return for services rendered. In the meld of African traditional values and modernity in a society imbued by corruption, the line between gratitude and corruption is blurred. Subsequently, the predatory state is augmented by cultural repertoires – which, then, is the way in which the state has been transformed by society. In this way, therefore, the strategies adopted for material survival by school principals, the military, lawmakers, judges, magistrates, the police and other civil servants, people in the private sector, even criminals, are not dissimilar from those used by leaders to accumulate power and wealth. Thus, the tempting image of innocent, bystanding masses, or viewing the Kenyan public as victims of grand corruption, is shattered. After all, corruption and predatoriness are not exclusive to the very powerful. Rather, they are modes of social and political behavior shared by a plurality of actors on a great scale, more or less (Bayart 1993: 235–241).

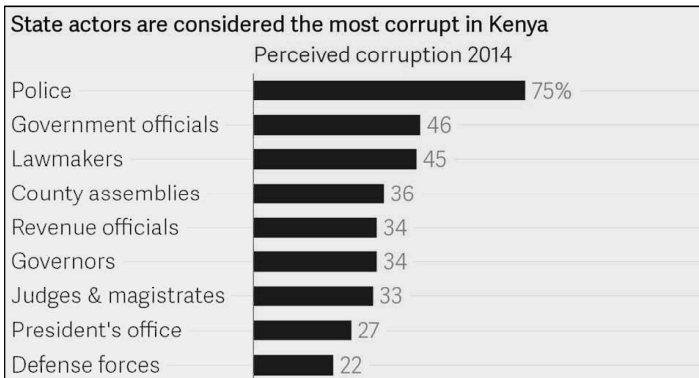


Fig. 3. Kenya has become a *Sukuma wiki* bandit economy characterized by predatoriness. Survival at any cost. Hence, the civil servant and other officials who are poorly remunerated, or simply harbor an insatiable greed for riches, make their living or build their fortunes off the people they serve rather than from their meagre official remuneration. Source: Afrobarometer.

In the civil service, within the Kenya revenue authority system, the judiciary and the police force, for example, opportunities for extortion present themselves in the line of duty in the administration of birth, death and marriage certificates or ‘justice’ and the collection of taxes. In Kenya, the prebends collected go by many words, for example, *bakshish*, *chai* (tea) or *kitu kidogo* (something small). In this *Sukuma wiki* bandit economy characterized by predatoriness, survival is at any cost. Hence, the civil servant and other officials who are poorly remunerated, or simply harbor an insatiable greed for riches, make their living or build their fortunes off the people they serve rather than from their meagre official remuneration. As such, government departments and public enterprises become ‘virtually bottomless financial reservoirs for those who manage them and for the political authorities, which head them’ (Bayart, 1993: 78–79). Even elementary and high school principals are known to charge exorbitant tuition and/or to illegally admit students while in hospitals, necessities like mattresses and bed-sheets, even prescription drugs, are known to be sold-off by poorly paid staff. At times, members of the police force, politicians and other public authorities, are forced to collude with the criminal underworld. Hunted by uncompromising police, faced by harsh laws or the lynch mob, young criminals have no choice but to kill or be killed unleashing a veritable balance of urban terror (Bayart 1993: 240). This can also be interpreted as an unlawful effort at redistribution of resources, which are hoarded by the rich in society. In fact, criminal violence is ‘immensely productive, sometimes horrifyingly so.’ In Kenya, as elsewhere, violent crime has demonstrated an enormous capacity to redirect the flow of wealth (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 279). In major cities, rural areas and townships, local people engage in all sorts of vandalism of public service installations and petty theft. In other remote localities, traditional raiding or cattle rustling, for example, in the North Rift region and North Eastern Province, this survival-by-all-means bandit economy translates into a form of political action. Such is the *Sukuma wiki* bandit economy prevalent in Kenya, a postcolonial state characterized historically by plunder and greed, bottom-up and back. Culturally and structurally, both the state and Kenyan society have mutually transformed each other producing a national psyche characterized by moral anarchy and primal greed. In this sense, the state and society are mutually reinforcing in

entrenching unabated, runaway corruption; a culture of impunity; and politics of (dis)order. The glue that makes this possible is the corruption of the moral economy of affection (alternatively, moral ethnicity) through the politicization of ethnicity, read political tribalism.



Fig. 4. Opportunities for extortion present themselves in the line of duty in the administration of birth, death and marriage certificates or ‘justice’ and the collection of taxes. Government departments and public enterprises become virtually bottomless financial reservoirs for those who manage them and for the political authorities, which head them. Source: ‘Justice Goes Digital,’ by Gado.

**Conclusion – the twin tyranny of political tribalism:  
Rising din of politics of (dis)order**

At the core of the bane of politics in postindependent Kenya is the twin tyranny of political tribalism. On the one hand is the tyranny of the masses. That is, the high pork-barrel expectations and pressure that different ethnic groups and seasonal, and shifting ethnic political alliances, place on their respective ethnic bigwigs. On the other is the tyranny of the ruling class that is responsible for the institutionalization of grand malfesance. These two tyrannies feed off each other and are, as such, inextricably connected. This stems from the adulteration of the moral economy of affection or and the preponderance of ethnicity as the

driving force of politics (political tribalism). Moral ethnicity and political tribalism have historically always been in an uneasy conflict or symbiotic tension.<sup>9</sup> Here, it is important to pause to offer some clarity. Moral ethnicity refers to internal or intraethnic class dynamics which are often at the heart of debates and struggles within communities or internal deliberations over good leadership of/or within an ethnic group (Klopp 2002; Burbidge 2014: 206). Lonsdale, credited with coining the term, defines moral ethnicity as the ‘internal standard of civic virtue against which we measure our personal esteem’ (Lonsdale 1994: 131). Ideally, and especially in pre-European Africa, big chiefly men, that is, wealthy householders were not only held in respect

but only if they paid their social debts, loaning out their assets in livestock or land, in return for the assistance of kin and clients; any failure to meet these reciprocal expectations of a redistributive civic virtue risked popular anger and a fiery death. To refuse to share the use of one’s assets could be seen as sorcery, a denial of opportunity to others (Lonsdale 2019).



Fig. 5. This cartoon by Gado speaks to an interesting element in Kenyan political debate in which churches themselves, in general, perceived to be as corrupt as the state.

The church in Kenya has come under heavy criticism for accepting, without question or demur, huge donations, offering and tithe from politicians. This cartoon was produced and circulated widely via Social Media after, while responding to his political detractors, the Deputy President, William Samoei Ruto, said that by donating money to churches, he was ‘investing in heavenly matters’ (see Kamau 2018; Lang’at and Gitau 2018).

For this reason, the primordial public realm (read, the ethnic realm) commanded the prior loyalty of African leadership. This was unadulterated moral ethnicity at work. Moral ethnicity was the reservoir of moral or mutual obligations between the authoritative bigwigs and their traditional African clients. With political consciousness and organization encouraged only within the bounds of ethnic regions during the colonial era, however, then, and well into the postcolonial period, wealthy householders (politicians) act(ed) as guardians or custodians of their respective ethnic groups to the exclusion of others within the political context of perceived stiff competition for public goods or state power. Perdurably present and, therefore, not simply a resource of 'false consciousness' exploited by manipulative leaders (Sithole 1985), ethnicity is politicized and thus becomes a crucial point of reference in the process of the authoritative allocation of value or the determination of who gets what, when and how.

The masses, as ethnic political 'patrons,' either pursuing their real or perceived pan-ethnic interests neither have tribal innocence nor are they innocent of the endless accumulation and concentration of power in the hands of the political elite without accountability, and its corollary, the perpetuation of corruption. After all, when they act, whether at the ballot box or when they defend their ethnic elite 'clients,' even when they are accused of grand corruption, they do so simply along ethnic lines. In so doing, they are rational actors engaged in an 'intriguing cost-benefit analysis of many issues affecting them' (Murphree 1986: 158). Thus involved in a cost-benefit analysis of issues affecting or perceived to be affecting it, the tribe<sup>10</sup> ceases to be a 'tribe-in-itself' and becomes the 'tribe-for-itself' (Sithole 1985). Both in the colonial and postcolonial periods, therefore, ethnicity (political tribalism) acts as the main vehicle through which dominance and preservation of power and resources have been achieved (Kundu 2000). In turn, political ethnic elites are beholden to 'their own' (people). Ethnic political elites are expected by their respective ethnic groups to defend and expand real or perceived pan-ethnic interests and opportunities with regard to the modern economic, or civic public, sector. This, then, is the first tyrannical twin of political tribalism. A classic case of the tail wagging the dog or, as Odhiambo puts it, the logic of patron-client relationships turned upside down. In the social science literature of the 1960s, patrons were thought to be almost

always politicians. The masses were clients. In the Kenyan context, however, tribes as rational actors in the realm of politics are patrons, the politicians are clients (Odhiambo 1987: 184). According to Odhiambo (1987: 184–185), political entrepreneurs –

... Came to the threshold of state power with a specific objective. The bottom line for all of them was that they had to ‘deliver the goods,’ ... To maintain and reproduce their bases of power, they had to recruit, sustain, and reward their followers from time to time. ...The peasants have the latitude, at elections, to shift their patronage. The fascination with the fact that the Kenyan member of Parliament is vulnerable at election time should acknowledge the fact of peasant choice as well as the peasants’ success at insisting on accountability by the parliamentary representative to his constituents. Put more directly, the masses put the leaders on the run to the gates of Parliament. ‘They invaded the state with society at their heels rather than imposed it on the people. They were accountable to an elected democracy’ (Londale 1989a: 27).

But at times, indeed, more often than not, and increasingly over the course of time, to do so – delivering public goods to sustain the support of their patrons, namely, their close individual supporters/enablers or cronies and tribes – politicians, as tribal clients, have no recourse but to attack with impunity the civic realm or seek to gain private capital out of the public domain. State coffers (read, the civic realm) are, therefore, raided rather blatantly by the political elite in order to benefit the moral primordial public realm of their immediate and extended families (nepotism), ethnic communities (tribalism) and/or elite cronies and political allies with patron-client networks of their own – which can, and should, be seen as abuse of the moral economy of affection. This, then, is the second twin tyranny of political tribalism *Viz.* – rampant, massive and seemingly endemic institutionalized corruption unleashed upon the collective body politic by the political elite in their quest for the accumulation, concentration and perpetuation of power and (re)producing themselves. This is the conundrum of the twin tyranny of political tribalism. On the one hand, a collection of patron-tribes acting as rational actors exacting high expectations of public goods on their clients, their corresponding ethnic political elites. And, on the other hand, insatiable politicians who exploit ethnicity and such tribal expectations and demands to profit by looting the public domain. There are, after all, no serious investigations into subsequent, and ever increasing corruption

scandals. No one is ever called to account for lost multibillion-dollars in a state and society where such heinous financial and other economic crimes are sanctioned by cultural repertoires. Client tribal bigwigs are untouchable sacred cows even when implicated or involved in appalling corruption scandals. After all, they enjoy the unstinting support of/ from their apparently ‘rational’ patron-tribes who would rather be ‘eaten’ by the hyena they think they know (a politician from their own ethnic group) than one they neither really know nor care to (a politician from a different ethnic group). It is not uncommon or least surprising, therefore, that when it comes to fighting corruption, Kenyans are rather resigned to their fate. Politics, for the most part, is viewed as an inherently flawed and dirty game. A rather cynical acceptance that ordinary citizens can do nothing about it except to vote for political tribalism. This languid attitude ensures that, collectively, ordinary people are unsafe and are, more often than not, not at the table but, rather, on the menu.<sup>11</sup> And so goes the vicious cycle and Kenyan political circus window dressed as a paragon of Western democracy in Africa although multiparty elections are largely nothing more than quinquennial ethnic contests.

### The Configuration of State Patronage / National Finance Grid (NFG)<sup>12</sup>

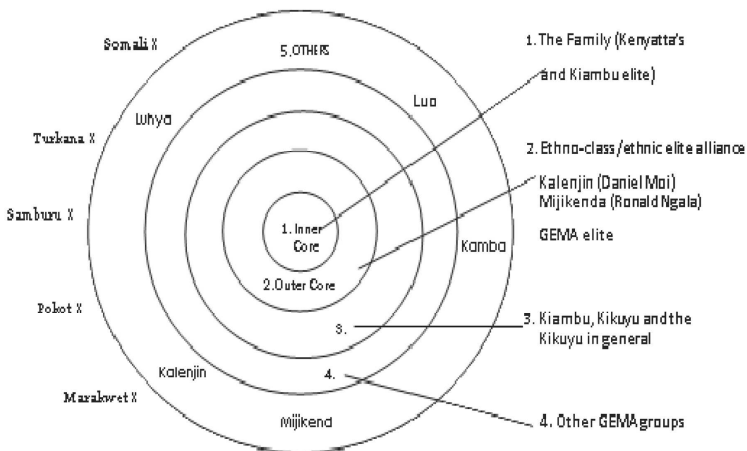


Fig. 6. The distribution of state finance capital in the Kikuyu-centric Kenyatta state, 1963–1978.

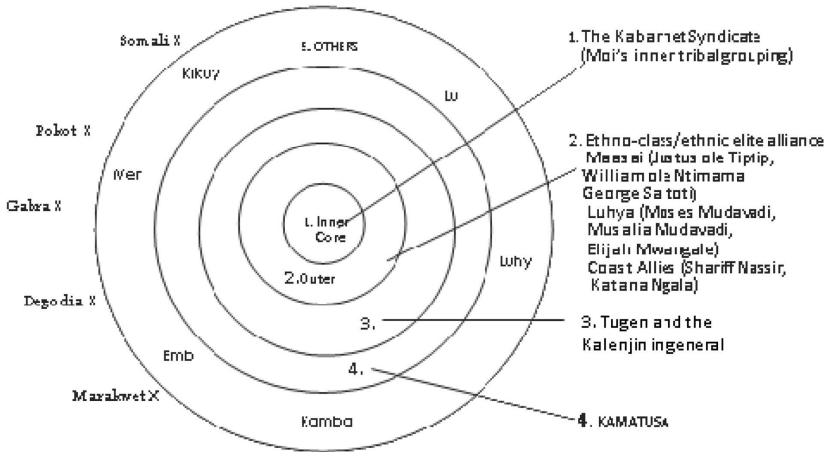


Fig. 7. The distribution of state finance capital in the Kalenjin-centric Moi state, 1978–2002.

Fig. 6, 7. Patron-tribes acting as rational actors exact high pork-barrel expectations on their clients—their corresponding ethnic political elites. In turn, insatiable politicians exploit ethnicity and such tribal expectations and demands to profit by looting the public domain with impunity to benefit their own families (nepotism), cronies and, sometimes, their respective ethnic groups. Source: Githuku 2004.

The ideology of the propertied elite is thus shored up by the pervasive ideology of tribalism which defines the struggle and capture of state power. The corresponding *democracy* yielded in such a political system is one in which the big stakes reigns-of-power election winning strategy is based on an ethnic calculus (Githuku 2013). Political and economic competition in the context of tense inter-ethnic relations has a deleterious and blighting effect on a range of important institutions that generally give states their form, stability and longevity. The highly ethnicized nature of politics and the stultifying and stunting sway and monopoly of ethnic kingpins has historically created personality cults and hegemonic political dynasties that hark back to the very first collaborating class of African big men who were produced by the colonial order of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Having reproduced itself over the years, this political class has consolidated a hegemony that enables them to flaunt, subvert or circumvent institutions based on democratic values



such as the constitution that guarantees freedom of expression, freedom of conscience, freedom of meeting, freedom of association, and rule of law; a free and independent judiciary; an independent election commission; public integrity and control bodies; and the civil service among others.

But, it is the generic political party founded on principles or championing social issues of concern, and pursuing clear ideological positions that has, arguably, borne the brunt of dynastic and tribal politics. In the face of political tribalism and dynastic politics, the democratic multiparty political system is weakened and stultified. The ethnic tinge, the fulcrum on which national politics revolves has, therefore, implied the inexorable dearth of the political party in Kenya (Githuku 2014). This is the unspoken consequence of the double tragedy of the twin tyranny of political tribalism that exists beneath the thin veneer of the preponderant ideological insistence on ‘order.’ A political ‘order’ underpinned by moral anarchy and assorted vagaries of political tribalism. One, moreover, that suppresses political dissent and one, therefore, that is, at once, anti-people and, thus, anti-democratic, chaotic and, oftentimes violent; and one that perpetuates the endless search for, and accumulation of, power attended by skyrocketing corruption. It is, alas, political disorder that is based on faux political stability enforced by security institutions of rule – regular and anti-riot police, intelligence services and the army (read, the continued investment of force). The colonially inaugurated ideology of order is, in postindependent Kenya, therefore, sustained through the very instrumentalities behind its inception – force, authority, bureaucracy and power. Perhaps, at least at this moment in the evolution of the state, there is no other avenue available to harness the attitudes, set of ideas, values, and beliefs, and the conduct of the political class in the unswerving pursuit of their own survival and interests, on the counterveiling ideological vision and aspirations of the majority of ordinary people. Interrogating ameliorative avenues that can bridge the ideology of order and dissenting *mentalités*, however, is beyond the purview of this chapter. Nonetheless, in spite of its format limitations, it is hoped that this chapter does shed light on, at least, the outer rough edges of the pathology of the uber-rich who ruled and still run Kenya; and, it is further hoped that, herein, the reader finds a successful argument which demonstrates that the uber-

rich in Kenya, as elsewhere, to conclude with the passionate and eloquent words of Chris Hedges (2018):

Have seized total political power. ... The uber-rich are almost always amoral. .... Spend their lives protected by their inherited wealth, the power it wields and an army of enablers, including other members of the fraternity of the uber-rich, along with their lawyers and publicists. There are almost never any consequences for their failures, abuses, mistreatment of others and crimes. ... They know no limits. They have never abided by the norms of society and never will. ... The uber-rich live in an artificial bubble ... of ...private jets, cut off from our reality. Wealth ... not only perpetuates itself but is used to monopolize ... new opportunities for wealth creation. ... They do not know how to nurture or build. They know only how to feed their bottomless greed. ... No matter how many billions they possess, they never have enough. ... They seek, through the accumulation of power, money and objects. ... The state apparatus the uber-rich controls now exclusively serves their interests [sic]. They are deaf to the cries of the dispossessed. They empower those institutions that keep us oppressed – the security and surveillance systems of domestic control, militarized police ... – and gut or degrade those institutions or programs that blunt social, economic and political inequality, among them public education, health care, welfare ... an equitable tax system ... public transportation and infrastructure, and the courts. The uber-rich extract greater and greater sums of money from those they steadily impoverish. And when citizens object or resist, they crush or kill them. ... [*The uber-rich*]<sup>13</sup> ignore the moral squalor of their lives. ... There is no force within ruling institutions that will halt the pillage by the uber rich of the nation and the ecosystem. The uber-rich have nothing to fear from the corporate-controlled media, the elected officials they bankroll or the judicial system they have seized .... The uber-rich have destroyed popular movements, including labor unions, along with democratic mechanisms for reform that once allowed working people to pit power against power. The uber-rich, as Karl Polanyi wrote, celebrate the worst kind of freedom – the freedom ‘to exploit one’s fellows, or the freedom to make inordinate gains without commensurable service to the community...’ As Polanyi noted, the uber-rich make war on the ‘freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of meeting, freedom of association, freedom to choose one’s own job.’ The dark pathologies of the uber-rich, lionized by mass culture, have become our own. We have ingested their poison. We have been taught by the uber-rich to celebrate the bad freedoms and to denigrate the good ones. ... We will repudiate these pathologies and organize to force the uber-rich from power or they will transform us.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This is done within the limits possible considering the obvious constraints of the nature of this book contribution. As such, I have limited myself to a brief analysis of what I consider to be the three or so major or important implications of the preponderance of the ideology of Kenya from the early 1990s, a period that marks the return of multiparty politics in the country to 2019. These include what I see as the twin tyranny of the political elite on the one hand and the masses on the other in the overlordship of, and symbiotic relationship between, political tribalism and corruption; stultification of the political party system in favor of Gramscian ‘historical blocs’ (Odhiambo 1987: 182) of ethnicity; and the all-pervasive culture of impunity, a *Sukuma wiki* economy of survival by any means necessary or what the former Chief Justice Willy Mutunga of the Supreme Court of Kenya referred to as a ‘bandit economy.’ This, then, serves as the basis of my conclusion that contrary to the popular trend among political analysts and intellectual experts on Kenya that the ideology of order survived independence and has held sway since, it has not. I, for the first time, posit that the ideology of (law and) order is not static but, rather, dynamic. That, it has, as such, like the state, transformed itself since independence.

<sup>2</sup> Although this author proposes this notion of an on-going, contemporary Third Colonial Occupation, it is an idea that, I suspect, may be in use in common intellectual parlance (at least in my circle of academic peers). The idea of an on-going Third Colonial Occupation first presented itself in one of my many discussions with my academic supervisor, Robert M. Maxon, when developing and writing my dissertation at West Virginia University. As conceived, and used herein, it describes the huge and unprecedented influx of foreign capital, especially Chinese, in not only Kenya, but the rest of the continent. As it were, this has been accompanied by massive land-grabs by multinational corporations, local private companies and tycoons; and by skyrocketing corruption. Specifically, the influx of Chinese capital, and loans for infrastructure development, has led at least one notable scholar to opine that Africa is China’s second continent (see French 2014). This Third Colonial Occupation is unfolding in the same way the first one unfolded across Africa generally between 1890 and 1910 (and in Kenya specifically, between 1896 and 1914); and the post-1945 Second Colonial Occupation in Africa characterized by various socio-economic reforms in areas such as African agriculture and education, and development in general under the imperial aegis and idea of ‘partnership’ with the ultimate objective of granting independence to European colonies in Africa and elsewhere. However, to the best of my knowledge, the term has not been used elsewhere or been written about as such – that is, the ‘Third Colonial Occupation.’

<sup>3</sup> See diplomatic correspondence, Hart to the High Commissioner, ‘Murder of J.M. Kariuki,’ 17 March 1975, BNA: DO 226/1.

<sup>4</sup> Newly independent, the Kenyan political space was extremely limited and lacked a civil society that could act as a watchdog against the excesses of the African government or hold elected officials to account or ensure that they fulfilled their responsibilities to voters. To some extent, various churches and, more aptly, specific individual church leaders filled this gap especially in the late 1980s when, having developed a critical theology, the church plunged onto the national political stage taking on the government when and where other public actors, professionals and individuals, were content to fight anonymously underground. As a result, the church became the omnibus for legal protest, political expression and civic involvement leading to the growth and zenith of civil society in the early 1990s, and with this, greater scrutiny, accountability and, relatively, more responsible governance.

<sup>5</sup> John Githongo, ‘John Githongo Personal Statement – Statement on HCCC 466 of 2006 Chris Murungaru VS. John Githongo,’ Published on Twitter, May 2, 2019. Githongo was reacting to the award of KES 27 million to Murungaru, Kibaki’s Internal Security and Provincial Affairs Minister of State in the Office of the President, for defamation by the High Court on Thursday 2 May 2019. As anti-corruption tsar, Githongo, in 2005, published a revealing dossier implicating several cabinet ministers including Murungaru, in the multimillion-dollar Anglo-Leasing scam.

<sup>6</sup> John Lonsdale to the author in a private Email correspondence, August 2, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. A country or territory’s score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). The Corruption Index in Kenya averaged 22.82 Points from 1996 until 2018, reaching an all time high of 28 Points in 2017 and a record low of 19 Points in 2002. See more on *Kenya Corruption Index* (2019), Trading Economics.

<sup>8</sup> It has become public knowledge that the Eurobond money was lost. This information was confirmed by a special audit report by the Auditor-Edward Ouko indicating that at least six ministries, through unprocedural means, ‘received and spent huge loads of loan money outside the Government’s integrated financial management system’ either by design or by accident (see Wafula 2019).

<sup>9</sup> John Lonsdale to author in wide-ranging Email correspondence, ‘Ethnographic Inquiry,’ 21 July, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> This author is acutely aware of the derogatory nature of the term ‘tribe’ but takes license using it if only to express the less than desirable adulteration of the moral economy of affection by ethnicized politics or politicization of eth-

nicity (PT) in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa. At least, Lonsdale and I, in our Email correspondence of 21 July, 2016, agreed to give the ethnic category ‘its unembarrassed Kenyan name!’

<sup>11</sup> John Lonsdale Email to author, 21 July, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> The ‘national finance grid’ refers to the authoritative allocation of value or public goods throughout society. I owe this phrase to my M.A. thesis supervisor and mentor, Vincent G. Simiyu. In addition to this general meaning, Simiyu used it to specifically refer to state-based avenues of accumulation in high government among them senior cabinet and parastatal positions, credit facilities and bank loans, land and other sources of government revenue. The sum of all this is what Simiyu referred to as ‘state finance capital.’

<sup>13</sup> The italics are the author’s.

## References

- Ajayi, J.F.A. 1983. The State in Colonial Africa. *Presence Africaine* 3/4: 170–194.
- Bayart, R-F. 1993. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. New York: Longman.
- Bayart, R-F. 1999. *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*. Ellis, S. and Hibou, B. (trans.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Berman, B., and Lonsdale, J.M. 2016. Book manuscript of *The House of Custom: Louis Leakey, Jomo Kenyatta and the Modern Kikuyu*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Branch, D. 2011. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press.
- Branch, D., and Cheeseman, N. 2006. The Politics of Control in Kenya: Understanding the Bureaucratic-Executive State, 1952–1978. *Review of African Political Economy* 33: 11–31.
- Burbidge, D. 2014. ‘Can Someone Get me Outta this Middle Class Zone?!’ Pressures on Middle Class Kikuyu in Kenya’s 2013 Election. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 52: 205–225.
- Burbidge, D. 2015. *The Shadow of Kenyan Democracy: Widespread Expectations of Widespread Corruption*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Clough, M.S. 1990. *Fighting Two Sides: Kenyan Chiefs and Politicians, 1918–1940*. Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado.
- Comaroff, J., and Comaroff, J.L. 2006. Criminal Obsessions, after Foucault: Postcoloniality, Policing, and the Metaphysics of Disorder. In Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J.L. (eds.), *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony* (pp. 273–298). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Easton, D. 1965. *A Framework for Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

- French, H.W. 2014. *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants are Building a New Empire in Africa*. New York: Knopf.
- Gisesa, N. 2019. Dams: The New Cash Cow for Tenderpreneurs in Kenya. *Daily Nation*, 28 February. <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Dams-worth-Sh700bn-under-construction/1056-5002716-2fkw3g/index.html> (accessed 26 April 2019).
- Githongo, J. 2019. John Githongo Personal Statement – Statement on HCCC 466 of 2006 Chris Murungaru VS. John Githongo. Published on Twitter, 2 May (accessed 12 May 2019).
- Githuku, N.K. 2004. *Ethnic Conflict and Its Implications for Social and Economic Development in Kenya, 1963–2004*. M.A. Thesis. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Githuku, N.K. 2013. Votes that Bind: Ethnic Politics and the Tyranny of Numbers. Institute of African Studies Blog, Columbia University, 17 March. <https://www.ias.columbia.edu/blog/votes-bind-ethnic-politics-and-tyranny-numbers> (accessed 7 June 2019).
- Githuku, N.K. 2014. Dearth of the Political Party in Kenya. *African Perspectives*, 8 September. <http://africanperspectives.co.ke/dearth-political-party-kenya/> (accessed 7 June 2019).
- Githuku, N.K. 2016. *Mau Mau Crucible of War: Statehood, national identity, and politics of postcolonial Kenya*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Hornsby, C. 2012. *Kenya: A History Since Independence*. London: Tauris.
- Hyden, G. 1980. *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Hedges, C. 2018. The Rule of the Uber-Rich Means Tyranny or Revolution. *TruthDig Newsletter*, 22 October. <https://www.truthdig.com/articles/the-rule-of-the-uber-rich-means-tyranny-or-revolution/> (accessed 7 June 2019).
- Jackson, R.H., Rosberg, C.G. 1984. Personal Rule: Theory and Practice in Africa. *Comparative Politics* 16 (4): 421–442.
- Kamau, J. 2018. I'm Investing in Heaven, You Invest in Funerals, Ruto Tells Critics. *The Star*, 19 June. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018-06-19-im-investing-in-heaven-you-invest-in-funerals-ruto-tells-critics/> (accessed 26 June 2019).
- Kenya Corruption Index. 2019. <https://tradingeconomics.com/kenya/corruption-index> (accessed 25 January 2019).
- Kipkorir, B. 1969. *The Alliance High School and the origins of the Kenya Africa Elite, 1926–1962*. Ph.D. Thesis. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Kipkorir, B. 1974. The Inheritors and the Successors. *Kenya Historical Review* 2: 11–34.
- Klopp, J.M. 2002. Can Moral Ethnicity Trump Political Tribalism? The Struggle for Land and Nation in Kenya. *African Studies* 61 (2): 269–294.

- Kundu, N.M. 2000. Ethnicity and the Challenge of Nationhood in Kenya. In Ogot, B.A., Ochieng, W.R. (eds.), *Kenya: The Making of a Nation 1895–1995*. Kisumu: Maseno University.
- Kuo, L. 2016. Kenya's ex-PM Accuses US Banks of helping the Government steal \$1 billion from the Country's First Eurobond. *Quartz Africa*, 14 January. <https://qz.com/africa/594324/kenyas-ex-pm-accuses-us-banks-of-helping-the-government-steal-1-billion-from-the-countrys-first-eurobond/> (accessed 26 April 2019).
- Lang'at, P., and Gitau, G. 2018. Ruto's Unmatched Generosity: Is He the New Mr. Moneybags? *Daily Nation*, 22 July. <https://www.nation.co.ke/new/politics/William-Ruto-s-unmatched-generosity-/1064-4675168-epk58wz/index.html> (accessed 26 June 2019).
- Lasswell, H. 1936. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Leys, C. 1974. *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism 1964–1971*. London: Heinemann.
- Lindijer, K. 2011. 'Kenya has become a 'bandit economy,' says Chief Justice Willy Mutunga,' *The Africanists*, 11 January. <http://theafricanists.info/kenya-has-become-a-bandit-economy-says-chief-justice-willy-mutunga/> (accessed 25 April 2019).
- Lonsdale, J.M. 1977. The Politics of Conquest: The British in Western Kenya, 1894–1908. *Historical Journal* 20 (4): 841–870.
- Lonsdale, J.M. 1981. States and Social Progress in Africa: A Historical-geographical Survey. *African Studies Review* 24 (2–3): 139–225.
- Lonsdale, J.M. 1986. Political Accountability in African History. In Chabal, P. (ed.), *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power* (pp. 126–157). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lonsdale, J. M. 1989a. The Conquest State. In Ochieng, W. R. (ed.), *A Modern History of Kenya, 1895–1980: In Honour of B.A. Ogot* (pp. 6–34). Nairobi: Evan Brothers.
- Lonsdale, J.M. 1989b. The Conquest State of Kenya. In de Mor, J., and Wesseling, H. (eds.), *Colonial Warfare* (pp. 87–120). Leiden: Brill.
- Lonsdale, J. M. 1990. Mau Maus of the Mind: Making Mau Mau and Remaking Kenya. *Journal of African History* 31 (3): 393–421.
- Lonsdale, J. M. 1994. Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism. In Kaarsholm, P., and Hultin, J. (eds.), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism* (pp. 131–150). Roskilde University.
- Lonsdale, J.M. 2009. Compromised Critics. In Knighton, B. (ed.), *Religion and Politics in Kenya: Essays in Honor of a Meddlesome Priest* (pp. 57–94). New York: Palgrave.

- Lonsdale, J.M. 2019. On Writing Kenya's History. The 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Callahan Lecture, Department of History, West Virginia University, 28 March 2019.
- Low, D.A., and Lonsdale, J. M. 1976. Towards the New Order, 1945–63. In Low, D.A., and Smith, A. (eds.), *History of East Africa*. Vol. 3 (pp. 1–64). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Marsh, R. 1999. *With Criminal Intent: The Changing Face of Crime in South Africa*. Cape Town: Ampersand Press.
- Maxon, R.M. 1993. *Struggle for Kenya: The Loss and Reassertion of Imperial Initiative, 1912–1923*. Rutherford, NJ: Associated University Presses.
- Menya, W., and Misiko, H. 2019. Court Orders Githongo to Pay Murungaru Sh27m for Defamation. *Daily Nation*, 2 May. <https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/news/Githongo-ordered-pay-Murungaru-Sh27m/539546-5097470-3ni8g1z/index.html> (accessed 7 June 2019).
- Migdal, J.S. 2001. *State and Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphree, M.W. 1986. Ethnicity and Third World Development: Political and Academic Context. In Rex, J. and Mason, D. (eds.), *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (pp. 153–169). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nyong'o, P.A. 1983. Class Struggles in Kenya. *Mawazo* 5 (2): 25–42.
- O'Brien, D.C. 1972. Modernization, Order, and Erosion of a Democratic Ideal. *Journal of Development Studies* 8 (4): 351–378.
- Odhiambo, E.S.A. 1987. Democracy and the Ideology of Order in Kenya. In Schatzberg, M.G. (ed.), *The Political Economy of Kenya* (pp. 177–201). New York: Praeger.
- Penketh, A. 2009. Kenya Tells Former Envoy, Clay he is 'Persona non Grata.' *Independent*, 6 February. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/kenya-tells-former-envoy-clay-he-is-persona-non-grata-778673.html> (accessed 25 April 2019).
- Poulantzas, N. 1975. *Political Power and Social Classes*. London: New Left Books.
- Robinson, R. 1972. Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration. In Owen, R., and Sutcliffe, R.B. (eds.), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (pp. 117–140). London: Longman.
- Schatzberg, M.G. (ed.). 1987. *The Political Economy of Kenya*. New York: Praeger.
- Schatzberg, M.G., and Zartman, I.W. 1986. *The Political Economy of Cameroon*. New York: Praeger.



- Sithole, M. 1985. The Salience of Ethnicity in African Politics: The Case of Zimbabwe. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 20 (3–4): 181–192/
- Some, K. 2019. Hard Questions Linger on Dams Scandal. *Daily Nation*, 3 March. <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Hard-questions-linger-on-dams-scandal/1056-5006788-oi1yqqz/index.html> (accessed 26 April 2019).
- Thiong'o, N. wa. 1987. Foreword. In Kinyatti, M. (ed.), *Kenya's Freedom Struggle: The Dedan Kimathi Papers* (pp. xiii–xvi). London: Zed.
- Wafula, P. 2016. Audit: Sh. 215b Eurobond Cash Unaccounted for. *Standard Digital News*, 8 September. <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000215138/audit-sh215b-eurobond-cash-unaccounted-for> (accessed 26 April 2019).
- Wafula, P. 2019. Eurobond: How the Billions Were Hidden. *Daily Nation*, 22 April. <https://www.pressreader.com/kenya/daily-nation/20190422/282110638009781> (accessed 26 April 2019).
- Wamagatta, E.N. 2016. *Controversial Chiefs in Colonial Kenya: The Untold Story of Senior Chief Waruhiu Wa Kung'u, 1890–1952*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Wamwere K. 1992. *The People's Representative and the Tyrants*. Nairobi: New Concept.
- Zartman, I.W. 1986. King Hassan's New Morocco. Paper Prepared for the SAIS/Homewood Seminar, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, March 7. Mimeo.

**THE BARREL OF THE GUN GUIDING POLITICS  
OR POLITICS GUIDING THE BARREL OF THE GUN:  
ON THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY  
DURING POLITICAL TRANSITIONS IN ZIMBABWE**

*Everisto Benyera*

University of South Africa

*La guerre! C'est une chose trop grave pour la confier à des militaires.*  
War! It is too important a matter to be left to the military.  
Georges Clemenceau

Peace is too important to be left in the hands of civilians.  
Admiral Thomas B. Hayward

**Introduction**

I contend that civil-military relations (CMR) are *sui generis* and must be studied as an imbedded phenomenon. The character of CMR is informed by the nature of ensuring and historical political dispensations. CMR in a liberal democracy such as France or Germany differ from those in military administrations as was, for example, the case in Nigeria during various military administrations<sup>1</sup>.

Similarly, I contend that CMR in a one-party state differ from those in a monarchy such as Eswatini (formerly Swaziland). Furthermore, there are variations in CMR even within one broad form of government such as the monarchy. Absolute monarchies such as Eswatini have different CMR than constitutional monarchies such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, Tuvalu, Sweden, or Kuwait. Then there are elective monarchies and non-sovereign monarchies where these relations further differ from one another.

An endeavour to understand CMR must therefore begin by characterising the government in which these relations occur. I will begin by attempting to characterise the regime of Robert Mugabe as a precursor to the understanding of CMR in Zimbabwe. In this exploration of CMR, I focus on the historical events which culminated in the removal of Mugabe from the leadership of the country. I will not analyse his removal from the leadership of the ruling party which he pre-

sided over since slitting from the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole in 1963. My entry point is therefore to define CMR. According to Ebo (2005: 2),

Civil-Military relations refer to the web of relations between the military and the society within which it operates, and of which it is necessarily a part. Such relations encompass all aspects of the role of the military (as a professional, political, social and economic institution) in the entire gambit of national life. Civil-military relations involve issues of the attitude of the military towards the civilian society, the civilian society's perceptions of, and attitudes to the military, and the role of the armed forces in relation to the state.

The rule of law is a legitimate framework for ascertaining the type of regime in a country. The *rule of law* must not be conflated with the *rule by law*. The rule of law by definition simply means that law should govern a nation and it has four principles; accountability<sup>2</sup>, just laws<sup>3</sup>, 'open government'<sup>4</sup> and accessible and impartial dispute resolution<sup>5</sup>. This is different from *rule by law* which is the (mis)use of the law and legislative frameworks to control the citizens and run the country. Examples of this practise include the illegal apartheid government of South Africa which ruled through immoral laws such as the infamous *Group Areas Act of 1950* which segregated people according to their race. The colonial Rhodesia equivalence of this law was the *Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation Act of 1947* which split urban areas into African and European sections.

The fact that Mugabe had degenerated from a prince to a dictator is no longer an item of debate (Blair 2002; Zille 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009; Compagnon 2010; Howard-Hassmann 2010; Benyera 2017) and will not be explored in these pages. So how can we characterise 'Mugabe's Zimbabwe'? Zimbabwe has an apparatchik government with a 'deep state'<sup>6</sup> and 'shadow state'<sup>7</sup> operating concurrently. An apparatchik government is a government of managers, both military and civilian, competent in the art of manoeuvring and manipulating bureaucratic politics yet devoid of the popularity contests and programmatic debates of electoral politics (Zartman 1987: 22). The *apparatchikness* of Zimbabwean politics is evident in the conflation of the party and the government.

Mugabe's Zimbabwe was also characterised by militarism. By definition, militarism is the conviction that a country should maintain

a strong military capability which it must be willing and prepared to use to defend and promote national interests, *inter alia*. Militarism was used to defend elite interests, settle factional differences and suppress dissent. As a phenomenon in Zimbabwean politics, militarism cannot be denied and its regular deployment and lethality was demonstrated in many reports, including by human rights groups (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2006; Chitiyo 2009; Howard-Hassmann 2010; Bratton 2011; Tshuma 2015). Zimbabwe's militarism has what can be termed political elite-military symbiosis. This symbiosis stifled democracy, development and is presented as a client-patron relationship.

The use of militarism in Mugabe's Zimbabwe resulted Zimbabwe becoming a typical 'shadow states', especially after the year 2000 land reform program. According to William Reno (2000: 434), shadow states are

... constructed behind the facade of laws and government institutions. The Shadow State is a form of *personal rule*; that is, an authority that is based upon the *decisions and interests of an individual*, not a set of written laws and procedures, even though these formal aspects of government may exist (emphasis original).

The facade of laws, abuse and personalisation of government institutions such as the military, registrar General's office, wherein Mugabe individually held more power than the party and the government, and how decisions were made in Zimbabwe to suit elite desires as opposed to the general citizenry were all present in Zimbabwe, thereby rendering it what Reno termed an archetype shadow state.

The government increasingly relied on the military as a solution to many political problems both at party and at state level, invariably increasing militarism in Zimbabwe. The deployment of war veterans, both serving and former military personnel to government and parastatal positions is a sign of this symbiosis.

Mugabe and ZANU-PF's militarization of Zimbabwe's political field since independence continued with several appointments of former guerrilla fighters to senior and influential roles in government departments and parastatals. For example, the appointment of Augustine Chihuri to the position of Police Commissioner and Hapison Muchetere to head the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation is a clear in-

dication of how Mugabe manipulated to his own advantage the bonds that stretch from the guerrilla struggle (Materike and El Moghazy 2015: 261).

The war of liberation and the military became a conveyor belt of loyal deployees to serve the needs of both the military and the party ahead of those of the country and the citizens. This practise constitutes typical militarism. Militarism in Zimbabwe should be understood as a direct product of the ideological orientation of the political elites and their desire to remain in power. While militarism is a worldwide phenomenon and not peculiar to Zimbabwe, in Zimbabwe and most importantly, militarism was a result of internal political party rivalry within the ruling Zimbabwe African national Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). With the various ZANU-PF factions vying for control of the ruling party and the government, the military was sucked in, signalling an unprecedented level and intensity of militarism.

ZANU-PF and the government had been relying on the military to solve most of their problems, and when faced with a succession problem which the party could not deal with decisively, the military were once again called in to decide on behalf of the party and the country. The opportunity cost of the ruling party and the government's reliance on the military was the *un-development, de-development and mis-development* of democratic institutions, processes and practises in Zimbabwe's statecraft. Strong and viable democracies are built on democratic institutions such as an independent judiciary and other Chapter 12 institutions such as the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, the Zimbabwe Media Commission, the Zimbabwe National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (Government of Zimbabwe 2013). In Zimbabwe, these institutions were either in the hands of the military on behalf of the liberation elites or were *un-developed, de-developed and mis-developed*<sup>8</sup>.

The involvement of the military to solve political party issues is like a quick fix which works in the short term but with long term ripple effects, mainly that of creating a precedence of military solutions to political problems. Resultantly, the military became the most important institution in Zimbabwe's politics. The ruling civilian elites transformed Zimbabwe's military from an integrated military in 1980 mandated to

deliver its conventional role of being the guardian of national security under civilian rule to a domestic political force to recon with.

Instead of consolidating both party and national democratic institutions, systems, mechanisms and practises, the ruling party and the government relied on the military as the *primus inter pares* source for its political solutions. Increased militarism in Zimbabwe is a product of the ruling party's failure to develop as an organisation separate from the government and the military and other institutions. The party and the government are often conflated with officials holding multiple posts in the party and the government. Decision-making is blurred, accountability lost, factions and personal fiefdoms and autochthons develop and flourish. Symbiosis occurs when the military in return for keeping the political elites in power are rewarded with government posts usually at the end of their careers. Militarism will be revisited later in the chapter where it is explored together with militarization and military rule. So, what characterises a professional military, one that is not complicit in *un-development, de-development and mis-development*?

### **On the characteristics of a professional military**

In his seminal work titled *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel Huntington (1957) devised seven characteristics of what he termed a professional army. These are: expertise (education and experience), responsibility (defending the state), corporatism (unity), centralised command and hierarchy, discipline, self-sufficiency and monopoly on legitimate use of violence.

I will explain these seven characteristics of a professional army briefly. A professional army is a utopian type of army, a desired level of service excellence which militaries strive to attain and sustain. According to Huntington, a professional army consists of highly educated officers. Some will be leading scholars and practitioners in their respective disciplines such as Engineering, Law, Medicine, Robotics, and Political Sciences. It can therefore be argued that the attainment of Doctoral Degrees by Zimbabwe Defence Forces hierarchy was part of the process of professionalising the army. On the contrary, unprofessional armies such as bandits and mutineers rarely have time to send their officers to school to attain academic qualifications.

Depicted as a linear progression, professional militaries are at the extreme end while at the other end are clandestine, illegal, unconstitutional forms of military activities such as militia, bandits, mercenaries, terrorists and the like.

### **Problematising civil-military relations in Zimbabwe**

The administration of the modern state is not a linear process but one punctuated by changes in government due to many factors, both constitutional and unconstitutional. The breaks in administration invariably creates power vacuums of different lengths, with some lasting a few days while others stretching for months.

There exist interregnums and power vacuums between the outgoing and incoming administrations; 1) after scheduled elections, 2) after the resignation of the incumbent, or 3), when party politics develop into platforms to elect incoming administrations can lead to changes in government leadership. The military were created by the civilians to protect the civilians from primarily the civilians from hostile states. Two sets of civilians get two sets of militaries to fight each other in order to protect the interests of their respective civilian populations.

Many developing nations face primarily two choices: a military accountable to civilians (the President, Parliament and the various parliamentary portfolios) or a state run by the military (militarised state). Between civilianising the military or militarising the state, Huntington proposed a middle ground, what he termed military professionalism. While beholden to the national constitutions, military hierarchies report to the head of state who in most cases will be part of the outgoing regime during political transitions. In this case, it can be asked; who is the army accountable to: The President, the people, parliament, the constitution or a combination of any of the preceding?

There are various factors which determine the extent of the involvement of the military in a political transition. There is greater military involvement if the following conditions exists. Firstly, if there is a lot at stake in terms of the possible losses for the military, individually and collectively. Secondly, if there are weak democratic institutions. Most of these weak democratic institutions such as a captured executive and a compromised judiciary already existed in Zimbabwe prior to 2017 (Munro 1998: 328; Funke and Solomon 2002: 6–7; Benyera 2016: 169; 2017: 105). Thirdly, there must be less civilian

control and oversight of the government. Again, this condition already existed in Zimbabwe especially as exemplified through the deliberate conflation of the state and the party. Parastatals functioned as an extension of the ruling party and they were used as instruments of rewarding loyal patrons (Bourne 2011; Matereke and El Moghazy 2015; Nyambi 2016). In this regard, loyal membership and support of the ruling party was a prerequisite to receiving public services, food aid and even land and other related agricultural inputs such as tractors, seeds and fertilisers (Badza 2008; Makura-Paradza 2010; Scoones 2014). Lastly, there must be a subjective as opposed to objective military control by the civilians of which in Zimbabwe there was little to no civilian oversight over the military. In fact, there was a military supervision and oversight over the civilians, in the process ensuring that the civilians towed the political lines as dictated by the military who in turn took their orders from military elites and few political elites. The drafting of the 2013 Zimbabwe Constitution illustrates the supervision of the civilians by the military which in most cases was accompanied by the threat or the actual use of violence (Tendi 2013).

### **The perpetual political transition: *Perpetuum interregnum***

The notion of political transition in Zimbabwe is problematic both in practise and scholarship owing to its perpetuity and the ever shifting destination(s). Elsewhere, countries are always in transition: from colonialism to independence, from communism to liberal capitalism, from third to the second and then first worlds and finally transitions from post-independence dictatorships to liberal electoral democracies. There are even negative political transitions as in the case of Libya after Muammar Mohammed Abu Minyar Gaddafi, Somalia after Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre and Syria after Bashar al-Assad. These are cases where states regress from ‘dictatorships’ to failed states.

Political transitions are generally problematic to theorise because of their simultaneity, multiplicity and hence complexity. In this chapter, I refer to the following transitions: the transition of colonial countries from colonialism to political independence. In this form of political transition, the military was a very important factor. Then there was the transition from communism to liberal capitalism. Posed as the Warsaw Pact versus the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the military was very instrumental in transition again saving the deliv-



ery vehicle. The battle of Cuito Cuanavale (14 August 1987 to 23 March 1988) is an example of the many battles of liberation in colonial Africa where communist countries were very supportive of the fight against colonialism. African countries became proxies of the two superpowers. After the fall of communism, the West used the military extensively as a means of expanding liberal capitalism to former communist countries that had been hitherto aligned to the Warsaw Pact. Today, the use of force by NATO to 'democratise' countries such as Libya and Iraq is another way in which the military is being used as an instrument of political transition from 'dictatorships' or any other ideology other than capitalism to capitalism.

The third form of transition is the transition from third world countries to second world country status and then from second world status to first world status. Like the other two transitions discussed before, this also is another political transition in perpetuity. This form of transition is more economical than militaristic. The fourth form of transition is the transition from post-independence dictatorships to liberal democracies. This is the political transition which applies to Zimbabwe, especially taking into account the 17 November 2017 events resulted in the ouster of the long-time President Robert Mugabe.

The question asked in this article is: when will these transitions end? This is so because of the multiplicity of these transitions, which occur concurrently, thereby giving birth to many combinations and permutations. For example, in 1980, Zimbabwe was simultaneously transitioning from colonialism while also trying to transition from a third world country status. While these two transitions were occurring, or being attempted, another transition was waiting, i.e., the transition from post-independence dictatorship which the 17 November 2017 military coup attempted to end. The logic of these perpetual transitions is that such countries deemed and classified as transition states are always inadequate in many forms and respects, always lagging or at worse recessing backwards. These inadequacies include the absence of human rights, democracy, health and education, among others. This sentiment was well captured by Ramon Grosfoguel when he argued:

We went from the sixteenth century characterization of '*people without writing*' to the eighteenth and nineteenth century characterization of '*people without history*', to the twentieth century characterization of

*'people without development'* and more recently, to the early twenty-first century of *'people without democracy'*. We went from the sixteenth century *'rights of people'* ..., to the eighteenth century *'rights of man'* ..., and to the late twentieth century *'human rights'* (Grosfoguel 2007: 214; original emphasis).

From the above, it can be argued that the transitions were from barbarism to civilisation through being Westernised and modernised. Then came the transition from being a people 'without history' to being historicisable. According to this logic, if one is not considered a subject of Western modernity, they are viewed as not yet historicisable. In other words, only Western modernity history is history. Anything which happened prior to the arrival of Western modernity is not history but something else. The development aspect is also likewise closely linked to Western modernity as development is only conceptualised by the West as Western forms of development. The pinnacle of these deficiencies which Africa must transit from is the absence of democracy. Here the military factor is key in ensuring that Western democracy (read the Washington consensus) is universalised. Finally, human rights are being instilled into (formerly) colonised countries through a combination of economic sanctions and military might. The weaponization of the United States dollar is one of the greatest achievements of the Western world as this weapon aptly compliments the military in enforcing these multiple transitions.

### **A prototype of a political transition**

A question might be asked: what is the prototype of a political transition? I will respond using a linear trajectory, and I must admit that political transitions are not always similar and conclusive. Some transitions stagnate, others reverse while others also abort or simply vanish.

There is a trajectory which political transitions that aim to remove post-independent dictators tends to follow. I must again stress that this is an ideal trajectory and all transitions do not follow the steps that are suggested here. In a political transition that is militarized as the one witnessed in Zimbabwe, there is need for discontent citizens, civil society and most importantly elements of the military and other uniformed forces as a key component. The sum of these discontentments will lead to popular mobilisation against the regime and those driving it.

In political practise in general and political transition in particular, there are certain divisions in the citizenry as they relate to the regime and its opponents. According to Masipula Sithole (Personal Communication, 2 June 1994), there are five groups of citizens when classified according to their attitude towards a dictator and an increasingly unpopular regime. Firstly, there are those that are at the heart of the regime, the regime drivers. These are the people that drive the regime, the diehard supporters and implementers of the regime's mandate. In some cases, they constitute what William Reno (2000) termed the 'deep state'. In the case of Zimbabwe, these include the G40 faction and those hardliners and fanatic comrades who were at the forefront of taking land or even beating people for not voting ZANU-PF.

The second layer consists of the active supporters of the regime. These are people that benefit from the corruption and the spoils of the mismanagement by the regime. It also includes genuine supporters of the regime, whether captured through the Stockholm syndrome or maize seeds or food aid; these people constitute genuine regime supporters. In the case of Zimbabwe, they are found in rural areas, where the literacy levels tend to be low and poverty high. The most underdeveloped areas provide the ruling party with the most votes.

Thirdly, there are those that are actively opposed to the (Mugabe) regime. These could be the Lacoste faction, the opposition political parties such as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC alliance) and any other sections of citizens that are actively and consistently in confrontation with the regime.

The fourth section are those who actively support the third segment. It consists of the supporters of the opposition political parties and those factions within the ruling party which are opposed to the regime and now want to see it ousted from power. Finally, there are those that are not actively involved in supporting either the regime or its opponents. These may include members of certain religious groups that claim to be apolitical like Jehovah's Witnesses.

In Zimbabwe, during the 2017 military transition, that the rest of the security sector had been largely involved in propping up Mugabe and the membership and deep involvement of military elites in politics was not a secret. In fact, the military in Zimbabwe is viewed as a stepping-stone into mainstream politics. Retired military chiefs have been routinely drafted into the government with the latest episode post No-

vember 2017 being the heaviest. The regular deployment of retired military personnel into the government is a sign that the military is in charge of CMR in Zimbabwe. The logic is that the military have influence over both the military and the civilian aspects of governance in Zimbabwe. The Vice President Constantino Chiwenga is a retired general and several of the cabinet ministers and key office bearers in both the ruling party and the government are former military personnel. The deployment of General Abel Rugeje to lead ZANU-PF's commissariat was a turning point in CMR in Zimbabwe. This is for the first time that this position which functions as a buffer between the military and the civilian in ZANU-PF has been occupied by a former soldier, a high ranking one for that matter. All previous commissariats were civilians. These include Border Gezi, Moven Mahachi and Elliot Manyika, all who are now late.

In a political transition such as the one which occurred in Zimbabwe in November 2017, it was the first four groups of Masipula Sithole's classification that were very active. In order for the regime opponents to coalesce into mobilisation against a regime it requires the forces against the regime being more motivated than their opponents. In other words, the balance of power must be with the opposing movement. Hardliners in the opposition must be more determined than hardliners in the regime. What makes opposition hardliners more determined and motivated is that failure to oust the dictator and the regime will result in them being charged with treason. Therefore, for the regime opponents, the consequences of failing to remove the dictator are too ghastly to contemplate and failure is not an option.

Once the need to remove the dictator and the regime has become unavoidable, the next stage in the transition process is the actual removal of the regime. This requires concerted efforts, support, sympathy and pressure from various quarters. In a typical brinkmanship, whoever blinks first between the rebels and the regime will be annihilated. The fall of Robert Mugabe is a case well documented. He went down in history as a president who was removed in one of the most peaceful revolutions in post-independence Africa.

Next to follow after the removal of the regime will be the commencement of the transitional period. This transitional period will be ideally marked by free, fair and credible elections. In some cases, there will be need to amend sections of the Constitution or to put to-

gether a new constitution which looks backwards and responds to the conditions which gave rise and sustained the dictator and dictatorial tendencies. This usually includes amending the constitution to limit presidential terms in office.

After the free and fair elections, the new administration takes over. The assumption and expectation is that the new administration will bring with it good, efficient public service and public goods delivery. Most importantly, the new administration will be expected to address historical human rights abuses, either through processes of reparation or by providing the truth of what happened.

I deliberately used the terms regime and administration in this section to denote the outgoing government which was characterized by human rights abuses and distinguish it from an incoming government which is believed to uphold human rights. Of course, this is not always the case as the trajectory of political transitions is not always linear. Some transitions regress, where the new administration becomes worse than the one it ousted in terms of managing the economy and upholding the rule of law. Other transitions also stagnate at one position such as the case in Libya where the country is stuck with the old regime gone and no new effective administration in place. Writing from his prison cell, Antonio Gramsci (1977: 311) argued that ‘the crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear’.

In Libya, Syria and other negative transitions, wherein the old died and the new refuses to be born, morbid symptoms create power vacuums which are then manipulated by terrorists, secessionists, fundamentalists and other rogue elements both locally and internationally.

### **Contextualizing civil-military relations:**

#### **Militarisation, militarism and military rule**

Civil-military relations are concerned with the relationship between three primary aspects: 1) processes, 2) institutions and 3) mechanisms by which the security sector is brought under constitutional civilian rule (Houngnikpo 2010: 24). In understanding CMR, there is need to clarify three terms which are often conflated and used interchangeably. These are militarisation, militarism and military rule. Militarisation is the armed build-up and engagement of society through coups,

authoritarian rule, wars, armed conflicts and other internal military interventions.

By definition, militarisation in the Zimbabwean context refers to the incremental appointment of (often retired) military leaders to state institutions and ZANU-PF structures, and the concomitant blurring of divisions between ZANU-PF, the military, and the state. The blurring and overlapping of mandate for military personnel (retired and active) between the military, the ruling party and the state leads to various scenarios. There are positive elements for militarisation such as that, if well managed, militarisation of the three institutions can be a stabilising factor during transition periods. Additionally, militarisation is useful in ensuring consistency and continuity in terms of policies as it operates on military principles, etiquette and discipline which lack in many aspects of governance in Zimbabwe. However, militarisation renders the state susceptible to military coups.

Militarism refers to the pervasiveness in society of military symbols, values and discourses validating military power. Finally, military rule refers to the direct rule by the army personnel. Zimbabwe's CMR cannot be entirely characterised as militarism or military rule, but rather as militarisation, although there are elements of both militarism and military rule. As alluded to earlier on, militarism is seen, for example, in the nature in which the government often deploys the military in matters which could be handled by civilians. These include the military's involvement in the 2013 Constitution making process. Similarly, trends of combined militarism and military rule also exist in Zimbabwe with the deployment of senior military personnel in government position as now the norm rather than exception. Senior military officials retire to start new careers as government officials, usually in ministerial or permanent secretary positions. This ensures the transplantation of military values and power from the military realms to the political arena and constitutes militarism.

I characterise Zimbabwe's CMR as more militarisation and less militarism or military rule because of the following five reasons. Duress and coercion play an important role in Zimbabwe's politics. The military, being an institution endowed with the legitimate use of violence is therefore a prime resource in Zimbabwe's political landscape and its deployment becomes an obvious policy option. This explains Zimbabwe's proclivity towards rule by military operations

(Benyera 2017: 104; Benyera and Nyere 2015: 6523; Rupiya 2005). Most problems that face the government under these circumstances are characteristically channelled to the military, overtly or covertly to be ‘solved’. Military values are witnessed when problems are ‘solved’ using ‘operations’, resulting in Zimbabwe being a country in a perpetual *chimurenga* (‘revolutionary struggle’) mode. Creating a sense of a perpetual *chimurenga* justifies militarisation because by its very nature, *chimurenga* is a perpetual warfare. The deployment of violence via military operations or other civilian operations given military code names becomes unquestionable because, after all, we are in the middle of *zvimurenga* (pl. *chimurenga*, various protracted warfare). There were three *zvimurenga*: First Chimurenga (1896–97), Second Chimurenga (1960s–70s) and Third Chimurenga (1997–2003).

As argued by Benyera and Nyere (2015), violence in Zimbabwe is not episodic but a continuum. What changes is the problem being solved through the deployment of violence and the form of violence being deployed. Civil issues such as allegations of prostitution were solved through *Operation Chipo Chiroorwa*, an operation meant to rid the streets of Harare and other urban areas of prostitutes (Benyera and Nyere 2015: 6523). Alleged prostitutes were rounded up and resettled in rural areas such as Mutoko’s resettlements villages where they were given small plots to start farming. While there is nothing with allocating land to alleged prostitutes, such programs must be done with the consent of the ‘beneficiaries’.

### **Military consolidation in Zimbabwe’s politics**

The appointment of General Rugeje to run ZANU-PF’s commissariat must not be taken lightly. This appointment set a precedent that army generals become political commissariats of ZANU PF. This is a seismic shift in Zimbabwe’s politics as the army is now in direct control of the party’s structures from grassroots upwards through to the Politburo and the Central Committee. Because of this power shift, future political transitions in Zimbabwe will be likely less problematic and contested as they will in all likelihood be executed with military precision. Whether these will be transitions within ZANU-PF or within the government, the military will play a central role. It will use its command structure and military discipline to ensure compliance and com-

pletion of future transitions. So, what roles did the military play in November 2017? In other words, what qualifies the events as a militarized political transition? I will respond to this question by exploring the role played by the military in ousting Mugabe.

### **The role of the military in Zimbabwe's 2017 transition**

The role played by the military in Zimbabwe's 27<sup>th</sup> November political transition is not yet fully clear. This is because of many reasons, but mainly because such role(s) were never meant to be publicized. The roles which I discuss in this section are those that were clear or implied. I must admit from the onset that this section is not based on any primary sources as I never collected data from the Zimbabwe military on their role in the political transition of 2017 partly due to the sensitivity of the issue.

In this section, I argue that the role played by the military in Zimbabwe was at four levels, namely: the grassroots, the party level, the national level and the international level. Let me start from the bottom going up. The military played an important role at grassroots politics in Zimbabwe by aligning with the suffering people of Zimbabwe and castigating the government of Robert Mugabe to the point of agitating for its removal. The military openly aligned itself with the people and in a way presented itself as the 'Messiahs' as opposed to the politicians whose management of the country had resulted in the suffering which the people were experiencing. The relationship between the military and the people at grassroots is a long-standing one in Zimbabwe which dates back to the war of independence. In this relationship, the military reinvented and repositioned itself in Zimbabwe politics. Additionally, by taking this stance, the military also presented itself as a government institution that is in touch with the reality of suffering people.

Secondly, and still at the grassroots level, the military authenticated the views and the grievances of the populace. This authentication is very important because at a later stage in the 2017 transition, the military became involved in party politics at the grassroots level and getting the support and the buy-in of the people. Especially in rural areas, the support was made easy by this foundation.

The military also legitimized the concerns of those people who were opposed to Mugabe's long-time rule, especially, the assertion



that he had become more of a liability than an asset to both ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe. By stepping into the political arena and agitating for the removal of Mugabe who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, the military took a very decisive if not treasonous step. Treasonous because had they failed to oust Mugabe; they were going to be charged for treason.

At the party level, the military played two important roles within the ruling ZANU-PF party and secondly within the broader gamut of opposition political parties. By entering directly into the arena of party politics, especially in the ruling party, the army presented itself as the arbiter of political squabbles, a role which ironically Mugabe had bestowed on the military albeit for his benefit. By presenting itself as the *omega* of the ruling party squabbles, the army was entering a territory already infested with other state institutions such as the intelligence. By emerging victorious, the military also asserted its dominance over other security organs such as the intelligence and the police. This dominance is very important going forward because should the ruling party face similar challenges, it will know which security organ to rely on and which ones to sideline. The same also applied to politicians and other elites who would be seeking institutional support from the security sector in their political endeavours.

As factionalism deepened in ZANU-PF politics in 2017, a dangerous power vacuum was growing. This power vacuum was created by two main factors: the aging of Mugabe and the entrance into official party and national politics of the First Lady, Grace Mugabe. A functionally divided political party, a very ambitious First Lady and a geriatric President were always a dangerous concoction for Zimbabwean politics. In these combinations, the military saw a propitious moment for them to enter politics. The role played by the ambitions of the First Lady in encouraging the military to be actively involved in party politics will not be attempted beyond this point. Suffice to mention that there was very bad blood between certain sections of the military veterans and the military on one hand, and the first lady and the G40 faction, on the other hand.

Political succession in African politics is usually undertaken either within the family as was the case in the Eyadéma in Togo, the Kabilas in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Bongos in Gabon. In most African countries, especially those that won independence

through armed struggle, power changes hands through the structures of the nationalist party. This is the case in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa and Angola. In these nationalist parties, the military plays an integral yet subtle role. In November 2017, the military in Zimbabwe were involved in party faction politics. The first role which the military played was to openly settle ZANU-PF's internal power struggles. The military achieved this by aligning with one faction and antagonising the other. By siding with the war veterans and the Lacoste faction, in the process opposing the G40, the military ended power struggles and succession battles which had for years toned the party into two fierce factions.

The military also assisted ZANU-PF internal transition from Mugabe's hegemony by assisting Emmerson Mnangagwa's accession. Prior to November 2017, ZANU-PF had tried privately and publicly to effect regime change from within, needless to state that such attempts at removing Mugabe failed. Hence by leaving the barracks and entering the political party arena and in the process assisting in the removal of a political party leader, the military can be argued to have done the unorthodox thing of going to the extent of ensuring and effecting internal party politics transition.

By assisting Mnangagwa ascend to power, the military succeeded in securing their interest both in the party and in government. Their central role as kingmakers in Zimbabwe's politics implies that their interests will always be a factor in future political transitions. Once a precedence of this magnitude has been set, it will most likely be repeated.

The most important role which the military undertook was to isolate Mugabe. Isolating their Commander-in-Chief, the military, in one way or the other, aided the removal of Mugabe from office. The most decisive moment in this political transition in general and the isolation of Mugabe in particular was when the military escorted the marchers to the state house. The opposition party dimension is that the military became a sort of a *de facto* opposition political party.

At the international level, the role played by the military was also twofold; regionally as in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and internationally. The behaviour of the Zimbabwe military rang alarm bells in other governments in the region because the army set a precedence, especially for the SADC community in

terms of the military being involved in party politics. In the region, the military has been an important factor only in the politics of Lesotho. The involvement of the military in Zimbabwean politics increased the number of countries where the military is an important political factor. Worry for the region is obviously that it set a bad precedent for other fragile democracies such as Angola, Lesotho and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The international dimension is that the international community was paralyzed as it was not clear how to proceed with the Zimbabwean crisis. This is so because the military were not involved in an open coup d'état, but rather instigated political changes from within a political party to which elite members of the military were members. The role which the Zimbabwe military played was, therefore, to awaken the international community to the mutative and pervasive nature of the notion of unconstitutional change in government.

The counter-argument to the role played by the military is that it appropriated people's grievances and misrepresented them for their selfish needs. By aligning itself with the suffering people, it can be argued that the Zimbabwean military were not doing it for the good of the population but rather in order to prop themselves using the people's grievances, suffering and subsequently popular uprising. Obviously, the military were aware of the fact that should they effect a change of government either by itself or within the ruling party but without the support of the population, their action was always going to be viewed as unlawful at the very least or as treason at the most both locally and internationally. To seek to authenticate their actions, the military simply aligned themselves with the masses. In political philosophy, this phenomenon or practice is termed appropriation. It can, therefore, be argued that the military appropriated people's grievances against the regime and made them their own in the same way in which nationalist elites in the 1960s and 1970s highjacked the grievances of the poor people in colonial Rhodesia and made them their own grievances. This amounts to existential appropriation. This is a very popular tactic used by populist politicians and political parties where they 'borrow' the problems of the oppressed and make them their own, only to return these problems to the masses when they accomplish their aim of taking political power. That the military 'borrowed' peoples' grievances in order to remove Mugabe is undebatable and what

is to be seen if and when they will 'return' peoples' grievances. At the time of writing, indications are that life and the economy under Mnangagwa remains much like life and the economy under Mugabe. In Zimbabwe's *perpetuum* interregnums, the more things change, the more they remain the same, to borrow Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr's 1849 saying coined during the period of the French revolution. So, what are the variations in and models of CMR?

### **Civil-military relations models**

There are various CMR models. For Africa Scharaeder (2000: 248) distinguished five such models that range from one extreme end to the other. These are; 1) civilian supremacy model, 2) watchdog model, 3) balanced wheel model, 4) direct rule model, and finally 5) the social transformation model.

In a civilian supremacy CMR, the military is firmly under the control of the civilians. Given the recent developments in Zimbabwe's politics where the military played a decisive political role in effecting a change of government, its CMR can hardly be classified as civilian supremacy relations. Watchdog model of CMR is one where the military have a greater degree of intervention in the domestic political systems. In the balanced wheel model, there is almost a balance of power between the military and the civilians. It is the most desirable condition as none of the two will have power and control over the other and the result is usually cooperation, concession as opposed to confrontation and usurpation. In a direct rule model, the military view the civilians as inherently incapable of running the government and, therefore, deserving of being directed. Military etiquette, discipline and decorum are seen as key attributes in running a government. At the opposite end of the civilian supremacy model is the social transformation model wherein the military take direct charge of certain bureaucratic functions and government agencies.

### **The role of the military in militarised political transitions**

A militarised political transition is a change from one administration to another with the involvement of the military or elements of the military. Almost equivalent to the benevolent/emancipatory coup, what can be termed positive militarised transitions are the ones that result in a change of administration which the general population was

anticipating and celebrates. In this chapter, I focus away from the brutal coups which remove constitutionally elected leaders and focus on what can be termed constructive militarised political transitions. I am aware that in some countries such as Burkina Faso, which experienced 10 military coups since independence, militarised political transitions are now almost the *de facto* way of changing political power. So, endemic are coups in Burkina Faso that former leader Blaise Compaoré was in power twice through military coups and was also removed from office through a coup. During political transitions which involve the military constructively, I want to propose ways in which the military can act in order to ensure smooth transmission of power between two civil administration, the incoming and the outgoing administrations.

I have to distinguish between a militarised political transition and a coup d'état. The two are similar but not identical. By definition, a coup is a forceful seizure of the machinery of state government by the military (Wells 1974: 871). Coups are undertaken by small groups of usually well-organised army personnel with the aid and or sympathy of some political elites. By its nature, a military coup rarely alters a country's macroeconomic fundamentals. It merely redistributes political power. A militarised political transition involves three components: the ruling political party (or a combination of political parties which may include opposition parties), the army and its fellow uniformed forces and the greater population.

Zimbabwe's November 2017 change of power from Mugabe to Mnangagwa was a militarised political transition and not a military coup because of the involvement of the general population, the ruling party and the government institutions, especially the parliament towards the end of the transition. The mass demonstrations in Zimbabwe's major cities agitating for the removal of Mugabe and the concomitant support which the masses received from the military and industry was a turning point in the transition because of three issues. Firstly, the support rendered to the demonstrators by the military authenticated the demands to remove Mugabe. Secondly, it had the inverse effect of giving the military an impetus to participate in the transition as the people viewed them as the 'vanguards of the Constitution'. Thirdly, the involvement of companies who were openly supporting the demonstrators gave both the military and the demonstrators an assurance that their demands were authentic and, therefore, had

to be carried through. Companies such as Delta Beverages who are the bottlers of Coca Cola in Harare were distributing free water to the marchers and the army who were ‘protecting’ the marchers. The added complexity is that the marchers were marching to the State House to remove Mugabe. The State House is protected by the military and for the military to escort and protect marchers as they marched towards the State House to remove their Commander-in-Chief was a cardinal point in Zimbabwe’s politics. Constructive militarised political transition were well articulated by Carothers when he sequenced the transition process thus: *opening*, *breakthrough* and *consolidation*. He argues:

First there occurs the *opening*, a period of democratic ferment and political liberalization in which cracks appear in the ruling dictatorial regime, with the most prominent fault line being that between hardliners and softliners. There follows the *breakthrough* – the collapse of the regime and the rapid emergence of a new, democratic system, with the coming to power of a new government through national elections and the establishment of a democratic institutional structure, often through the promulgation of a new constitution. After the transition comes *consolidation*, a slow but purposeful process in which democratic forms are transformed into democratic substance through the reform of state institutions, the regularization of elections, the strengthening of civil society, and the overall habituation of the society to the new democratic ‘rules of the game’ (Carothers 2002: 7) (emphasis original).

I discussed the trajectories, nature, possibilities and permutations of transition states elsewhere (Benyera 2016). The two main forms of political transitions are negotiated transitions and mediated negotiation transitions. The typologies will not be attempted beyond this point as the focus of this chapter is on the role of the military in the processes of political transition.

The alpha role of the military during political transitions is to ensure the survival of the military as an institution. In a typical client-patron relationship, the civilian government ensures that the military get most of what they want. In a way the relationship between the military and the civilian politicians becomes a win-win, the civilians will get the political power they desired, and the military get the concessions they wanted. In Zimbabwe, this involved allocating the military more posts in the incoming administration, among other concessions.

If there are constitutional amendments to be made or if the whole of the constitution is to be rewritten, then the military can play a coordinatory but not leading role. They can use their logistical capabilities to ensure that the processes are as inclusive as possible. The military can play a positive role in ensuring the accessibility of areas which are geographically remote. The danger in this role is that the military may use their power to influence the outcomes of the constitutional processes.

There is a dangerous political vacuum which is created when the outcome regime departs and the new one is not yet inaugurated. During this period, there is no executive in charge of the country and the military can play a role of safeguarding the constitution. The military have been seen elsewhere as filling in both administrative and operational vacuum such as helping in disasters and emergencies.

One of the markers of successful political transitions is that there must be elections which are meant to authenticate the incoming regime (Huntington 1991; Cohen 1997). The military can play a role in election preparation, especially given that state institutions will be themselves undergoing transformation. This transformation involves the purging or resignation of the drivers, kingpins and kingmakers of the outgoing regime. If there is need for demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration, these options have to be followed though, ideally with the active assistance of the relevant United Nations agency.

The question of when should the military leave politics is inherent in the nature of the armies. Generally, there are two types of militaries: patrimonial and institutionalised militaries. A patrimonial military tends to stay in politics for much longer and the transfer of power to civilians is gradual if not piecemeal. Patrimonial militaries are driven by cronyism and characterized by widespread corruption, abuse of power, patronage, demobilization of the opposition forces and blurred lines between its public and private mission. A patrimonial military will therefore be particularly resistant to democratic reform (Meijer 2014: 17). Patrimonial militaries are more involved in politics as they tend not to trust civilians. An institutionalized military tends to leave politics sooner and will not be interested in the running of the government.

A question may be asked: Given the November 2017 events, can Zimbabwe's army be classified as patrimonial or institutionalised? My inclination is to classify it as an institutionalised patrimonial army be-

cause the military enjoy extensive prerogatives and are subjected to very little, if any form of civilian oversight. The biggest twin achievements of the military in Zimbabwe's 2017 transition was to remove itself from civilian oversight while inversely increasing their participation and influence in party politics. The appointment of the (former) Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces General Constantino Chiwenga as the first Vice President and that of General Rugeje as ZANU-PF's Political Commissariat illustrates this shift in power.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to proffer that the military in Zimbabwe tested both political victory and political power. Going forward, the presence of the military in Zimbabwe's body politic is more than guaranteed. Both retired and serving military elites will become a permanent feature in Zimbabwe's statecraft and bureaucracy. This development puts elected civilians into a compromised political position. Compromised because the military will be in possession of both political and military power. A combination of political power and the barrel of the gun is a very lethal one if allowed to ensue in any political setting.

Since the formation of ZANU-PF in Gweru in 1963, the military were incrementally closing the power gap between themselves and the civilians and finally in November of 2017, the military closed this gap and are now an integral part of Zimbabwean politics, not as policy consumers but as power brokers and policymakers. A former General is the country's first Vice President and in the process the military also control ZANU-PF's political commissariat. These two positions rank as the greatest achievements of the military in Zimbabwe. Now that the military control most elements of the government and most of the ruling party's structures at grassroots, the military will not leave politics anytime soon. The removal of Mugabe was, therefore, important at many levels. Firstly, he was the only politician who was capable of controlling and rebuking the military. Inversely and secondly, he was the only civilian politician who the military listened to. Thirdly, the removal of Mugabe demonstrated to other politicians that the military was capable of removing elected politicians without running into legal and political problems locally and internationally.



## Acknowledgements

This chapter is a product of the paper that I presented at the 77<sup>th</sup> Midwest Political Sciences Association held in Chicago on 4–7 April 2019. I am thankful to the various reviewers, panelists and readers who helped shape my views of which I take full responsibility.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi 16 January 1966 – 12 July 1966, General Yakubu Gowon 1 August 1966 – 29 July 1975, General Murtala Mohammed 29 July 1975 – 13 February 1976, Major-General Olusegun Obasanjo 13 February 1976 – 1 October 1979, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari 31 December 1983 – 27 August 1985 and 29 May 2015 to date, General Ibrahim Babangida 27 August 1985 – 26 August 1993, General Sani Abacha 17 November 1993 – 8 June 1998, General Abdulsalami Abubakar 8 June 1998 – 29 May 1999.

<sup>2</sup> All in the country including the government, private citizens and organisations are accountable to the law.

<sup>3</sup> Clear laws which are publicised, stable and just. These laws must be applied evenly and be capable of protecting the fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Open government’ implies a fair and accessible manner by which the government of the day makes laws, administers them. The enacting of laws must be accessible and participatory, their enforcement fair and their administration efficient.

<sup>5</sup> This attribute refers to the manner in which justice is delivered in a country. Justice must be delivered timeously, competently, ethically by independent and competent representatives of the judiciary system, who possess adequate resources. Additionally, justice must be accessible to the people.

<sup>6</sup> A ‘deep state’ is an exclusive club of elite members of the society drawn from key institutions such as the treasury, banks, business, police, military, intelligence and the deep state does not consist of the entire government. It is a hybrid of primarily national security and law enforcement agencies. A deep state governs a country without reference to the consent of the governed as expressed through the formal political process.

<sup>7</sup> According to William Reno (2000: 437), a ‘shadow state’ is one that is constructed behind the facade of laws and government institutions. It is form of a personal rule wherein authority is vested in one individual. While the shadow state and the deep state share many common characteristics, the main difference is that the deep state operates within the government while the shadow state runs parallel to the official bureaucracy.

<sup>8</sup> In this context, *un-development* is the process of not deliberately developing institutions, systems and infrastructure, mechanisms etc. so that they can, in

their un-developed state save and or benefit the elite. *De-development* denotes a regression in the state of institutions, systems and infrastructure of a state. *Mis-development*, on the other hand, is the management of development wherein it is directed towards undeserving cases and away from more deserving cases. This practice is prevalent in typical prebendal political environments.

## References

- Badza, S. 2008. Zimbabwe's 2008 Elections and Their Implications for Africa. *African Security Studies* 17 (4): 1–16.
- Benyera, E. 2016. On the Question of the Transition: Was Zimbabwe a Transitional State Between 2008 and 2013? *Journal of Human Ecology* 55 (3): 160–172.
- Benyera, E. 2017. On the Complexities of Prosecuting Robert Mugabe at the International Criminal Court. *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations* 6 (12): 104–122.
- Benyera, E., and Nyere, C. 2015. An Exploration of the Impact of Zimbabwe's 2005 Operation Murambatsvina on Women and Children. *Gender and Behaviour* 13 (1): 6522–6534.
- Blair, D. 2002. *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe*. New York: Continuum.
- Bourne, R. 2011. *Catastrophe: What Went Wrong in Zimbabwe?* London; New York: Zed Books.
- Bratton, M. 2011. Violence, Partisanship and Transitional Justice in Zimbabwe. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 49 (3): 353–380.
- Carothers, T. 2002. The End of the Transition Paradigm. *Journal of Democracy* 13 (1): 5–21.
- Chitiyo, K. 2009. *The Case for Security Sector Reform in Zimbabwe*. London: The Royal United Services Institute.
- Cohen, E.A. 1997. Civil-Military Relations. *Orbis* 41 (2): 177–186.
- Compagnon, D. 2010. *Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Ebo, A. 2005. *Towards a Code of Conduct for Armed and Security Forces in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges*. Geneva: Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.
- Funke, N., and Solomon, H. 2002. *The Shadow State in Africa: A Discussion*. Addis Ababa: Development Policy Management Forum.
- Government of Zimbabwe. 2013. *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013, Pub. L. No. 20 (2013)*. Harare: Government Printers.
- Gramsci, A. 1977. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

- Grosfoguel, R. 2007. The Epistemic Decolonial Turn. *Cultural Studies* 21 (2–3): 211–223.
- Howard-Hassmann, R.E. 2010. Mugabe's Zimbabwe, 2000-2009: Massive Human Rights Violations and the Failure to Protect. *Human Rights Quarterly* 32 (4): 898–920.
- Huntington, S.P. 1957. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. New York: Vintage Book.
- Huntington, S.P. 1991. How Countries Democratize. *Political Science Quarterly* 106 (4): 579–616.
- Makura-Paradza, G.G. 2010. *Single Women, Land and Livelihood Vulnerability in a Communal Area in Zimbabwe*. Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers.
- Matereke, K., and El Moghazy, N. 2015. Mugabe and the Military Alliance: Zimbabwe's Prospects of Democratic Transition. In Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. (ed.), *Mugabeism? History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe* (pp. 249–272). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Meijer, R. 2014. *The Role of the Military in Political Transitions Egypt: A Case Study*. Leiden: Leiden University.
- Munro, W.A. 1998. *The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development, and State Making in Zimbabwe*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2009. Making Sense of Mugabeism in Local and Global Politics: 'So Blair, Keep Your England and Let Me Keep My Zimbabwe.' *Third World Quarterly* 30 (6): 1139–1158.
- Nyambi, O. 2016. Of Weevils and Gamatox: Titles, Names and Nicknames in ZANU-PF Succession Politics. Introduction and Conceptual Framework. *African Identities* 14 (1): 59–73.
- Reno, W. 2000. Clandestine Economies, Violence and States in Africa. *Journal of International Affairs* 53 (2): 433–459.
- Rupiya, M. 2005. Zimbabwe: Governance Through Military Operations. *African Security Review* 14 (3): 116–118.
- Scoones, I. 2014. *Debating Zimbabwe's Land Reform*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.
- Tendi, B.-M. 2013. Ideology, Civilian Authority and the Zimbabwean Military. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 39 (4): 829–843.
- Tshuma, A. 2015. Reframing post-Mugabe Justice: A Critical Need for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 9 (7): 308–320.
- Wells, A. 1974. The Coup d'État in Theory and Practice: Independent Black Africa in the 1960s. *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (4): 871–887.

- Zartman, W.I. 1987. The Military in the Politics of Succession: Algeria. In Harberson, J.W. (ed.), *The Military in African Politics* (pp. 21–45). New York: Praeger.
- Zille, H. 2008. Mugabe Must Be Tried for Crimes against Humanity. <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/archive/mugabe-must-be-tried-for-crimes-against-humanity> (accessed February 22, 2015).



**IV. The Past in the Present:  
Africans outside Africa  
and Non-Africans in Africa**



# ENTANGLED IN THE WEB OF HISTORY: COLLECTIVE HISTORICAL MEMORY AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN AFRICAN AMERICANS AND FIRST-GENERATION AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE USA

*Dmitri M. Bondarenko*

Russian State University for the Humanities  
National Research University Higher School of Economics  
Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

## **Introduction**

In the 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in most countries of the New World, the European slave trade resulted in the formation of large communities of people whose ancestors had been forcibly removed from Africa, mainly from her west coast. In the United States in particular, they have become an integral part of the nation's historical, ethno-cultural, and socio-economic landscape from its early days. According to data for 2013, they amount to 12.6% of its population – 39.9 million people (Anderson 2015).

The Africans' voluntary migration to the Western Hemisphere, including the USA, began about the same time with the end of slavery – in the 1860s. However, the scale of voluntary migration from sub-Saharan Africa to the United States remained insignificant for a long time. Its dramatic scaling up happened only in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s when many Africans lost hope for a politically stable, socially just and economically prosperous society in their own countries. In 2000–2013, the number of African migrants in the USA increased by 137% (from 574,000 to 1,400,000 people) (Anderson 2015). Africans arrive in the USA from actually all the countries of the continent, but English-speaking countries and states beset by civil war, now or in the recent past, remain the main donor nations: almost half (48.9%) of American Africans are natives of Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana or Kenya (Zong and Batalova 2017), while among immigrant groups in the US with the fastest growth between 2010 and 2017, are Eritreans (66%), Nigerians (57%), Kenyans (56%), Ethiopians (44%), and South Africans (of all origins, 43%) (Zong and Batalova 2019).



So, today, in the United States, two communities with sub-Saharan Africa genetic origins – African Americans whose ancestors were brought from Africa as slaves hundreds years ago and contemporary voluntary migrants from the countries of sub-Saharan Africa and their children – exist side by side but have different histories and occupy different positions in the American society. African Americans and Africans do not form a single ‘black community’. Despite the common roots, significant social distance persists between black communities, and in particular between African Americans and Africans. Given the history of both Africa and black population of the New World, this fact may seem quite natural, but what is remarkable about it is that it contradicts mythologies and ideologies of a significant number of powerful intellectual, cultural-enlightening and political teachings that began to spread among African Americans, Africans and African Caribbeans still in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Garveyism, Negritude, Pan-Africanism, Afrocentrism and other teachings of this sort argued and argue the ideas of common cultural and spiritual basis of all black people, of specific spirituality and mentality of a black person no matter where he or she was born, of global ‘black brotherhood’ and common for all those who belong to the ‘black race’ goals and tasks that require their joint action in the world ruled by the whites.

Given conditions of racial inequality in America and colonialism/neocolonialism in Africa, the ideas of ‘black brotherhood’ resonated in the hearts of many Africans and African Americans, from refined intellectuals to socially and politically active young urban poor. However, after the creation of the state of Liberia by black Americans in 1847 and the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the USA in 1865 the relationship between African and American black communities were minimal for a long time. When a real ‘meeting’ took place in the 1980s and 90s, the doubts of Malcolm X proved accurate: ‘We have to be realistic and flexible. Africa is a long way off and there’s a lot of water in between’ (quoted in: Goldman 1979: 148). Many deep differences of all sorts between the black natives of the two continents formed over the centuries of separate existence.

At the same time, the absence of ‘black unity’ does not mean that the relations between the black communities are bad. They cannot be characterized unambiguously at all, not least because they are not

quite the same in different age, social, and educational groups, in megacities and in the rural areas, in the country's different historical and cultural regions. It is not by chance that our informants from both communities defined the relations between Africans and African Americans in the widest possible range from 'excellent' to 'antagonistic'. Between these extremes, the following assessments fitted: 'good', 'friendly', 'respectful', 'generally positive', 'normal, but not close', 'more or less decent', 'not bad but that could be better', on the one hand; and 'not brilliant', 'superficial', 'cold', 'cautious', 'strained', 'suspicious', 'watchful', 'bad', based on 'mixed feelings', 'misunderstandings', 'lack of mutual understanding', 'wrong perceptions', 'prejudice' and 'mistrust', on the other (interviews 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 46, 52, 53, talks 7, 12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 26, 34, 35, 36, 37, 41, 43, 50, 70, 83, 84, 91, 97, 129). The relationship between African Americans and African migrants resembles the simultaneous attraction and repulsion of two magnets. They both understand that among all the ethno-racial communities in the country, they (along with African Caribbeans) are the closest to each other (to the degree that for non-black Americans they often merge into one), and they recognize common roots and a partial similarity of problems in a society in which racial division is so important. But myriads of cultural differences that are immediately detected at an attempt of mutual attraction and 'translated' into the 'language' of images of the other culture, cause mutual repulsion. There is no reason to disagree with our interlocutor: 'It's still very hard for Africans to accept African Americans. Also for African Americans to accept Africans – they see Africans, a lot of African Americans see Africans as just any other foreigners' (interview 6).

Among the factors that lead to this sort of the relationship between Africans and African Americans, not the last place is occupied by the specificity of their perception of each other. To a large extent it is determined by social parameters and today's experience of intercultural communication which reveals deep differences between cultures of black Americans and recently arrived in the country Africans, but cultural factors are no less important. However, among the topoi of mutual perception of Africans and African Americans there are a lot of those related to differences in refraction in the collective memory and reflection in the mass consciousness of those and others

of most important events of the past. These differences also do not allow African Americans and Africans to see themselves as parts of a whole.

### **Collected evidence and theoretical background**

This chapter is based on the field evidence collected by the author and his associates, Dr. Veronica Usacheva and Dr. Alexander Zhukov, in 2013–2015. We spoke with respondents in seven states (Alabama, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York and Pennsylvania) in thirteen towns and cities ranging in size from 8,000 in Gunterville, Alabama, to St Louis with a population of more than 300,000, to the bigger cities of Boston and Minneapolis, and the megacities of Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia. In total, we recorded 196 interviews and conversations of different duration and degree of structuring, made notes of observations of many events in the life of African Americans and African migrants.

I focus here on historical memory of the two black communities in the United States. Such memory largely shapes any group's collective identity, just as collective identity shapes people's attitudes towards cultural 'others'. Historical memory is not a 'verbatim quote', a 'cast', or a 'photo' of real history.

Collective memory is not history, though it is sometimes made from similar material. It is a collective phenomenon but it only manifests itself in the actions and statements of individuals. It can take hold of historically and socially remote events but it often privileges the interests of the contemporary. It is as much a result of conscious manipulation as unconscious absorption and it is always mediated. And it can only be observed in roundabout ways, more through its effects than its characteristics (Kansteiner 2002: 180).

However, the product of the historical memory is not necessarily lie or fib. Even if a particular memory is historically inaccurate, the cultural myths generating that memory may give an accurate measure of a phenomenon or even an epoch. These images and myths will also make sense to the people who believe them and therefore influence their worldview and behavior. Historical consciousness always correlates memory of the past with the present. People reconstruct what happened in the past according to what is important for the group and how it supports group identity in the present (Repina 2014: 29–31). As

a result, collective historical memory concentrates on key moments in a community's history, reassesses the past depending on the socio-cultural changes in the present, and helps reshape the collective worldview. Thus, historical memory defines 'us' and 'them', as well as the nature of the relationship between 'our' and 'other' socio-cultural groups.

The latter is especially evident in the way African Americans and recent African immigrants in the United States perceive and relate to each other.

### **Memory of the main historical events and the African American – African relations**

The vast majority of African Americans and Africans do not have a holistic view on history – their own and especially of the other black community. On the one hand, in the words of an Eritrean native, 'many of us arrive in the United States completely unaware of the history that preceded us. We just, vroom, land, with a plane and start life running. ... absolutely no idea of what our place is in this country or what the history of race has been in this country that we've just come into' (quoted in: Oray 2013: 133). On the other hand, the Soviet Africanist Lily Golden, African American on the paternal side who moved to the USA in 1992 and then worked for one of the largest 'black' universities – Chicago State University, wrote about African Americans:

I was struck by the extent to which they do not know African history, at the same time trying to accept the African culture, but simultaneously retaining benefits of the American society. Although they ardently wish to be Africans in the first place and Americans in the second, all their life experience, education and manners are American in two or three generations (Golden 2002: 185; quoted in the Russian translation in: Litinsky 2009: 83).

The present author had the same experience when he delivered lectures on the history of Africa to predominantly African American student audience.

The African Americans and Africans' historical consciousness, apart, perhaps from that of highly educated humanitarians, is usually discrete: there is no room for history as a process in it, but there are several bright topoi – the most significant phenomena or events that

beam like stars in the dark sky of the past. All these ‘stars’ are directly or indirectly related to the socio-political or spiritual resistance of black people to oppression and exploitation by whites in Africa or beyond. But they may be different or ‘shine’ with different force for African Americans and Africans. I distinguish the most important of them: Africa before the slave trade and colonialism, transatlantic slave trade, slavery and its abolition in the USA, colonialism and anticolonial struggle in Africa, the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, and the downfall of apartheid in South Africa.

### ***Africa before the slave trade and colonialism***

Chronologically the longest yet most distant from our contemporaries period of African history is worst known to the majority of Africans and especially African Americans. At the same time, it is most mythologized in the minds of some of them. Partly, this is a result of conscious construction of the African and African American past by concrete intellectuals, notably the Senegalese Cheikh Anta Diop (1923–1986) and the African American Molefi Kete Asante, née Arthur Lee Smith, Jr. (b. 1942). However, the Afrocentrists’ attempts to prove the primacy of African history and culture in respect to the European usually left our respondents indifferent. Typical manifestations of the Afrocentric views of history were demonstrated to us by only two interlocutors. One of them was an educated socially active African American middle-aged woman who spoke with conviction that Abraham, Moses, Adam, Noah, King Solomon and Queen of Sheba, Nefertiti, Jesus Christ, Prophet Muhammad had been Africans, that black people had invented arithmetic, algebra, trigonometry, built the Egyptian pyramids, became the first monotheists, made the first neurosurgical operation, invented a mechanism that runs on solar energy, recipes of jam and peanut butter and ‘lots of other things’ (interview 17). The second staunch exponent of this view of ancient history was a Guyanese man, the owner of a Rasta store in Philadelphia who argued that black people had created the great African civilization that included Egypt, and later the whites ‘stole’ all the knowledge from the blacks (talk 4; see the same argument in recent Afrocentric literature, e.g.: Imhotep 2017). Besides, both during the research (interview 51) and earlier I was repeatedly told by some African Americans about ostensibly

black origins of many great figures of world history and culture. Ludwig van Beethoven was mentioned in this connection especially often because of his curly hair and unconfirmed assumptions about African ancestors in his family on one of the lines (see also: Rinehart 2013; interview 51).

At the same time, many informants, including highly educated ones, do not even know the names of Diop, Asante and other similar authors (interviews 1, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, 22, 27). Their ideas has not ‘gone to the people’ as widely as they would surely want. Nevertheless, they have captured the minds of a certain part of the black intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic. Their most radical supporters in America refuse the names given at birth and take not even ‘African’ (as Molefi Kete Asante himself) but ‘Ancient Egyptian’ names. Among the authors of Afrocentrist works there are people who have taken such names as Asar Imhotep, Anpu Unnefer Amen and so forth. Other Afrocentrists publish works about the alleged dominance of the ‘black civilization’ in Antiquity and the Middle Ages as a ‘fact’ now held back by whites (Walker 2006), or about the African origins of actually all the ‘great cultures’ (e.g., Rashidi 2011; 2012; etc.; Winters 1984; 2014; etc.) and world religions – especially Christianity and Islam (e.g.: Imhotep 2011; 2012). Furthermore, they discuss the emergence in Africa in antiquity of almost all modern sciences and discoveries, which Europeans appropriated and now use to dominate life across the globe (e.g., Amen 1999).

This way those authors, as well as Asante, are trying to counter the view shared by a part of migrants from Africa who consider only themselves as real Africans and deny black Americans the right to be called Africans at all (Mwakikagile 2005: 108, 120; 2007: 21, 120). Indeed, the prevalent opinion among African migrants to the USA is that in their culture, African Americans are ‘more American than [white] Americans’ (Ojo-Ade 2011: 18) – that due to the centuries-long separation from their roots, they have lost the typical for Africans social values and became ‘just Black Americans’ (interviews 3, 4, 6, 7, 16, 21, 22, 24, 28, 34, 36, 38, 45, talks 1, 4, 12, 15, 22, 40, 57, 59, 65, 85, 99, 109; see also: Jackson and Cothran 2003: 596; Mitchell-Agbemadi 2004: 102; Mwakikagile 2007: 18, 30–31; Labang 2014). For example, here is a story of our respondent, a Cameroonian native:

Coming from Africa, I happened to be grown in a very traditional African society. You see that even though you [and an African American] are quite similar from the physical prospective, you don't have the same values – they don't have what you believe in [living] a traditional way of life in Africa. They wouldn't even know what you are talking about... They are Americans, that's the best way to describe them. Whether they are African Americans or just white Americans (interview 29).

This view has been typical for Africans in America for a long time. This is how an African women, settled in New York in the 1930s, described her impressions of Harlem – the biggest black area in the city: 'To me it was a strange Negro world filled with Negroes, no longer African, but with the definite stamp of Western civilization' (Reid 1939: 190).

Most recent migrants from Africa to the USA describe the basic difference between their own culture and that of African Americans as 'just black Americans' as between collectivistic and individualistic cultures, respectively. For example:

American culture is very individualistic. Our culture is collectivistic... My relatives can drive to my house any time they want, and I can agree to that. But I can't do the same to African Americans and they wouldn't do it to me either. They need to call to make sure I'm at home before they get here. We treat family differently. All my relatives can come all the time and stay at my house. African Americans – they can't. When they visit relatives, they might live in the hotel, like white Americans – same thing (interview 16).

On the contrary, American Afrocentrists try to show that the history of African Americans is a part of common long history of black people. By linking the history of African Americans and Africa in a single 'black history' the Afrocentrists are trying to attach it especial importance, to put into the center of world history, the common ideas of which still remain largely Eurocentric. It is noteworthy that such views are spread much more widely among black Americans than among recent migrants from Africa. Africans do not need to prove themselves, and in the postcolonial period to the rest of the world too, antiquity, completeness and uniqueness of their historical and cultural tradition, while '...the discourse of Afrocentricity... is more aimed at the African-American community than developed for consumption outside of that community' (Wilson-Fall n.d.; see also Khokholkova

2016: 122). According to a reasoning of an interlocutor, it is important for African Americans to have an identity that spreads beyond the United States because they have been humiliated for a long time and never felt at home in America (interview 46).

Nevertheless, as noted above, the place of pre-slave trade, pre-colonial Africa in the historical consciousness of most both African Americans and Africans is determined first of all not by mythologization of the continent's distant past but by extremely limited real knowledge of it; in fact, its actually complete absence, especially as far as African Americans are concerned. Here is the full list of real historical facts and names related to Africa's precolonial past but not connected to the history of the slave trade which our interlocutors mentioned, in particular, answering to the direct questions: 'What facts from the history of African do you find most important?', 'What African historical figures do you find most important?' and so forth. The African respondents recalled the great medieval empires of Mali and Songhai, the outstanding monarchs of Mali –Sundiata Keita and Musa, another outstanding ruler – Shaka, the founder of the Zulu power in Southern Africa in the nineteenth century, talked about the foundation of the state of Liberia in 1847 and the importance for the whole of Africa of the fact that she has never been under the colonial yoke (interviews 18, 22, 24, 29). The African Americans noted that just Africa was the cradle of the whole humankind as that was Africa where the humans first appeared, talked about the ancient history and 'kings' of Ethiopia, also called the name of Shaka and recollected the foundation of Liberia (interviews 17, 27, 42, 44).

The pre-slave trade and precolonial past – the time before 'black history's' separation into the history of Africa and the history of Africans and their descendants in the New World is not a cornerstone of the historical consciousness for either African migrants or African Americans, yet it occupies different positions in it. African Americans either do not consider it as part of 'their' past and ignore it, or mythologize that most distant historical period in attempts to 'make' it become 'theirs' in their own consciousness and in the eyes of the others. Only some of them perceive the pre-slave trade and precolonial history of Africa as a natural, organic, not requiring substantiation and justification part of the history of their people, while for Africans just this position is invariably logical and correct. An elderly Sierra



Leonean man underlined: ‘People used to say the Europeans taught Africans all what to do. No, before the Europeans came, we were casting iron, bronze, and did everything else’ (interview 22). His statement has essentially nothing in common with the conviction of the African American interlocutor in the African origins of mathematics and so forth, because it reflects the actual historical facts; it is objectively aimed not at mythologization of the pre-European African past but at its demythologization – at debunking in mass consciousness of the debunked already long ago in scholarship colonialist and Eurocentric myths of the Africans’ ‘incapability’ of independent creation of ‘high cultures’. As for the African Americans, despite the variety of views in their community, the majority would most probably agree with our respondents from the town of Guntersville in Alabama: ‘We remember that our ancestors are from Africa, but it does not affect us much. We were born and live here, we are already Americans’ (interview 44; see also: interview 40).

The differences in interpreting events after the bifurcation of ‘black history’ into the history of Africa and the history of African descendants in the New World are even more profound.

### ***Transatlantic slave trade, slavery and its abolition in the USA***

The transatlantic slave trade gave birth to the black experience in America – the very phenomenon of ‘black Americans’. It would also lead to the ideas of a ‘black history’ of all black people and of an ‘African cultural tradition’ in both the Old and New Worlds. Since the mid-1990s, a surge of interest in the USA in the history of the slave trade and slavery, among both black and white Americans, has resulted in the opening of new monuments, memorials, museums, and exhibitions, as well as a wave of radio and television programs, web sites, novels and popular science books (see, e.g.: Oostindie 2001: 102–112; Horton and Horton 2006; Gallas and Perry 2015). For example, in Alabama in the whole last quarter of the twentieth century nine African American historical museums and memorials were opened, while twelve were dedicated in twice a shorter period from 2000 to 2011 (calculated on: Giliberti 2013: 146, Table 1). The solemn opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC by President Obama in September 2016 became a culmination and apotheosis of

this activity. This activity was generated and accelerated by the enduring inflammation of historical memory of the slave trade and slavery in African American mass consciousness, its central place in it.

The African American community itself emerged from the centuries of humiliation, suffering, and struggle that began with the slave trade and slavery. The memory of that struggle still to a large extent determines African American attitudes and social behaviors, regardless of social status (Akbar 1990; Eyerman 2001; 2012). This comment was typical of how many respondents felt:

Nobody can doubt that what we, blacks in this country, had two hundred years ago is less [freedom] than what we are having now. But are we truly free? I don't think so. Is our mindset free from the memory of enslavement? No. The 'slave' is still affecting our society... I think that mentally, not physically, the blacks here are still 'enslaved', still lack a strong voice to be heard (interview 30; see also: interviews 10, 17, 38, etc.).

Moreover, some scholars suggest that the trauma of slavery, with all its social humiliation, makes African Americans feel superior to African migrants and therefore to keep social distance from them on the basis of 'interiorized racism', by which they unconsciously mimic the white oppressors' attitudes toward Africans (Iheduru 2013). As Bernard Lategan's (2013) study has shown, historical memory can strengthen individual and collective identity by emphasizing the links with the past, but without creating a basis for the perception of change. In such cases, identity is often used to justify entrenched positions, to reinforce existing stereotypes and to resist change, blocking the ability of individuals and groups to see themselves as part of a positive future. The pain of a past in which they were enslaved also appears in the reluctance of many African Americans to talk about the subject (interview 10), as well as in Afrocentrists' increasing insistence on replacing the word 'slaves' with the more accurate 'enslaved' in the public sphere (interviews 10, 12).

For Africans, the slave trade, both European in West Africa and Arab in East Africa, also symbolizes the subjugation of black people; however; they consider it more a historical event than an element of personal identity. Because they are not descendants of slaves, and because they now live in sovereign African states, they experience the

slave trade as far less powerful in their historical memory and mass consciousness. More so, sometimes Africans look down on African Americans because they are descendants of slaves and allegedly still carry the ineradicable stigma of ‘slave mentality’ (interviews 6, 34; Jackson and Cothran 2003: 597; Clark 2006; Blyden 2012: 168). The Africans who share such views wonder: ‘Why should I care about them [African Americans] and the Transatlantic Slave Trade...? What does this have to do with me? I realize that their ancestors originated from my neck of the woods but so what?’ (<https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20140102135916AA8JnK7>, accessed 18.02.2019; see also: interviews 6, 34).

As noted above, most African Americans continue to see themselves as second class citizens in the only country they have ever known, a country that their ancestors were instrumental in forming. As the then US First Lady Michel Obama said in her speech at the Democratic national convention’s opening night in July 2016 meaning the White House, ‘I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves’ (Washington Post Staff 2016). Our respondent, an African American woman, who lives in one of Philadelphia’s most respectable black neighborhoods, spoke vividly about it: ‘During the four hundred years of enslavement we helped to build this country. And we were not even allowed to use a bath. So that’s trauma’ (interview 17). Another black citizen of the ‘City of Brotherly Love’, from the lower middle class, answering the question: ‘What historical figures are most prominent for America?’ said: ‘To me, black people who were brought here as slaves – we built America’ (interview 15). The historical memory of that period is so alive in black Americans’ consciousnesses that our respondents unselfconsciously identify with the black slaves who contributed so much to their country using ‘we’ speaking about them. History and the present form an indissoluble symbiosis. So many African Americans think of their ancestors not merely as heroes deprived of glory, but as their comrades-in-arms. The ‘time of slavery negates the common-sense intuition of time as continuity or progression; then and now coexist; we are coeval with the dead’ (Hartman 2009: 431). Projecting the past on the present is a characteristic feature of African Americans’ consciousness; this is not peculiar to Africans (interview 46). Intractability of memory of the time of slavery in African Americans vividly manifested itself once

again most recently in controversies around pulling down the Confederate monuments in 2017. As the historian of African American Civil War memory Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders (2017) wrote analyzing these events, ‘African Americans have always had the burden of both asserting their own histories and narratives while battling against the ones that sought to marginalize them’. This is the argument our evidence supports convincingly.

As the slave trade era was black history’s ‘bifurcation point’, historical memory of it impacts powerfully their members’ perception of each other and their relationships. In the view of many respondents, in African history, ‘nothing is more important than “slavery”. The reason is because it is the one thing that ties all black people together the world over’ (interview 1; see also: interviews 39, 41, 42, etc.). As Zain Abdullah (2010: 67) writes, ‘While the historical past of American slavery joins Africans and blacks at the hip, their separate imaginings of this event and its horrors result in a new type of divergence between them’. In the words of an African American interviewee, ‘physically our [Africans and African Americans] DNA is similar, but spiritually and emotionally we are different because the trauma that affected us is different’ (interview 17; see also: interview 50).

Black Africans and African Americans are unanimous in glorifying victims of slavery and celebrating those who fought against the slave trade and slavery. Among the most outstanding figures in American history, members of both communities often named those who contributed to this struggle: Abraham Lincoln, Richard Allen, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman (interviews 1, 3, 6, 7, 12, 16, 17, 40, 41, 42). While as a common symbol of oppression slave trade unites blacks in the face of the whites (interviews 4, 12), it is not strong enough to create a feeling of historical and cultural unity. For one thing, a feeling of unity based on dissimilarity to some third party, rather than of shared sameness, will be fragile. For another, the slave trade is interpreted differently in the historical memory of African migrants and African Americans. It occupies a different place in their consciousness.

The attitude of African Americans to Africans is determined to a large extent by the important part played in their collective memory by the true historical fact that Africans themselves supplied white traders with slaves. As a result, black Americans not infrequently look

at Africans as descendants of those who sold their ancestors into slavery (interviews 6, 7, 8, 12, 22, 25, 26, 36, 38, 48, 53, talks 59, 86; Agbemabiese n.d.: 8; Stoller 2002: 153; Takougang 2002: 8; Ogbaa 2003: 111–113; Wibault 2005: 154–158; Clark 2006; Mwakikagile 2007: 41–42, 120; Darboe 2006–2008: 50, 70–72; Abdullah 2010: 67–70; Arthur 2010: 247–248; el-Malik 2011; Ojo-Ade 2011: 17–18; Okrah 2011: 38). Once again, events that occurred more than two hundred years ago have become so powerful in African Americans' historical memory that contemporary Africans seem responsible for centuries-old atrocities. In some ways, African participation in the slave trade resembles Original Sin: It has no statute of limitation, passing from generation to generation, extending to every African and to Africans collectively. Of course, such charges often offend African migrants though some try to treat this situation with understanding. Africans sometimes invoke the trauma of slavery to explain the negative personality traits and behavior they characterize as typically lower class African American, such as aggressiveness, rancor, suspiciousness and so forth (interview 21, 24, 36, talks 4, 15). According to an Ethiopian interlocutor, 'Africans in America are doing well because they have a different culture than that of African Americans: their ancestors were not slaves, and they are not fixated on the problem of racism, which does not allow African Americans to rise socially and culturally' (talk 18; see also: Jackson and Cothran 2003: 596).

Certain African Americans also justify some of these behavioral problems as products of their oppressed past (interviews 10, 12, 15). Furthermore, the wish of some African Americans to nurture a 'free' African identity so that they can feel part of the 'great African civilization' is caused by their conscious desire to get rid of the trauma of slavery – the feeling of inferiority of their own socio-cultural identity and the humiliation of living in a society that still looks at them as at descendants of slaves (interviews 12, 17, talks 11, 100). Some African Americans try to cope with the trauma of slavery by cultivating 'a spirit of Africa', positioning themselves as primarily African. Some of them start wearing 'African' clothes, change a 'white', 'slavish' name for 'African', 'return' to Islam – allegedly 'the way of life... [Africans] took with them to America as slaves' (Winters 1985: 56), or even to 'African' ancestor cult (Williams n.d.). Generally, they strive to feel, think and behave in 'the African way', as they understand it.

Usually these people are from the lower middle and middle middle class. They began doing so in the 1950s and 1960s in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement (interview 12; Paulun 2012: 26–27). To ‘real’ Africans, and not only those living through the sale of attributes of ‘Africanness’ (clothes, bijouterie, souvenirs), such people seem comical and even unintelligent (interviews 4, 38).

However, among the more affluent and educated African Americans, including those in the upper middle class and wealthy celebrities, the desire to restore the link with black Africans has taken other forms. To a great extent, those forms are shaped by the socio-political context of the time. African American writer Alex Haley’s novel *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* played a particularly important role. *Roots* tells the story of several generations of the author’s ancestors – from enslavement in Africa and forcible resettlement to America in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century until emancipation a century later. It was first published as a novel in 1976, with a TV mini-series based on it, broadcast already next year, in 1977. *Roots* – and the idea of restoring both personal connection and the continuity of the black world’s culture – inspired many members of the African American community of the time. The African American elite and upper middle class began taking DNA tests to discover the African ethnic groups from which they came (Nelson 2008; 2013; Clay 2011; 2017). Other African Americans, who cannot afford a DNA test, now refer to the website [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) (interviews 40, 44). That website often has little valuable information or does not have it at all, but its services are much more affordable than a DNA test. Ironically, African Americans who learned the ethnic group or modern nation from which they came generally continue thinking of themselves as Africans ‘in general’, so strong is the habit of thinking in terms of race, the typical African American logic of cultural thinking.

Wealthy African Americans also began taking advantage of ‘roots tourism’. Black tourists from the USA and other countries of the New World would go to sites connected with the slave trade. There, in restored architectural monuments, recently created museums, reconstructed ceremonies, and the stories of guides and local residents, they find history waiting for them, presented to match their ideas about it. President Obama and his wife gave additional impetus to such tourism in July 2009 when they visited Cape Coast castle in Ghana, one of the

main sights from the slave trade era. However, in Africa all American citizens are perceived as Americans, regardless of skin color. At home, these tourists had created origin stories, partly because they found it impossible to be ‘just Americans’. Accustomed to considering themselves as African Americans, in Africa they are merely ‘Americans’ (interview 46). For the most part, residents of the African countries they visit perceive black Americans as eccentric but wealthy Western tourists who would pay handsomely for this ‘roots’ experience.

African states also see black Americans as a potential source of income and make considerable efforts to attract them as investors and tourists, even providing opportunities for ‘homecoming’ – moving to their countries for permanent residence. Still, our respondents showed us, over and over, that the vast majority of African Americans and African migrants, as well as black Caribbeans, find a mass ‘return’ of black natives of the New World to Africa unnecessary or at least unrealistic (interviews 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 51, 52, 53, talks 1, 15, 27, 32, 60; the few exceptions are: interviews 6, 12, 32). In the words of a respondent, today ‘the world has gone far beyond this type of thinking’ (interview 11; see also: interviews 18, 51). Most African Americans are entrapped in ‘double marginalization’ – in the white socio-cultural mainstream and with regards to the African ‘motherland’ where, they admit, they are unable to return either physically or psychologically (Elliott n.d.: 8–12). Nevertheless, small communities of ‘homecomers’ do exist, in particular in Ghana. Many homecomers feel cultural dissonance with their new compatriots, have problems with the state authorities, or feel disappointed that they did not receive a much warmer welcome (interview 3; see also: Lake 1995; Mwakikagile 2007: 45–51, 104–107; Jalloh and Falola 2008: 147–188, 200–213; Schramm 2008; 2009; 2010; Alex-Assensoh 2010; Forte 2010; Delpino 2011). In the words of a Liberian woman residing in the USA for many years:

I could be wrong, but this is how I see this thing after long being with the African Americans now. This is their home and I’ll see that anticipation of all that desire to go and to learn what that [African] heritage was – for them, this is heritage. Those African Americans, who moved to Africa, for example to Ghana, complain of being not welcome cordially there because they want to impose their culture on the people (interview 3).

Yet many African Americans from all walks of life feel their American identity so deeply that they are not interested in returning to their African roots, either personally or as members of the ethno-racial community. They do not feel anything special, either good or bad, about Africans, and treat them as any other immigrants. Outside major urban communities this indifference is enhanced by the fact that relatively few African migrants live there, limiting their personal contact (interviews 4, 5, 10, 15, 39, 41, 43, 44, 54, talk 112).

While African residents often see African American 'roots tourism' as an opportunity to capitalize on the eccentricities of rich Westerners, our African migrant respondents see it differently. They sneer at those African Americans 'who try to be more African than Africans' (interview 8), seeking 'real Africa' without leaving their home country. They are equally disdainful of those who wear pseudo-African clothes or buy souvenirs that have very little to do with real folk art. Immigrants are also negative about the 'fashion' for DNA testing. At the same time, many Africans believe that DNA testing will help African Americans realize that Africa is not culturally homogeneous; Africans find the image of 'Africa in general', widely spread among African Americans, inaccurate and condescending. However, African immigrants unanimously support roots tourism, as well as other kinds of trips to Africa. Such trips increase the amount of genuine knowledge African Americans have about Africa, encouraging them to abandon negative stereotypes and promoting better relationships between African Americans and African migrants in the USA (interviews 6, 8, 10, 22, 24, 27, 34, talks 7, 65, 67, 114; see also: Mwakikagile 2007: 119).

While the transatlantic slave trade and slavery are crucial for African American respondents' historical memory, its value for African migrants is different. For one thing, the slave trade is not a primary factor in the identity of Africans. For another, Africans think of the slave trade less as the betrayal of some black people by others, as of the exploitation of black people by whites. Paradoxically, Africans emphasize the racial aspect of slavery more forcefully than African Americans. Be that as it may, the collective historical memory of the slave trade within these communities separates them more than it integrates them as they face 'white America'. I may argue that there are not only 'white' and 'black' discourses in treating the heritage of the



slave trade (Stipriaan 2006), but there is also a clear and important split of the ‘black’ discourse into African American (or maybe wider – of the New World blacks) and African.

For the most part, only African Americans, who understand black history in terms of before and after the slave trade, perceive slavery in America as ‘our history’. At the same time, Africans are understandably upset when African Americans claim that their ancestors suffered while those of the Africans did not. After all, African immigrants remind, their ancestors had to experience colonialism.

### ***Colonialism and anticolonial struggle in Africa***

Like slavery in the USA, colonialism in Africa affected directly only one party of the African American – African migrant interaction. A historical memory of colonialism does not have as great an affect on relations between the two communities as memory of the slave trade and slavery. For one thing, the community of African Americans is far larger. For another, relations between the two communities occur where slavery, not colonialism, flourished. Yet historical memory of colonialism, the anticolonial struggle, and the rise of independent states in Africa plays an important part in shaping mutual perception of, and relationship between the two communities, especially in comparative perspective with the slave trade, slavery, and emancipation of slaves.

Some African American respondents thought that slavery and colonialism are comparable (interview 5). At the same time, many of them believed that the two cannot be equated because slavery was far more cruel and degrading and accused African migrants of not understanding the horror of their ancestors’ lives under slavery (interview 10, talks 11, 44, 47). Other African Americans believed that even though colonialism was not as cruel as slavery, the colonial experience suppressed the desire of Africans to develop socio-economically. As a result, today Africans do not want to move beyond their ‘Third World status’ (Jackson and Cothran 2003: 596; see also: Johnson 2000; Okrah 2011: 38). Similarly, many Africans insisted that slavery instilled a ‘slave mentality’ in African Americans.

In turn, many African respondents regretted that African Americans underestimate the inhumanity of colonial regimes. They also worried that African Americans’ attitudes are distorted by the convic-

tion that Africans underestimate the cruelty of slavery (interviews 6, 38). Sometimes Africans claimed that black Americans did not support them in their struggle against colonialism (and did not seek to influence USA policy towards Africa in the postcolonial time). This claim is mistaken: Africans are rarely aware of the anticolonial activities of African Americans. Nor do Africans understand how difficult it was for African Americans to provide that sort of support in a time of racial segregation, and even after its termination (Magubane 1994: 195–203; Meriwether 2002; Ogbaa 2003: 115; Vishnevsky 2004; Williams 2007; Tillery 2011: 99–148; Okoro et al. 2012).

Meanwhile, those African Americans who cultivate an African identity or practice ‘black internationalism’ as members of left organizations like the Uhuru Movement try to avoid comparisons of slavery with colonialism. They prefer to speak about black people’s troubles in general, everywhere – the troubles caused by the whites (interview 14).

Many African American respondents from all walks of life spoke about their still unequal position in their own country. Ironically, this does not prevent some of them, mainly (but not exclusively – see Jackson and Cothran 2003: 596) those from the underclass, from showing their superiority to natives of ‘backward’ African countries (and probably postcolonial countries in general). Interacting with them, these African Americans feel citizens of a great advanced power (interviews 6, 8, 16, 20, 33, 36, talks 59, 67). At the same time, African migrants are usually proud that their home countries threw off colonial domination, even if they remained poor and burdened with social and political problems (interviews 1, 8, 29, 37, talk 69). Although a pan-African layer of identity may not be primary among African migrants, a sense of that identity comes through when they talk about how current conflicts in today’s Africa reflect colonialism and its politics, based on the principle of ‘divide and rule’ (interview 22).

As with the slave trade and slavery in the USA, both African Americans and African migrants view colonialism negatively, but from widely different viewpoints. As a result, people in these communities understand the consequences of these policies very differently. In turn, disagreement on these consequences shapes the mutual perceptions these groups have of each other.

### *The Civil Rights Movement in the USA*

Although many African Americans still consider themselves second-class citizens in their country, they recognize that their rights and opportunities in society have expanded greatly in the decades since the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement (interviews 2, 10, 12, 19, 23, 27, 30, 32, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, talk 11). The ‘icons’ of the Civil Rights Movement – Rosa Parks, Angela Davis and especially Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X – are universally known and respected in both black communities. At the same time, some African Americans believe that current African migrants do not have a right to enjoy the benefits purchased with their ancestors’ sacrifices (interviews 8, 19). In the words of a young African American, ‘Fifty to sixty years ago, we were fighting here for equal rights and Africans stood aside’ (talk 44; see also interviews 36, 38). Most African Americans thinking this way are poorly educated but some are well educated (interviews 19, 26; Swarns 2004). African migrants, the logic goes, owe the very possibility of enjoying these benefits to the suffering and the struggle of African Americans, whose torment and humiliation was partly caused by Africans. This position reflects a widespread, specific feature of such people’s outlook: ‘African-Americans may think:

‘Oh, you are attacking our part of the American portion’. You know, because in their mind they think a certain part of America is for Caucasians, a certain part is for Latin Americans, a certain part is for African Americans, a certain part is for Asians. So, when Africans are coming, then the same African Americans with this kind of mentality think: ‘Oh, you are coming to take our part, to take what we already have’, and this creates some tensions (interview 34; see also: interview 18; Okrah 2011: 37; Oray 2013: 168).

That the picture is really not rosy is evidenced, for example, by the open conflict that erupted with events in Washington, DC in 2005. The migrant Ethiopian community applied to the city administration, asking that the part of the Shaw neighborhood in which they lived be officially named ‘Little Ethiopia’. The administration was ready to meet the request, but Shaw’s African American community rejected the project. That community considered the project an attempt to capitalize on growing commerce and an influx of tourists that resulted from victories in the struggle for civil rights, created by African

Americans rather than recent African migrants (Kedebe 2011; Oray 2013: 159–167). The organizers of the protest openly spoke of the Ethiopians in the press: ‘They haven’t paid their dues... Where were they during the [1968] riots? They’re Johnny-come-lately. What gives them the right? Just because you opened a store?’ (quoted in: Schwartzman 2005). This story is not unique (Okome 2011: 8–9; interviews 16, 22). The most recent scandal of this sort broke in fall 2018 when some African Americans activists called for a boycott the film ‘Harriet’ if the part of Harriet Tubman, one of the greatest heroes of Black Americans’ struggle against slavery, will be played by not ‘an actual black American actress’ but by British Nigerian actress Cynthia Erivo, as it is planned (Russ 2018). Even during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections when Barack Obama enjoyed broad support from African Americans, some members of this community did not vote for him because his father was a Kenyan from Africa, not an African American (interviews 19, 28, 38, 46; see also: Clark 2008: 171–172; Williams 2008; Sundiata 2015; Blyden 2019: 188–189). Because Obama and his ancestors had no experience in the suffering and humiliation at the heart of African American experience, some blacks viewed him as an outsider (Sarmah 2007).

However, accusations that Africans neglected the civil rights struggle of African Americans (e.g., interview 53) are as distorted as Africans’ belief that African Americans ignored their struggle against colonialism. The still newly born independent states of Africa and the Organization of African Unity (since its founding in 1963) actually supported the American Civil Rights Movement as far as possible (Mwakikagile, 2007: 126–131). Africans, especially the elderly, realize the impact of the struggle against racial segregation in the USA on their conditions and those of the world: ‘Recent African immigrants also understand that without the civil right movements of the 1950s and 1960s, their chances of survival in the USA would be hard’ (interview 9; see also: interview 16; Mwakikagile 2007: 19; Arthur 2010: 225; Blyden 2012: 168; Agbemabiese 2013; Akinde 2014). Furthermore, they had been ‘fighting for the future of the whole humanity, not only Africa, not for African Americans only’ (interview 29). Thus, contrary to the opinion of a number of African American respondents, Africans often do care about the history of their struggle for equality. This concern of Africans also indicates the racial layer in their collec-

tive identity, the extent to which they perceive themselves as representatives of their race. This layer of identity is definitely present, if much less dominant than it is in the consciousness of African Americans.

### ***The downfall of apartheid in South Africa***

Few of our respondents in either community could tell much about Africa's postcolonial history. Nevertheless, for practically all of them, the 1994 collapse of apartheid in South Africa remains surprisingly vivid, perhaps because it was the most powerful single event through which they lived. Only the youngest of those we interviewed, people under twenty, were not affected this way. As a general rule, contemporary events often seem much more important than those of the deeper past.

Africans and African Americans agree that the fall of the apartheid regime in South Africa altered the course of world history. Nelson Mandela is particularly admired by respondents from all black communities (interviews 3, 5, 8, 11, 16, 24, 27, 30, 32, 40, 50). At the same time, apartheid and the struggle against it have different meanings in the historical consciousness of Africans and African Americans. For Africans, apartheid was always a shared problem of the colonial past, not just one faced in South Africa. When I asked an elderly native of Nigeria, 'In what situations can Africans from different countries feel precisely African and unite?' he answered, 'The most vivid example I remember is how people from all over Africa united against apartheid' (interview 38; see also interview 49). Today, more than twenty years after the collapse of apartheid, Africans still view this event as a page in the history of the whole continent, an organic part of the anticolonial struggle of all peoples and countries of Africa. It represented the final, triumphant phase of that shared struggle.

African Americans are impressed by the victory over apartheid not less than Africans. But where Africans view the collapse of apartheid as the culmination of the struggle of African peoples for political freedom, African Americans think of it racially, as part of the still ongoing global struggle for equality with whites. This racial way of thinking is more familiar and seems more correct to them in the light of their own historical experience of open racial confrontation. In this way, the end of apartheid in South Africa was an important, but not the final step toward social and spiritual liberation of the black race as a whole.

Martin Luther King mentioned the struggle of native peoples of South Africa against apartheid in this context, three decades before the end of apartheid, when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize 1964 (King 1964).

Thus, people in both communities appear to remember the collapse of apartheid in South Africa two decades before our research – chronologically the last event of the past that is vividly etched in their historical memory – seemingly much the same way as they feel equally positive about it. But how they interpret that event differs widely, depending on the historical and cultural contexts in which they view it.

### **Conclusion**

So, African Americans and recent African migrants in the USA understand the key events of their historical past significantly differently, even when they are assessing the same phenomena and facts. These differences in perception, estimation, and evaluation, combined with awareness of the differences in their histories, separates these communities spiritually and mentally, thereby creating an ambiguous and complicated relationship between these two USA black communities in the present.

Almost exclusively among highly educated representatives of both groups one can meet the people who have enough real knowledge about the past of Africa and black Americans. This is true for knowledge of own history, and of each other's history all the more so. However, the images of each other's cultures form in the consciousness of Africans and African Americans on the basis of not only knowledge and ideas about the past of Africa and 'black America', but also personal communication on the one hand, and perception of stereotypes about the current state and overall estimates of these cultures on the other. Although many African migrants reside in the same urban areas as black Americans, those who can afford it financially settle in the more socially advantaged, and hence often primarily 'non-black', neighborhoods. Yet even when African Americans and Africans are neighbors, communication among neighbors from different black communities tends to be limited and superficial. It remains so in other places where black Americans and migrants from sub-Saharan Africa find themselves too: at work or school, at different events from meetings of public organiza-

tions to sport matches, as well as at religious services (interviews 1, 3, 13, 15, 16, 21, 23, 28, 32, 33, 45, talks 2, 6, 9, 12, 35, 38, 70, 82, 83, 84, 91, 94, 95, 110, 123, 138). Only a few respondents from either community have friends from the other (interviews 5, 8, 9, 10, 15, 27, 35, 40, 46, 50, 52, 53, 54, talks 8, 34, 36, 37, 56, 62, 67, 89). Intermarriages between African Americans and Africans are infrequent. Both African Americans and Africans view such intermarriages as marriages between people from different communities, so many consider them undesirable (cf., interviews 4, 6, 13, 20, 21, 36, 37, 38, 46, 47, talk 85 and interviews 1, 3, 9, 11, 18, 23, 28, 30, 41, 44, talk 56).

Thus, most African Americans and African migrants do not have an extensive and deep enough experience of personal communication with each other for basing an image of the other black community's culture on it. Respondents noted that ongoing contact and communication break down those stereotypes (interviews 12, 18, 22, 30, 33, 45, 51). However, as interpersonal communication is limited (largely voluntarily) and multiplied by little knowledge about each other, just preconceived notions and stereotypes, rooted in history and based on its use and abuse, come to the forefront at the formation of mutual culture images in the minds of African Americans and first-generation African migrants.

### **Acknowledgements**

The research is supported by the Russian Science Foundation, grant # 18-18-00454 'Historical memory as a factor in the evolution of socio-political systems (Sub-Saharan Africa and Mesoamerica).'

The author is grateful to Dr. Ken Baskin for bringing the text of the chapter into conformity with the standards of the English language.

### **References**

- Abdullah, Z. 2010. *Black Mecca: The African Muslims in Harlem*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Agbemabiese, P.E. 2013. 50 Years between Martin L. King and Trayvon Martin: What Are the Lessons Learned? [https://www.academia.edu/5860997/Fifty\\_Years\\_After\\_Dr.\\_Martin\\_Luther\\_Kings\\_Iconic\\_Dream\\_Speech\\_What\\_Are\\_the\\_Lessons\\_Learned](https://www.academia.edu/5860997/Fifty_Years_After_Dr._Martin_Luther_Kings_Iconic_Dream_Speech_What_Are_the_Lessons_Learned) (accessed January 28, 2014).
- Agbemabiese, P.E. n.d. The Changing 'Face' of African Immigrants and Refugees: The Case of Ghanaian Immigrants in Columbus, Ohio. [http://www.academia.edu/1530113/The\\_Changing\\_Face\\_of\\_African\\_Im](http://www.academia.edu/1530113/The_Changing_Face_of_African_Im)

- migrants\_and\_Refugees\_The\_Case\_of\_Ghanaian\_immigrants\_in\_Columbus\_Ohio (accessed October 20, 2012).
- Akbar, N. 1990. *Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery*. Jersey City, NJ: New Mind Productions.
- Akinde, M. 2014. It's Time for Africans in America to Identify with African Americans. <http://thegrio.com/2014/12/26/africans-in-america-african-american/> (accessed August 2, 2015).
- Alex-Assensoh, Y.M. 2010. African Americans, African Immigrants and Homeland-Diaspora Development in Africa. *African Diaspora* 10 (3): 207–234.
- Amen, N.A. 1999. *The Ankh: African Origin of Electromagnetism*. New York: A&B Publishers.
- Anderson, M. 2015. A Rising Share of the U.S. Black Population is Foreign Born. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/04/09/a-rising-share-of-the-u-s-black-population-is-foreign-born/> (accessed April 16, 2015).
- Arthur, J.A. 2010. *African Diaspora Identities: Negotiating Culture in Transnational Migration*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Blyden, N.A.I. 2012. Relationships among Blacks in the Diaspora: African and Caribbean Immigrants and American-Born Blacks. In Arthur, J.A., Takougang, J., and Owusu, T. (eds.), *Africans in Global Migration: Searching for Promised Lands* (pp. 161–174). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Blyden, N.A.I. 2019. *African Americans and Africa: A New History*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press.
- Clark, M.K. 2006. African American Identity and the Impact of the 'New Diaspora'. *Pambazuka News* 237. <http://pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/31250> (accessed July 4, 2013).
- Clark, M.K. 2008. Identity among First and Second Generation African Immigrants in the United States. *African Identities* 6 (2): 169–181.
- Clay, E. 2011. Mediated Science, Genetics and Identity in the US African Diaspora. In Hoover, S., and Emerich, M. (eds.), *Media, Spiritualities and Social Change* (pp. 25–36). London; New York: Continuum.
- Clay, E. 2017. *Lost Ancestors, Genetic Journeys, and Recycled Roots in the (United States) Genomic Imaginary: Intermediality and Myth in Media Portrayals of African Americans and Genetic Ancestry*. Ph.D. dissertation. Amsterdam: Free University of Amsterdam.
- Darboe, F. 2006–2008. Africans and African Americans: Conflicts, Stereotypes and Grudges. *Portland State University McNair Scholars Online Journal* 2 (1): 48–80. <http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/mcnair/vol2/iss1/19> (accessed September 18, 2014).
- Delpino, G. 2011. Building up Belonging: Diasporic 'Homecomers', the Ghanaian Government and Traditional Rulers: a Case of Return. *African Diaspora* 4 (2): 163–184.



- Elliott, M. n.d. Rhythm, Conflict, and Memory: Communicating the Third Space in the Music of the African American Diaspora. [https://www.academia.edu/10737173/\\_Rhythm\\_Conflict\\_and\\_Memory\\_Communicating\\_the\\_third\\_space\\_in\\_the\\_music\\_of\\_the\\_African-American\\_diaspora\\_](https://www.academia.edu/10737173/_Rhythm_Conflict_and_Memory_Communicating_the_third_space_in_the_music_of_the_African-American_diaspora_) (accessed October 24, 2015).
- Eyerman, R. 2001. *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eyerman, R. 2012. Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity. In Alexander, J.C. (ed.), *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (pp. 60–111). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Forte, J.R. 2010. Diaspora Homecoming, Vodun Ancestry, and the Ambiguities of Transnational Belongings in the Republic of Benin. In Rahier, J.M., Hintzen, P.C., and Smith, F. (eds.), *Global Circuits of Blackness: Interrogating the African Diaspora* (pp. 174–200). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Gallas, K.L., and Perry, J.D. (eds.). 2015. *Interpreting Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Giliberti, M. 2013. Rethinking the Memorial in a Black Belt Landscape: Planning, Memory and Identity of African Americans in Alabama. *Urbani izziv* 24 (1): 144–159.
- Golden, L. 2002. *My Long Journey Home*. Chicago: Third World Press.
- Goldman, P. 1979. *The Death and Life of Malcolm X*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Hartman, S.V. 2009. The Time of Slavery. In Dube, S. (ed.), *Enchantments of Modernity. Empire, Nation, Globalization* (pp. 429–450). New Delhi; Abingdon: Routledge.
- Horton, J.O., and Horton L.E. (eds.). 2006. *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*. New York: The New Press.
- Iheduru, A.C. 2013. *Examining the Social Distance between Africans and African Americans: The Role of Internalized Racism*. Psy.D. dissertation. Dayton, OH: Wright State University.
- Imhotep, A. 2011. *Passion of the Christ, or Passion of Osiris: The Kongo Origins of the Jesus Myth*. Houston, TX; San Antonio, TX: A MOCHA-Verstity Press.
- Imhotep, A. 2012. Reexamining the Kaaba of Islam. [https://www.academia.edu/3303577/REEXAMINING\\_THE\\_KAABA\\_OF\\_ISLAM](https://www.academia.edu/3303577/REEXAMINING_THE_KAABA_OF_ISLAM) (May 6, 2015).
- Imhotep, A. 2017. Medu-Netcher: A Catalyst for an African Scientific Renaissance. [https://www.academia.edu/30695644/Medu-Netcher\\_A\\_Catalyst\\_for\\_an\\_African\\_Scientific\\_Renaissance](https://www.academia.edu/30695644/Medu-Netcher_A_Catalyst_for_an_African_Scientific_Renaissance) (accessed January 1, 2017).

- Jackson, J.V., and Cothran, M.E. 2003. Black versus Black. The Relationships among African, African American, and African Caribbean Persons. *Journal of Black Studies* 33 (5): 576–604.
- Jalloh, A., and Falola, T. (eds.). 2008. *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations*. Rochester, NY: The University of Rochester Press.
- Johnson, O. 2000. Chilly Coexistence. Africans and African Americans in the Bronx. <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/gissler/anthology/Chill-Johnson.html> (accessed July 30, 2015).
- Kansteiner, W. 2002. Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies. *History and Theory* 41 (2): 179–197.
- Kedebé, K.H. 2011. Controversy over Legacy: Ethiopian Americans Transnational Place-Making Project in Washington, DC. Paper presented at American Anthropological Association 2011 Annual Meeting, Montreal, PQ, November 15–20, 2011.
- Khokholkova, N.E. 2016. Afrocentricity: The Evolution of the Theory in the Context of American History. *Social Evolution and History* 15 (1): 111–125.
- King, Jr., M.L. 1964. Acceptance Speech, on the Occasion of the Award of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, December 10, 1964. [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-acceptance\\_en.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-acceptance_en.html) (accessed December 19, 2015).
- Labang, O.C. 2014. *The New African-Americans: The Politics of Naming in a Racialized Context*. Kansas City, MO: Miraclaire Academic Publications.
- Lake, O. 1995. Toward a Pan-African Identity: Diaspora African Repatriates in Ghana. *Anthropological Quarterly* 68 (1): 21–36.
- Lategan, B. 2013. Remembering with the Future in Mind. In Diawara, M., Lategan, B., and Rüsen, J. (eds.), *Historical Memory in Africa: Dealing with the Past, Reaching for the Future in an Intellectual Context* (pp. 145–161). New York; Oxford: Berghahn.
- Lawrence-Sanders, A. 2017. Beyond monuments: African Americans contesting Civil War memory. <http://www.aaihs.org/beyond-monuments-african-americans-contesting-civil-war-memory/> (accessed December 21, 2017).
- Litinsky, A.L. 2009. Formirovanie etnicheskogo samosoznaniya afroamerikantsev v XX veke [Formation of Ethnic Self-Consciousness of African Americans in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century]. In Davidson, A.B. (ed.), *Pax Africana: continent i diaspora v poiskakh sebja* [*Pax Africana: Continent and Diaspora in Search of Identity*] (pp. 71–100). Moscow: State University Higher School of Economics Press.

- Magubane, B.M. 1994. *The Ties That Bind: African-American Consciousness of Africa*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- el-Malik, S.S. 2011. Neo African-Americans: Discourse on Blackness. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 4 (1): 105–112.
- Meriwether, J.H. 2002. *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Mitchell-Agbemadi, V. 2004. A Common Identity: Moving towards Mutual Understanding and Acceptance between Africans and African Americans. In Swaffield, B.C. (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture* (pp. 92–106). Rome: John Cabot University Press.
- Mwakikagile, G. 2005. *Relations between Africans and African Americans: Misconceptions, Myths and Realities*. Grand Rapids, MI: National Academic Press.
- Mwakikagile, G. 2007. *Relations between Africans, African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans: Tensions, Indifference and Harmony*. Dar es Salaam; Pretoria: New Africa Press.
- Nelson, A., 2008. Bio Science: Genetic Genealogy Testing and the Pursuit of African Ancestry. *Social Studies of Science* 38 (5): 759–783.
- Nelson, A. 2013. DNA Ethnicity as Black Social Action? *Cultural Anthropology* 28 (3): 527–536.
- Ogbaa, K. 2003. *The Nigerian Americans*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Ojo-Ade, F. 2011. Living in Paradise?: Africans in America. *Ìrìnkèrindò: A Journal of African Migration* 4: 1–27. <http://www.africamigration.com/Articles2011/OJO%20ADE%20LIVING%20IN%20PARADISE.pdf> (accessed July 19, 2013).
- Okome, M.O. 2011. Review of: Copeland-Carson, Jacqueline. *Creating Africa in America: Translocal Identity in an Emerging World City*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. *Ìrìnkèrindò: A Journal of African Migration* 4: 1–9. [http://www.africamigration.com/archive\\_01/m\\_oko\\_me\\_globalization\\_01.pdf](http://www.africamigration.com/archive_01/m_oko_me_globalization_01.pdf) (accessed July 19, 2013).
- Okoro, J., Ingwe, R., and Ijim-Agbor, U. 2012. African-American Influence on American Government's Foreign Trade, Investment and Aid Policies toward Africa: Continuing Challenges. *International Journal of Asian Social Science* 2 (8): 1269–1285.
- Okrah, K.A. 2011. Bridging the Gap: Managing the 'Cold War' between Africans and African-Americans in the United States of America. *African Symposium* 11 (1): 33–41.
- Oostindie, G. (ed.). 2001. *Facing Up to the Past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.

- Oray, P.B. 2013. *Another Layer of Blackness: Theorizing Race, Ethni-city, and Identity in the U.S. Black Public Sphere*. Ph.D. dissertation. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa.
- Paulun, S.F. 2012. *Enacting Cultural Identity: Time and Memory in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century African American Theatre by Female Playwrights*. Ph.D. dissertation. Konstanz: Universität Konstanz.
- Rashidi, R. 2011. *Black Star: The African Presence in Early Europe*. London: Books of Africa.
- Rashidi, R. 2012. *African Star over Asia: The Black Presence in the East*. London: Books of Africa.
- Reid, I.D.A. 1939. *The Negro Immigrant: His Background, Characteristics and Social Adjustment, 1899–1937*. New York: Arno Press.
- Repina, L.P. 2014. Temporal'nye kharakteristiki istoricheskogo soznaniya (o dinamicheskom komponente 'istorii pamjati') [Temporal Characteristics of Historical Consciousness (On the Dynamic Component of 'History of Memory')]. *Dialog so vremenem: Al'manakh intellektual'noj istorii* 49: 28–43.
- Rinehart, N.T. 2013. Black Beethoven and the Racial Politics of Music History. *Transition* 112: 117–130.
- Russ, V. 2018. Who is Black in America? Ethnic Tensions Flare between Black Americans and Black Immigrants. *The Inquirer*, October 19. [http://www2.philly.com/philly/news/cynthia-erivo-harriet-tubman-movie-lu-vvie-ajayi-american-descendants-of-slaves-20181018.html?\\_\\_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar&fbclid=IwAR2XZzPOVvmfoGJVYYfiWrZYiVrjJqajfF16aVZERF5wNlaRpOqm5PcpLSQ](http://www2.philly.com/philly/news/cynthia-erivo-harriet-tubman-movie-lu-vvie-ajayi-american-descendants-of-slaves-20181018.html?__vfz=medium%3Dsharebar&fbclid=IwAR2XZzPOVvmfoGJVYYfiWrZYiVrjJqajfF16aVZERF5wNlaRpOqm5PcpLSQ) (accessed October 28, 2018).
- Sarmah, S. 2007. Is Obama Black Enough? *Columbia Journalism Review*, February 15. [http://www.cjr.org/politics/is\\_obama\\_black\\_enough.php](http://www.cjr.org/politics/is_obama_black_enough.php) (accessed September 5, 2016).
- Schramm, K., 2008. Das Joseph-Projekt. Sklavenhandel, Diaspora, Erinerungskultur. *Historische Anthropologie* 16 (2): 227–246.
- Schramm, K. 2009. Negotiating Race: Blackness and Whiteness in the Context of Homecoming to Ghana. *African Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Africa in a Global World* 2 (1): 3–24.
- Schramm, K. 2010. *African Homecoming: Pan-African Ideology and Contested Heritage*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Schwartzman, P. 2005. Shaw Shuns 'Little Ethiopia'. *Washington Post*, July 25. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/24/AR2005072401136.html> (accessed July 7, 2016).
- Stipriaan, A. van. 2006. Between Diaspora, (Trans)nationalism, and American Globalization: A History of Afro-Surinamese Emancipation Day. In Gowricharn, R. (ed.), *Caribbean Transnationalism: Migration, Plurali-*

- zation, and Social Cohesion (pp. 155–178). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Stoller, P. 2002. *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sundiata, I. 2015. Obama, African Americans, and Africans: The Double Vision. In Heywood, L., Blakely, A., Stith, C., and Yesnowitz, J.C. (eds.), *African Americans in U.S. Foreign Policy: From the Era of Frederick Douglass to the Age of Obama* (pp. 200–212). Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Swarns, R.L. 2004. ‘African-American’ Becomes a Term for Debate. *New York Times*, August 29. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/29/us/african-american-becomes-a-term-for-debate.html> (accessed January 1, 2017).
- Takougang, J. 2002. Contemporary African Immigrants to the United States. *Ìrinkèrindò: A Journal of African Migration* 2: 1–15. [http://www.africamigration.com/archive\\_02/j\\_takougang.htm](http://www.africamigration.com/archive_02/j_takougang.htm) (accessed July 19, 2013).
- Tillery, Jr., A.B. 2011. *Between Homeland and Motherland: Africa, U.S. Foreign Policy, and Black Leadership in America*. Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press.
- Vishnevsky, M. 2004. Afrikano-amerikanskaja obshchina i politika SShA v Afrike [The African American Community and Policy of the USA in Africa]. *Azija i Afrika segodnja* 9: 18–26.
- Walker, R. 2006. *When We Ruled: The Ancient and Medieval History of Black Civilizations*. Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press.
- Washington Post Staff. 2016. Transcript: Read Michelle Obama’s full speech from the 2016 DNC. *Washington Post*, 26 July. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/07/26/transcript-read-michelle-obamas-full-speech-from-the-2016-dnc/> (accessed 01.10.2016).
- Wibault, M. 2005. *L’Immigration africaine aux Etats-Unis depuis 1965*. Paris: Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne.
- Williams, P.A. n.d. And to My Healers... [https://www.academia.edu/7340031/And\\_To\\_My\\_Healers](https://www.academia.edu/7340031/And_To_My_Healers) (accessed June 14, 2014).
- Williams, II, R. 2008. Barack Obama and the Complicated Boundaries of Blackness. *Black Scholar* 38 (1): 55–61.
- Williams, Z.R. 2007. African Americans, Pan African Policy Matters, and the Development of the Black Foreign Policy Constituency for Africa and the African Diaspora, 1930–1998. *Journal of Pan African Studies* 1 (10): 135–151.
- Wilson-Fall, W.W. n.d. A Negro Handbook for West Africans and Other Strangers. A Meditation on Caste, Class and Other Matters by a Native Anthropologist. [https://www.academia.edu/4461174/A\\_Negro\\_Handbook\\_for\\_West\\_Africans\\_and\\_Other\\_Strangers\\_Introduction](https://www.academia.edu/4461174/A_Negro_Handbook_for_West_Africans_and_Other_Strangers_Introduction) (accessed June 29, 2014).

- Winters, C.A. 1984. Blacks in Europe before the Europeans. *Return to the Source* 3 (1): 26–33.
- Winters, C.A. 1985. Going Back to the Roots. *Afkar: Inquiry* 2 (4): 56–57.
- Winters, C.A. 2014. Blacks in Ancient China. In Hester, K.E. (ed.), *Survey of African Music* (pp. 179–186). San Diego, CA: Cognella.
- Zong, J., Batalova, J. 2017. Sub-Saharan African Immigrants in the United States. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/sub-saharan-african-immigrants-united-states> (accessed May 16, 2017).
- Zong, J., Batalova, J. 2019. Immigrants from New Origin Countries in the United States. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigrants-new-origin-countries-united-states> (accessed February 1, 2019).

## Field evidence

### **Cited interviews (communication with respondents on the extensive plan lasting, as a rule, from one to two hours)**

1. Nigerian man, physician and university teacher, 73, East Lansing, MI, 10.09.2013 (done by e-mail)
2. African American woman, waitress in a Caribbean restaurant, 19, Philadelphia, PA, 16.09.2013
3. Liberian woman, an African migrant organization leadership member, 58, Capitol Heights, MD, 16.09.2013 (done in Philadelphia)
4. Liberian man, activist of an African migrant organization, about 60, Philadelphia, PA, 18.09.2013
5. African American man, ex-policeman, now businessman, 60, Philadelphia, PA, 18.09.2013
6. Nigerian-Ugandan woman, born in the US, lawyer in an African migrant organization, about 30, Philadelphia, PA, 19.09.2013
7. Ethiopian man, proprietor of a restaurant of Ethiopian and Mediterranean cuisine, 30–35, Philadelphia, PA, 19.09.2013
8. Ghanaian woman, physician, 45–50, Philadelphia, PA, 20.09.2013
9. Nigerian man, schoolteacher, 50, Detroit, MI, 16.08.2013, 20.09.2013 (done by e-mail)
10. African American woman, financial consultant, 62, Baltimore, MD, 21.09.2013 (done in Philadelphia)
11. Nigerian man, physiotherapist, 49, Chesterton, IN, 22.09.2013 (done by e-mail)
12. African American woman, head of an African American non-profit, about 70, Philadelphia, PA, 23.09.2013
13. Sudanese, refugees from Darfur: mother (about 40) and her five children (two sons and three daughters); in the interview mainly participated the mother and two children (a son, 16, and a daughter, 15), Philadelphia, PA, 24.09.2013

14. White English woman living in the US since the 1960s, activist of a left pan-African political organization, about 70, Philadelphia, PA, 25.09.2013
15. African American man, non-qualified worker, about 60, Philadelphia, PA, 26.09.2013
16. Liberian man, journalist, employee of the city administration, 48, Philadelphia, PA, 28.09.2013
17. African American woman, social activist in a black neighborhood, about 50, Philadelphia, PA, 29.09.2013
18. Liberian man, head of an African migrant organization, 57, Philadelphia, PA, 30.09.2013
19. African American man, university professor on retirement, 79, Cambridge, MA, 03.10.2013
20. Somali man, college and schoolteacher in the past, now jobless, about 60, Boston, MA, 03.10.2013
21. Nigerian man, head of the IT department in a company, 53, Cambridge, MA, 04.10.2013
22. Sierra Leonean man, head of an African migrant organization, 57, Boston, MA, 08.10.2013
23. African American man, university professor, 65–70, Boston, MA, 08.10.2013
24. Chadian man, head of an African migrant organization, about 40, Cambridge, MA, 06.10.2013, 11.10.2013
25. Kenyan man, university teacher, about 40, Boston, MA, 10.10.2013
26. African American man, university professor, about 55, Boston, MA, 10.10.2013
27. African American man, engineer, 50–55, Boston, MA, 12.10.2013
28. Sierra Leonean man, engineer and university M.A. student, 35, Boston, MA, 12.10.2013
29. Cameroonian man, software engineer, 30–35, Boston, MA, 14.10.2013
30. African American man, hospital technical staff member, about 40, Springfield, MA, 15.10.2013
32. African American man, university student, about 20, Minneapolis, MN, 28.10.2013
33. Ethiopian man, university student, about 20, Minneapolis, MN, 28.10.2013
34. Kenyan man, university professor, about 60, Minneapolis, MN, 29.10.2013
35. Sudanese woman, teacher of English as a foreign language and activist of the feminist movement, 30–35, Minneapolis, MN, 30.10.2013

36. Family: Nigerian woman (psychologist, 50–55), African American man (preacher, about 55) and their son (community college student, 19); the couple also have an elder child – a daughter, Minneapolis, MN, 31.10.2013
37. Nigerian man, professor and a private university President, 67, Fontana, CA, 14.11.2013 (done by e-mail)
38. Nigerian man, ex-university teacher and employee of the Canadian government, now independent researcher in the field of international relations, 69, Ottawa, ON, Canada, 15.11.2013 (conducted in Moscow).
39. African American woman, churchwarden and Sunday school teacher, about 70, Guntersville, AL, 18.08.2014
40. African American man, accountant, about 30, Guntersville, AL, 18.08.2014
41. African American woman, ex-poultry plant worker, now pensioner, 51, Guntersville, AL, 19.08.2014
42. African American woman, schoolteacher, 59, Guntersville, AL, 20.08.2014
43. African American woman, pastor, about 50, Guntersville, AL, 20.08.2014
44. African Americans, two men (about 60 and about 70) and two women (both about 70), members of the community of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Guntersville, AL, 20.08.2014
45. Two Ethiopian men, poultry plant workers, about 25 and about 40, Albertville, AL, 23.08.2014
46. African American man, teacher of African American history at a university, 30–35, St Louis, MO, 21.09.2015
47. Senegalese man, anthropologist and university teacher, 49, St Louis, MO, 21.09.2015
48. A group of university students in the humanities, attending a course on the history of black socio-political movements in the US (seventeen people: nine African Americans, five Africans born in the US, two whites, one African Caribbean; twelve women, five men; all about 20), St Louis, MO, 21.09.2015
49. White American woman, African historian and university professor, 60–65, St Louis, MO, 22.09.2015
50. African American man, Director of a non-profit which aim is to help students of weak public schools get real knowledge, 35–40, St Louis, MO, 23.09.2015
51. Nigerian man, born in Ghana and raised in Ghana and Nigeria, composer, collector of African and African American folk music, founder and head of a public organization designed to promote African music and music by black composers in the US, 55, St Louis, MO, 24.09.2015



52. Kenyan man, linguist and university teacher, about 55, St Louis, MO, 24.09.2015

53. African American woman, university department of African and African American Studies staff member and annual African festival coordinator, 35–40, St Louis, MO, 25.09.2015

54. Haitian (Mulatto)-African American woman, cultural awareness trainer, about 30, St Louis, MO, 28.09.2015

**Talks (communication with respondents on the reduced plan or without any plan at all lasting, as a rule, from several minutes to one hour)**

1. Jamaican man, computer repairman, 30–35, Philadelphia, PA, 17.09.2013

2. African American man, sweeper, about 60, Philadelphia, PA, 18.09.2013

4. Guyanese man, owner of a Rasta store, about 35, Philadelphia, PA, 19.09.2013

6. African American man, civil servant, 30–35, Philadelphia, PA, 20.09.2013

7. Malian woman, hairdresser, about 35, Philadelphia, PA, 20.09.2013

8. Malian man, businessman, about 50, Philadelphia, PA, 20.09.2013

9. African American woman, guide, about 60, Philadelphia, PA, 21.09.2013

11. African American woman, owner of a food store, about 55, Philadelphia, PA, 22.09.2013

12. Ethiopian, journalist by training working as a driver in a car rental company, about 30, Philadelphia, PA, 22.09.2013

14. White man, shop assistant in a shop of optics having African friends, 30–35, Philadelphia, PA, 23.09.2013

15. Nigerian man, shop assistant in a computer shop, about 30, Philadelphia, PA, 23.09.2013

18. Ethiopian man, employee of a firm, assisting the elderly and sick people, about 55, Philadelphia, PA, 27.09.2013

20. Nigerian man, retailer at a Saturday manufactured goods market at a mosque, 20–25, Philadelphia, PA, 28.09.2013

21. African American man, retailer at a Saturday manufactured goods market at a mosque, about 55, Philadelphia, PA, 28.09.2013

22. Guinean woman, university student, 20–25, Philadelphia, PA, 28.09.2013

26. African American man, musician, 20–25, Philadelphia, PA, 30.09.2013

27. African American man, jobless, about 50, Philadelphia, PA, 30.09.2013
32. African man (refused to name the home country), street vendor, 25–30, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
34. African American man, school student, about 15, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
35. Guinean man, seller in a shop at a mosque, 30–35, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
36. Somali man, school student, about 15, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
37. Somali man, taxi driver, about 40, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
38. African American man, about 60, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
40. Somali man, technical college student, about 25, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
41. Jamaican man, seller in a fast-food diner, about 50, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
43. African American man, beggar, about 65, Boston, MA, 02.10.2013
44. African American man, university entrant, about 17, Cambridge, MA, 03.10.2013
47. African American man, servant at a mosque, 50–55, Boston, MA, 04.10.2013
50. Senegalese man, waiter in a Senegalese restaurant, about 60, Boston, MA, 04.10.2013
56. Sierra Leonean man, owner of an ‘African’ closing store, 60–65, Boston, MA, 05.10.2013
57. Kenyan man, seller in an African gift shop belonging to his mother, about 20, Cambridge, MA, 05.10.2013
59. Ghanaian woman, born in the US, graduate student, about 25, Boston, MA, 06.10.2013
60. Ghanaian-Nigerian woman, born in the US, sociologist, 25–30, Boston, MA, 06.10.2013
62. Somali man, about 20, Boston, MA, 07.10.2013
65. Kenyan woman, graduate student, 25–30, Boston, MA, 08.10.2013
67. Liberian man, seller in an African food store, 25–30, Boston, MA, 09.10.2013
69. Cape Verdean man, proprietor of a Cape Verdean restaurant and a liquor store, 48, Boston, MA, 09.10.2013
70. Cameroonian man, scholar and university teacher, intern at an American university, about 30, Boston, MA, 09.10.2013
82. Ethiopian woman on her maternal side and Mexican on paternal, daughter of an Ethiopian restaurant owners, about 30, Evanston, IL, 18.10.2013

83. Ethiopian woman, waitress in an Ethiopian restaurant, 25–30, Evanston, IL, 22.10.2013
84. Indian man whose parents emigrated from East Africa, owner of and seller in a food store, about 40, Evanston, IL, 22.10.2013
85. Ghanaian woman, hairdresser, about 40, Evanston, IL, 22.10.2013
86. Beninese man, university teacher in Benin, 46, was in the US twice visiting his sister who lives in Houston, TX, 23.10.2013 (done by e-mail)
89. African American woman, school student, about 14, Chicago, IL, 24.10.2013
91. Rwandan woman, secretary in an organization giving assistance to refugees from Africa, 30–35, Chicago, IL, 24.10.2013
94. African American man, university freshman, about 18, Evanston, IL, 25.10.2013
95. African American woman, graduate student, about 25, Evanston, IL, 25.10.2013
97. Senegalese woman, seller at an African market, about 60, New York, NY, 27.10.2013
99. Malian man, seller at an African market, about 18, New York, NY, 27.10.2013
100. African American woman, customer at an African market, about 70, New York, NY, 27.10.2013
109. Cameroonian man, geologist, worked in the US for five years, now comes regularly to work on joint projects with American colleagues; daughter resides in the US, 55–60, New York, NY, 02.11.2013
110. Two Ethiopian men, poultry plant workers, both about 30, Guntersville, AL, 11.08.2014
112. African American woman, ‘black’ church community member, 51, Guntersville, AL, 13.08.2014
114. African American woman, nurse, about 45, Albertville, AL, 16.08.2014
123. Ethiopian man, poultry plant worker, about 30, Guntersville, AL, 20.08.2014
129. Senegalese man, owner of a store of goods with African American and Rastafarian symbols and a restaurant of African and Caribbean cuisine, about 45, St Louis, MO, 25.09.2015
138. Ethiopian man, sweeper in a department store, about 40, New York, NY, 04.10.2015

**'ALL OF THEM ARE OUR ANCESTORS':  
AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN ELEMENTS  
IN CUBAN RELIGION<sup>1</sup>**

*Olga B. Khristoforova<sup>2</sup>*

Russian State University for the Humanities  
Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy  
and Public Administration

**Introduction**

On a warm evening in January 2015 signora Vivian, the owner of a little gift shop in downtown Havana, said, pointing out the *orisha*<sup>3</sup> figurines on the shelves among other souvenirs: 'These are our ancestors'. The wooden figurines of African deities were hard to spot among the beer-can toy cars, seashell jewelry, rag dolls, maracas and Che Guevara t-shirts. 'This is Chango, this is Our Lady de Cobre, and this is Cacique<sup>4</sup> ' – 'And he is your ancestor too?' – I asked, looking at the image of a Native American man in a feathered headdress. – 'Yes, all of them are our ancestors!' (FD 2015: 68).

For signora Vivian the images of the *orisha* are not just souvenirs to be sold to tourists; she, like other members of her extended family, is a *santero*, a follower of Santeria (from Spanish *santo*, 'saint'). Her personal *orisha*, or *santo*, is Obatala, the creator of man, the patron deity of intelligence, perception and spiritual love. Vivian's nephew, who was also helping around the shop, is also devoted to Obatala, her sister's patron is Oshun, the deity of rivers and love, and her niece has recently been initiated as an adept, also a devotee ('daughter') of Osun. In Vivian's shop one can buy bead necklaces and bracelets in various colors associated with a certain *orisha*<sup>5</sup>, as well as other devotional articles.

Next time I saw Vivian was in December 2015, soon after Christmas. She talked a lot about celebrating Christmas with her family – they went to mass, than feasted on a roast piglet, had a picnic by the sea.

Both spiritual and everyday life of Vivian, her family and neighbors, and most other Cubans, is made up of elements so different that their combinations seems, to an outsider at least, to be self-

contradictory. The cultural elements brought here by the people from various geographic and cultural areas, while differing in many respects, had, over the centuries, fit together so closely, that the resulting whole somewhat resembles a patchwork quilt – motley, colorful, yet strong enough to keep one warm and comfortable.

The ‘patchwork quilt’ metaphor works quite well not just for the Afro-Cuban religion of Santería, but for other Afro-Atlantic religions as well (Voodoo on Haiti and in the southern U.S., Candomblé and Umbanda in Brazil, and others); the metaphor would fit practically any discussion of syncretic beliefs and religious practices emerging at the intersection of different cultural systems. The circumstances leading to such cultural overlap may be very different: the intercultural interaction may be peaceful or violent, the contacting cultures may be more or less closely related (typologically, linguistically, ideologically). All those circumstances determine the specifics of the formation of a ‘shared language’ and of the eventual result of that process. Syncretization is not always a result of a spontaneous recognition of similarities between different symbolic systems, it often begins with symbolic acts of resistance, with a conscious effort to hide ‘our’, to masquerade it as ‘theirs’ – especially in situations of violent cultural subjugation and drastic differences between the clashing cultures in terms of access to political and economic resources.

This chapter examines the origins and the formation of the symbolic space inhabited by contemporary Cubans, or at least a quarter of the island’s population – the 3 million people who, according to the census, follow Santería (Tishkov 1998: 824)<sup>6</sup>. From which elements was that symbolic space constructed? What was the nature, the goals and the mechanisms of this construction? How did the santero worldview coexist with the Catholic one and with the authorities in colonial and post-colonial times, and how did it function in post-revolutionary era, how did it coexist with the official government ideology? What is happening to this symbolic universe now, in the post-socialist age?

The issues of origins of Afro-Cuban religions and their symbolism were examined in classic works by Fernando Ortiz, Melville Herskovits, Alfred Métraux, Lidya Cabrera. William Bascom, Romulo Lachatanere, Natalia Bolívar-Arostegui (Ortiz 1906, 1950, 1984; Herskovits 1937, 1966; Métraux 1959; Cabrera 1970, 1974; Bascom 1944, 1950, 1972, 1980; Lachatanere 2007 (1938, 1942); Bolívar 1990); the subject was

also explored by Russian scholars (Lavretskii 1967; Aleksandrenkov 1998, 1999; Dannenberg 2011: 150–160, 2011a: 144–151, 2014). Recently, several authors have explored the social aspects of Afro-Cuban religions (Wedel 2004; Wirtz 2007), and the role of Santería in shaping the Cuban identity and cultural memory (Brown 2003; Wirtz 2014a). Besides that, there are publications by santeros themselves which present a point of view from inside the tradition (for example (Kanizares 2005); narratives by santeros are collected in (Robaina 2008)).

We will, of course, draw from existing research on the subject, relating it to our own materials (interviews, observations, artifacts), collected in Cuba in 2013–2016 (Matanzas, Havana, Trinidad, Cárdenas, Guanabacoa and Regla) and in Nigeria in 2018.

### **The religious system in Africa and in the diaspora**

The destruction of a religious tradition can be gradual and can be caused by a whole complex of evolutionary factors, but it can also be a result of cultural revolutions and social catastrophes. Eventually, new cultural forms emerge from the ruins of the old ones, new traditions are formed, often utilizing elements of the old ones and cementing those fragments with new interpretations, which appear seemingly from nowhere. Such situations are undoubtedly interesting to researchers, since they reveal the basic mechanisms of stabilization and transformation of traditions.

An ‘accidental experiment’ of the subject was conducted in the New World. The destruction of a socio-cultural reality and an attempt to quickly replace it with another one (for purely economic reasons) have led – as an unintended consequence – to the emergence of hybrid constructs, drawing both forms and meanings from a variety of sources.

Like other syncretic religions, the Cuban Santería includes elements from several mythological and ritual systems, including Catholicism, which was deliberately spread among the enslaved populations, and was, therefore, perceived by them in a very specific light, and the fragments of West African religious systems. It is important to remember that the enslaved Africans belonged to different ethnic and social groups; Cuban enslaved population consisted primarily of the Yoruba people (members of a widespread group of related ethnic groups speaking the Yoruba language), the Fon and Ewe people (Gbe

linguistic cluster of the Niger-Congo language family), and the Bantu-speaking Congolese. All three groups had distinct mythological systems (not to mention the regional variations within each of them). The enslaved were primarily commoners, but there were some ritual specialists among them. In the 14–18th centuries, several city-states existed in West Africa (Ife, Oyo, Edo), all with a well-developed state religion, the elements of which were transferred to the New World (though in a limited fashion – the enslaved were usually young, so even those initiated into the Ifa religion were most likely only familiar with its primary teachings, and experienced priests – *babalawos* – were probably extremely rare among the enslaved). The political decline in West Africa had affected the religious system as well, so later the newly arriving enslaved Africans brought altered versions of the same beliefs and practices, which further transformed the traditions already taking shape in the colonies. This constant supply of ‘fresh blood’ prevented the religious and cultural situation in the colonies from stabilizing, and it never ran short until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (slavery was abolished in the region only in 1886), though even today Santería spiritual leaders, the *babalawos*, still consider Africa their spiritual homeland, and continue communicating with African priests, organizing mutual visits to support the tradition. For example, one of our informants from Matanzas, *babalawo* Carol, has showed us photos of himself with Nigerian priests and books on the Ifa tradition published in Nigeria which he uses in his practice.

For a long time, ritual practices of Africa on Cuba were disjointed, and only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century attempts were made to unify them. The need for unification was caused primarily by pragmatic necessity – the growth in economic well-being and mobility of former slaves had revealed the scale of differences in local ritual practices: for example, the initiations conducted in one area were considered ‘invalid’ in another area, and the adept was required to undergo initiation again. The unification of the Yoruba religious practices was conducted by Octavio Sama, a *santero* from Matanzas, who had personally encountered exactly the situation described above (thus his popular nickname-title, *Obadimejí*, ‘the twice crowned’), and a priestess from Havana name Latuan, who forced him to undergo a second initiation, devoting him to the orisha Agayu, during which the oracle had proclaimed that he was already devoted to Oshun. Afterwards, they

started to develop a unified ritual system together (Ramos 2003: 51–55; Bolivar 1990: 23–26).

Adding socioeconomic and political transformations of Cuba to the above-mentioned factors of influx of African practices and conscious efforts to unify Santeria, all of which had a profound influence on the religious system and the disappearance and emergence of its elements, we can conclude that Santeria today is a complex construct, aptly described by our ‘patchwork quilt’ metaphor. Just like such a quilt, the system of beliefs and practices consists of differing elements which, nonetheless, fit together, and the system as a whole is a coherent structure well suited to its goals of satisfying the adepts’ spiritual needs.

Afro-Christian religions of the New World perfectly demonstrate, firstly, the transformation of a religious system in a new context, secondly the mechanisms of syncretization, and thirdly the invention of new cultural forms and meanings, typologically similar to similar processes in other parts of the world.

The Yoruba religious system consisted of several key components.

1. The cosmological scheme and the pantheon<sup>7</sup>. The world is split into two parts – *ikole orun*, the spiritual, invisible world, and *ikole aye* – the visible material one. Within it exist 801 *irunmole* (Yoruba for ‘pure spirit’), 400 of them in *orun*, and 400 traveling between *orun* and *ae* worlds; Elegua, the trickster and the keeper of pathways, has a unique position. The head of the pantheon (though existing outside of it) is Olodumare (in other incarnations known as Olorun and Olofi) – *deus otiosus*, the lord of all that is, who ordered the creation of the world and then retired, avoiding participating in its affairs. Other deities are emanations of his benevolent power (*ashe*), the most important among them being Obatala, the creator of mankind, his wife Odudua, the goddess of earth and fertility, Orunmila (Orula), the god of prophecy and destiny; Olokun, the lord of the ocean; Ogun, the lord of war and iron; Shango, the god of thunder. Lower-order deities – the *orisha* – were considered patron deities of particular natural features. Each Yoruba city-state had its own variation of the pantheon, closely linked with the veneration of the local king and local deities.

2. The cult of the divine ruler, supported by the court priests and closely linked with the cult of Shango, the thunder deity. To this day, the house where Shango, the third *alafin* (ruler) of Oyo, had passed



away, is preserved in his hometown. The building where the coronation ceremony for new alafins is conducted is located next to that house. During interregnum periods, the ‘crown of Shango’, the symbol of alafin’s authority, is kept in this coronation building. The keeper of this set of sacred sites and objects is the Onomaba babalu, the head priest of Shango.

3. Priesthood was a complex hierarchical organization of priests of three ranks with multiple internal gradations within each rank.

4. The Ifa divination system, consisting of 256 *Odu* – binary symbol combinations and poetic commentaries, collected in the Book of Ifa (an English translation can be found in (Bascom 1969)). For divination, a string of eight concave seeds (*opele*) or palm nuts (*ikin*) was used. By throwing the string, the babalawo (Yoruba: ‘father of mysteries’) would provide a combination of symbols, which pointed to a specific *odu* (a chapter in the Book of Ifa) he should read to the person asking the oracle. The priest would interpret the *odu*, which were always ambiguous, relying on his *ashe*. The babalawos were considered servants of Orunmila, though in this case he served as mediator between the people and Olodumare, the creator of the Ifa system.

5. The ancestor worship, including yearly community celebrations, *egungun* (Yoruba ‘ancestors’) specialized priests who represents the ancestors during those celebrations, would become possessed by the spirits of the departed.

In the diaspora context, all these aspects show signs of transformation.

1a. The pantheon is contracted and streamlined, the number of deities doesn’t exceed ten, all of them termed *orisha/oricha* (hence Regla de Ocha, ‘the rule [or the order] of orisha’). All *orisha* are considered relatives or in-laws (the idea which does not exist in African tradition and was probably born out of the enslaved people’s desire for unity, closeness and a sense of community, see [Kanizares 2005: 39]). The more ‘popular’ ones are the so-called *santos reglamentarios*, or ‘standard saints’, or *siete potencias*, ‘the seven powers’ – Obatala, Elegua, Ogun, Shango, Oshun, Yemaya, Oya (the majority of adepts are devoted to one of them<sup>8</sup>). The Cuban Santeria rituals omit such popular Yoruba deities as Odudua, Oba, Osumare and some others. Local deities are replaced by ‘thematic’ ones – for example, Oshun, the deity of river Oshun in Nigeria, became the *orisha* of rivers in general and

love; Oya, the patron deity of the Oya river (a feeder of the Niger river) became a powerful orisha of wind and the mistress of the cemeteries; Yemaya, also a river deity became the orisha of the sea. The Cuban deities were separated from both geographical and historical realities of Africa: Odudua, the divine ruler, the first alafin of Oyo, is seen in the Cuban context solely as a deity (as opposed to a deified human being), the wife of Obatala (it is interesting to note that in Nigeria in 2018 the *ohoro* – the ruler – of the city of Shao had told us that Odudua was not a deity at all, but a man, the founder of the Oyo dynasty and the ancestor of all Yoruba rulers).

Most orishas have one, or several, Catholic syncretic counterparts, seen not as their ‘masks’ (which was probably the case in times of slavery), but as their true ‘faces’. The ways of visualizing the deities have also changed: in addition to sacred stones in special vessels<sup>9</sup> (or even instead of them) and African temple sculptures, the altars are often decorated with wooden, and in recent years plastic *ire* figurines, or *muñecos* (Spanish for ‘dolls’), Christian paintings and sculptures. Each orisha has a color scheme associated with them, used to distinguish the *ire* and to recognize adepts in everyday life (through the color of clothing, necklaces or bracelets). Some ‘Native American’ figures have also entered the pantheon (for example, Cacique Guerrero), and they share the ‘ancestor’ status with the orisha of African origin (though they do not have Catholic parallels)<sup>10</sup>.

2a. The divine ruler cult had disappeared; Shango is very popular as the orisha of thunder and lightning; among his *secretos*, stored on the altar in a sacred vessel, are *piedra de rayo*, the ‘lightning stones’ (similar to ‘thunder arrows’ in Slavic cultures) – belemnites, stone arrowheads, or just unusually shaped stones. Shango the ruler is known only to the most educated among the adepts, primarily the *babalawos*, but even they talk about Shango the man as a separate entity, a historical figure named after the deity).

3a. The structure of a Santeria community of worshipers (Yoruba: *ile*, literally ‘home’) is simplified. The head of the congregation is the *babalawo*. Among the members of the community, who have already undergone the *cariocha* initiation ritual (Spanish: *asiento*, from *asentar* ‘to help sit down, to settle’)<sup>11</sup>, are several other high-ranking individuals: the *italero*, in charge of initiation ceremonies, the *babalocha* (i.e. *babaloricha*, Yoruba: ‘father of the orisha’), someone capable of

initiating others, the *iyalocha* ('mother of the orisha'), with similar functions. In a separate category are the *iyawo* (literally 'bride') – the neophytes during the year following the initiation. They always wear white and must observe a number of special prohibitions (according to *ita* – a set of rules, taboos and divination, provided to the initiate by the *italero*). There are also lower-ranking adepts, who have not yet undergone the *cariocha* – servants of Elegua or *guerreros* (the warrior orishas Ogun, Oshosi and Osun), and *collares* (adepts entitled to wearing sacred necklaces, attributes of the orisha). Those adepts may never undergo a full initiation – their fate in this regard is determined by the *babalawo* through divination. Not only the neophytes, but all Cuban Santeria followers are distinguished by special external symbols in everyday life – necklaces and bracelets, certain color combinations in clothing. In Nigeria we have not observed any such external features in everyday life. On the contrary, followers of traditional beliefs are characterized by the absence of such external signs of their religion (while their neighbors do have those – specific clothing for Muslims, wearing the cross for Christians). Neophytes wearing white is a specifically Cuban invention, interpreted, on the one hand, as a symbol of purity and spirituality (white is the color of Obatala, the creator of humanity, the orisha of spiritual love, associated with *Our Lady of Mercy*), and, on the other hand, as a reminder of the clothing worn by slaves, the members of the first Santeria communities.

4a. The Ifa system does exist, but it is not ubiquitous. During the slavery era it was practically non-existent: the attempts to re-create it were only made by three priests born in Nigeria in the late 19th century (Dannenberg 2014: 226–227). The *babalawos* today retain their connection to Nigeria as a way to keep their art at a certain professional level. Opele or cowrie shells are used for divination – which is simpler than the Ifa system. The Ifa system has 256 *odu*, while divination using cowrie shells only requires 16 *letre* (Spanish 'letter', similar to *odu*). Any *santero* can use cowrie shells for divination, though *letres* 13 through 16 can only be interpreted by a *babalawo*. The most popular method of divination is *obi*, using four pieces of a coconut shell, which is permitted even to the non-initiated (in Africa *obi* means the cola nut).

5a. The changes in social structure (the destruction of tribal and clan systems, the emergence of new types of communities and new social identities) have changed the ancestor worship traditions as well.

Yearly collective celebrations have disappeared, though familial rituals of ‘feeding’ the ancestors, the *egun*, do still exist, as well as the special altars for performing those rituals. Egun, or *los muertos* (‘the dead’), are more or less individual divine patrons of a lower rank than the orisha. The Egungun ritual has disappeared, partially replaced by the spirit mediums participating in the funerary rites.

The list of changes goes on – initiation and sacrificial rites have changed, the number of musical instruments used in ceremonies was reduced, Cuban rituals only employ the bata drums, the ritual language has changed – prayers, or recitations used to contact the deities (*oriki* in West Africa) in diaspora are known as *rezo* (prayers), a set of phrases, often not understood by the adepts themselves, in a corrupted Yoruba language with Spanish elements; there are multiple other differences as well.

The role of a social unit of orisha worship in the diaspora is played by new types of communities – ‘brotherhoods of the ship’, the *cabildos*, sort of ‘ethnic clubs’ created by the enslaved for communication, mutual assistance, organizing celebrations (overall, communities modeled on those the slave owners had based on shared origins from different parts of the Iberian peninsula) (see Dridzo 1995: 231–246). Establishment of such communities was supported by the slave owners, who welcomed any social fragmentation among the enslaved, but the communities quickly became de-facto religious ones<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, African deities, also impacted by the contact with Christianity and its idea of patron saints, had transformed into something similar to those. The process, resulting from the emergent religious situation of the colonies, probably eased the adaptation of the enslaved Africans to that situation. We must also consider as a possible contributing factor the quick disappearance of African languages in active use and the adoption of Spanish as koine within months after landing on the island, if not faster. It should be noted, though, that ritual formulas and songs in the Lukumi language (as Yoruba was known to Cubans) were preserved.

Later, after the abolition of slavery and the dissolution of the *cabildos*, the idea of a divine patron of a community had given way to deities seen primarily as individual spiritual patrons who can help in solving personal problems. Likewise, the African system of clan, village and state deities has transformed into a system of personal ‘guardian angels’ and ‘head owners’. *Santeros* not only serve their or-

isha by performing rituals of worship and ‘feeding’ (*ebbo*), but literally embody them, and not exclusively during the rituals, but in everyday life too: their names are two-part, the first part being the name of the patron orisha, they wear specific attributes associated with the patron (necklaces, bracelets), they must observe certain prohibitions and lead a godly life as befits the ‘saints’.

Such systems have been termed in anthropological literature ‘religion of misfortune’ (similar to, for example to Turner’s *drums of affliction* (Turner 1968)); they have been found and described in Africa (though not among the Yoruba) – the *zar* and *bori* in Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan and Nigeria (Lewis et al 1990; Boddy 1989; Besmer 1983), the *hauka* in Mali (Stoller 1995). Such cults and religions emerge primarily in acculturation zones during periods of drastic socioeconomic changes. The followers are primarily drawn to them by personal problems – today those are often health issues, legal troubles, unemployment, financial difficulties, matrimonial or reproductive issues.

Being devoted to a deity (to the point of periodical ritual possession) is supposed to fix those individual problems, but leaving the congregation is difficult if not impossible. Typologically this is similar to the devotion of an animal to a deity among certain peoples in Asia – the horse, for example, or, among northern nomads, the deer. Use of such animal is linked with multiple prohibitions, including the refusal to ride the animal associated with the spirit, since it is considered the steed of the deity. In terms of our subject the comparison is all the more interesting, since the adepts of Santeria (and other African and Afro-Christian religions (see Besmer 1983: 7)), are called *caballo de dios*, ‘horse of the god’, and the possession is described metaphorically as *montar el caballo*, ‘riding’.

Especially interesting in the process of transformation of communal religious system into an individualized ‘religion of misfortune’ is the way in which African deities became associated with Catholic saints. We shall first consider the pragmatic aspects of the process, and then the semantic ones.

## **Multiple religions belonging or symbolic resistance?**

### **The pragmatics of syncretization**

The notion of syncretism was first applied to African-American traditions by Melville Herskovits (Herskovits 1937), who understood it as

a naturally emerging interconnection and interweaving of Catholic and African elements in religious practices of African-American people of the New World (Haiti, Cuba, Brazil). Herskovits' idea of syncretism is similar to the concept of Two Faiths in old Russian culture, which also implies the mixing of elements of Christian and pagan beliefs, without those who participate in the tradition being aware of any contradictions.

But how random was this process? Were the enslaved truly unaware of it, as Herskovits believed? Some data allows us to suggest a different interpretation.

Raul Kanizares, who is both a researcher studying Santeria and a practicing santero, describes the following account from his personal history. Once, then he was seven years old and still an *iyawo* (neophyte), he was praying to the statue of Our Lady of Mercy. 'My *padrino* (a spiritual mentor in Santeria, lit. 'godfather') approached me. 'I am praying to Obatala' – I said. The old man slowly raised his eyes to the statue, then looked at me and said softly: 'No, my son, that is not Obatala'. He took me to a room where he kept, in soup bowls, the orisha stones. He raised the lid on the white soup bowl containing the Obatala stones, and said excitedly: 'This is Obatala!' Seeing the confused look on my face, he clarified: 'Obatala can only be in the otan (stones), or here' – and he tapped me on the forehead lightly' (Kanizares 2005: 26). The same author has recorded a legend once told by his grandmother: 'In colonial times santeros gave a church in Trinidad a gift – a huge, very expensive statue of St. Barbara. The parish priest was very happy to receive such a gift, and ordered the statue to be carried around the town during holiday parades. He didn't know that the santeros have secretly sanctified the statue, giving it the name Shango, and hid some ingredients that gave it power within the statue. So, when the statue was brought out on parade, santeros could worship openly, and the Catholic authorities wouldn't know about it. It doesn't matter if the story is true. What is important is that according to it in a certain area an orisha was associated with a Catholic saint, knowingly and deliberately. The santeros used this sort of a cypher, a code, to be able to worship publicly' (Kanizares 2005: 31).

The 'cypher' or 'code' metaphor was used earlier by Judith Gleason: 'After arriving to Cuba the orisha had to, to survive, hide behind the masks of certain Catholic saints <...> and some aspects of Christ

or Virgin Mary. It didn't matter that the figures of the Christian pantheon had little in common with African powers who had taken their appearance so unceremoniously. An image of a tower or a sword, poverty or sickness, just a couple of shared traits were enough – the common elements were very superficial. *Yoruba had found a code* they could use to preserve their beliefs and rituals, which in other areas were banned, eradicated, forgotten' (Gleason 1975: 206–207); the opinion is also shared by Migene Gonzalez-Wippler (2004: 3).

The conversion of slaves to Christianity should not be understood simplistically: the missionaries have brought the Scripture to nations and the latter understood it in their terms of their own worldview. On both sides there were hidden political motives as well – for slave owners converting the enslaved and separating them into ethnic groups was a way of preventing possible uprisings, while for the enslaved accepting the rules established by the owners became a form of symbolic resistance<sup>13</sup>. Kanizares, while talking about the intermarriage of traditions, prefers the term 'dissimulation' (lat. *dissimulatio* – 'hiding, securing') to 'syncretism': sources inside the Santeria tradition itself clearly indicate the deliberate nature of dissimulation. The Cuban syncretism was formed by the enslaved Africans associating their own deities with Catholic saints as a way of securing the ability to worship freely'<sup>14</sup> (Kanizares 2005: 31), see also (Dannenberg 2011: 150–152).

William Bascom, a British anthropologist more restrained in his interpretations, describes his own encounters with the Cuban Santeria – lithographs and figurines of the saints were always displayed openly in the homes of the believers, while the sacred stones, the embodiment of the orisha, containing their ashe, were well hidden and Bascom had only learned of their existence later. He also notes that if an image of a saint starts to fade, it is simply replaced by a new one, while the sacred stones are treated differently, like living beings (Bascom 1950: 65) (we should add that the stones are sold in Santeria shops together with the figurines of the saints, but, unlike the latter, the stones are then 'ensouled' during a special ritual). On the one hand, this may be the sign of the primary nature of the 'African faces' of the deities and may serve as a proof of the dissimulation hypothesis, on the other hand it may be just a sign of different practices for handling different ritual objects. In Catholic churches images of the saints are displayed openly, they are supposed to be addressed in prayer and even touched,

while the orisha stones are always kept hidden, only revealed on special occasions – then an initiate is introduced to the orisha, the anointing with *omiero* (a ritual herbal infusion) and the ‘feeding’ of the deities (sprinkling the stones with sacrificial animal blood) during the holidays.

In any case, the association between various cultural elements had moved, apparently, ‘upwards’, spreading from the enslaved population – they were the ones looking for similarities between the traditional deities and the Catholic saints they became familiar with in the colonies. The purpose of such an association was, it seems, not just the deliberate ‘masking’ of forbidden practices, but the replacement of important elements absent in the enslaved society, and the adoption of elements of the dominant ‘white’ culture. For example, gypsum figurines of the Virgin Mary and the saints had easily replaced the African wooden statues, absent on the island, and were later replaced by plastic figurines, all those seen as acceptable forms of *ire*, images of the deities. In the late 19 century wealthy former slaves placed the attributes of the orisha not in clay pots in the corner of the house, but in porcelain soup bowls in glass-fronted cupboards; the image of Elegua near the entrance to the house was placed not on the floor, but on a special stand. European-style attire for both men and women quickly became fashionable, and was used in ritual context as well; elements of music and choreography were adopted, etc.

Melville Herskovits, while describing the culture of Haiti, has arranged elements according to a scale of ‘intensity of Africanisms’. Technology and visual arts he considered to be ‘mostly un-African’, language and social organization ‘somewhat African’, while religion, magic, music and folklore were ‘very African’ (Herskovits 1966: 52). At the same time, both other research and our own field data show that the elements Herskovits saw as ‘very African’ could have been borrowed from the European culture, but interpreted in ‘an African way’. The melodies used in songs, for example, show similarities with European music, though barely audible over the beat of the drums and the Lucumi lyrics. Cuban religious practices can combine African and European elements in various ways based on a number of factors – the origins and the place of residence of a santero, their social environment, the degree of initiation. As Kanizares notes, the higher a person’s position within the religious hierarchy, the more African their



practice becomes (including more ritual texts, drumbeats and dances of the orisha, animal sacrifice, African attire, all the way to complete rejection of the term Santería, replaced by ‘Regla Lukumi’ or ‘Regla Ocha-Ifa’); the uninitiated and the neophytes show more inclination to Catholicism-infused practices (attending the mass, praying in Spanish, using figurines of the saints to decorate home altars etc.) (Kanizares 2005: 33–34). It may be said that like ‘popular Christianity’ with its pagan elements, the ‘popular Santería’ seems to be full of Christian elements and is perceived with some derision by the leaders (babalawos) and higher-grade adepts.

We must stress that today the prestige of everything ‘African’ in religion and folklore has grown significantly on Cuba, even compared to the second half of the 20 century, when the socialist government was actively fighting the racial discrimination (despite all the efforts, Afro-Cuban population, mostly poor, mostly urban and generally inhabiting the Western regions of the country, still has lower social status than any other group). The reasons for the growing prestige of ‘Africanness’ are both the general global trend towards the actualization of ethnicity and ‘returning to roots’ in the last third of the 20 century, and the specific Cuban situation of the 1990s, when financial assistance from the USSR had ceased. During this time of economic difficulties, known as *el periodo especial* (‘special period’), everything previously repressed became an important part of the tourism industry. For many tourists the signs of ‘Cubanness’ were not only rum, coffee, cigars and black corrals, but more exotic features as well – socialist state attributes (from slogans to monuments and state-owned shops) and religious practices (fortunetellers crowding the squares of Havana, folk music concerts imitating Santería rituals and the rituals themselves, now more accessible to outsiders). The growing openness of Afro-Cuban practices and communities was supported by the general increase in freedom of worship. Despite the Constitution of the Republic guaranteeing the freedom of worship, in reality ever since the 1960s members of the Communist party could not openly practice religion. Practices such as baptising children, going to church, wearing santero attributes or consulting a babalawo were all done in secret, and were accompanied by the constant fear of anonymous delations. In the early 1990s the unofficial ban was lifted, and new churches, temples and prayer houses of various denominations started to appear, inclu-

ding the Orthodox Kazan cathedral in Havana (construction started in 2004, supported by Fidel Castro himself, who suggested building an Orthodox cathedral as a sign of Cuban-Russian friendship; consecrated in 2008 by Kirill, the Metropolitan of Smolensk and the future Patriarch, the ceremony attended by Raul Castro, the current head of state). In 1998 Cuba was visited by the Pope John Paul II, in 2004 – by Patriarch Bartholomew, and in 2016 – by Pope Francis and the Patriarch of Moscow Kirill simultaneously (the two religious leaders had a meeting in the Havana airport).

Open Santeria practice was now permitted, which was used by the Cubans themselves and by the visitors to the island, and not only Cuban migrants from Miami or Mexico, who prefer to undergo initiation in Cuban communities because it is cheaper than in the USA<sup>15</sup>, but non-Cuban visitors as well, from Latin America, Canada and Europe.

Such a demand for exoticism and spirituality had commercialized the Cuban folklore movement and the Afro-Cuban religious practices. Often the same groups practice both real rituals and their theatrical recreations during folklore festivals or as a performance for tourists – in Matanzas, for example, we had a chance to meet members of two such groups, ‘Muñequitas de Matanzas’ (‘The Dolls from Matanzas’) and ‘Callejón de las tradiciones’ (‘The Lane of Traditions’) (the latter is organized by young aspiring artists, white and mixed-race, who draw inspiration for their projects from African folk art and religious practices).

The demand for the exotic had, therefore, seriously impacted the process of the African culture (including Santeria) being integrated into the post-socialist Cuban identity, directed both inwards and outwards<sup>16</sup>. Consequently, the Afro-Cuban religion has drawn the attention of the white population of the island, which earlier – in both ‘Catholic’ and ‘atheist’ eras – often treated the beliefs and rituals of the Afro-Cubans with caution, if not fear, and disgust. Consequently, the numbers of santeros are growing, and the new followers are not just the urban poor looking for a way to solve their everyday problems, there are also educated young people exploring their spirituality among them (it should be noted that earlier, both before the revolution of 1959 and after it, though for different ostensible reasons, belonging to Afro-Cuban religions was a hindrance for the improvement of ones social status).

However, this new ‘internal demand’ for Afro-Cuban religions is superficial; at its core the tradition is still driven by the desire to achieve prosperity (health, high income, success etc.) with the help of the orisha. That is exactly the reason why African deities still wear their ‘white’ masks, even though it would be possible today to discard them: if the goal of a certain religious practice is a material one<sup>17</sup>, denying the help of Catholic saints would seem unreasonable at least. This is what an author of a publication in ‘Negro Mundo’ thinks (very much in the spirit of the more general ideas about the differences between Christianity and paganism): ‘The Catholic faith is not as ‘immediate’ as the Yoruba religion. Though it is as kind, patient and spiritual. In Catholicism, a person asking for help can never be certain that help will be received. In Yoruba religion, the person can know immediately if the answer is a positive or a negative one. One might say that in Catholicism you pray and hope, while in Santería you receive a quick answer’ (Larra Lomas 2007).

That’s why one sees so many *iyawos* praying in Catholic churches, near the statues of Our Lady of Regla or St. Barbara, and on December, 17, the day of St. Lazarus, hundreds of pilgrims dressed in purple or hemp clothes (the favorite color and fabric of Babalu-Aye, the healer orisha) travel to Rincon, a town near Havana where the temple of St. Lazarus is located.

Santería is a typical ‘religion of misfortune’, with common people (*aleyo*) using the help of the babalawos and santeros to avoid or mitigate unfortunate circumstances in their everyday lives; initiations are caused primarily by serious personal problems. One of our informants, Lianni from Havana, a mixed-race young woman of 27, became seriously ill, but got, according to her words, better soon after her initiation as a devotee of Shango (FD 2015: 52–53); Ernesto from Matanzas, a white man of 55, became a santero at the age of about thirty, because his musical career didn’t take off, and his family life was troubled. The oracle said he must undergo an initiation to Shango and marry ‘within his race’. He did exactly that (previously he had three mixed-race wives, but all three marriages fell apart), and his life started to improve. Now he has several children, the youngest son being 5 years old (FD 2014–2015: 10–13). Another informant, a woman of 38 from Pueblo Nuevo (a district of Matanzas) became a devotee of Oshun because she could not conceive a child for some time – ‘and

now, see, the baby is turning three today'. When asked will the child be initiated, the informant replied: 'No, why, everything is alright with her' (FD 2016: 52–53).

So, syncretization can start with the acts of symbolic resistance, as a deliberate attempt to hide one's own religion behind the facade of another one, and continue as an exploration or adoption of foreign elements as signs of prestige – this pathway is characteristic of situations of violent cultural subjugation and significant differences in access to resources between the members of the cultures in contact. Later the deliberate dissimulation and active adoption give way to custom: there is no need to hide anymore, but the Catholic 'masks' remain, because they are seen by most believers not as masks, but as different, Catholic faces of the same deities. An orisha and a saint are two manifestations of the same entity, interchanging according to the place and context of worship, a Catholic church or a Regla da Ocha-Ifa temple, while in domestic altars both aspects can be represented, both the figurines of Virgin Mary, St. Barbara, St. Lazarus etc. and painted clay pots and porcelain soup bowls containing the sacred stones and other attributes of the orisha.

It is interesting to note that some orisha may be visualized (represented on the altar) in both their appearances (Yemaya – Our Lady of Regla, Oshun – Our Lady of Kobre, Obatala – Our Lady of Mercy, Shango – St. Barbara), others – in their 'Catholic' form (Babalu-Aye is always depicted as St. Lazarus – a poor old man accompanied by two dogs), and some – only in their African aspect (Ogun as a kettle with metal items near the entrance to the house).

We must now address the interpretive mechanisms on which the identification of the African and the Christian sacred images is based.

### **The orisha and the saints: Ways of identification**

As Judith Gleason noted in the work cited above, the identification of African deities with Christian saints was based on relatively superficial similarities: 'A tower, a sword, poverty or sickness, one or two common traits – very superficial similarities are enough' (Gleason 1975: 207). The sphere of influence and character of a saint were taken into account (as far as they could be understood from the sermons or religious lithographs), and external attributes, attire and colors, days of celebration as well (Herskovits 1937: 637–638). Some-

thing was inevitably lost in translation, when elements of Christian symbolism were interpreted according to the African systems of meaning. Herskovits provides an example from Haitian voodoo – John the Baptist was either identified with Ogun, or functioned as a separate *loa* of thunder and lightning Jan Baptiste. That would seemingly contradict the popular image of St. John as a child carrying a lamb in his arms. But the association was, according to Herskovits, well-founded – in Dagomean mythology, like in Yoruba tradition, the lamb was a symbol of thunder, petulant and irresponsible like a child. Besides, on Haiti a lamb was a sacrificial animal for the loa of thunder (Herskovits 1966: 325)<sup>18</sup>.

In Cuban tradition the thunder deity is Shango, identified with St. Barbara. Usually the scholars have noted the red and white colors associated with both figures, and their functions – Shango’s explosive temperament is expressed through thunder and lightning, while St. Barbara guards the believers from sudden and unexpected death (Dannenberg 2011: 154) (in the central and eastern regions of the island we recorded testimonials from white locals that during a thunderstorm St. Barbara is usually prayed to, while Shango is completely unknown in this areas). St. Barbara is also used to scare children – she steals them and drains their blood, FD 2014–2015: 53–54). A gender confusion in the dualistic image of Shango and St. Barbara should not be a concern – firstly, many orisha are associated with both genders (Olokun, orisha of the ocean, for example, or Obatala, who, in Yoruba mythology, had split into male and female parts, Odudua and Yemmu, to reproduce and continue their bloodline), and secondly, in *pataki* (a mythological story) of Shango there is an episode in which he flees from pursuing enemies disguised as a woman. But, as far as we know, another reason for the identification of Shango with St. Barbara was not mentioned in any scholarly works so far – the first is considered the legendary king (alafin) of the state of Oyo and his traditional attribute is a two-headed axe, while St. Barbara is often depicted in Catholic sculpture crowned and carrying a sword.

Ogun in Cuban tradition is the patron of warriors and blacksmiths, the orisha of mountains and iron, and is identified primarily with St. Peter, who is often depicted carrying a metal key.

Obatala, the creator of humanity (Yoruba ‘the king in white’ (Dannenberg 2011: 156)), the orisha of spiritual love, clarity, purity,

peace and justice is identified with Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes (Our Lady of Mercy), also dressed in white; Oshun, whose color is yellow – with Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre (Our Lady of Cobre), the patron saint of Cuba (*cobre*, Spanish for ‘copper’, though in Yoruba tradition Oshun is associated with gold). The church dedicated to her is in Villa del Cobre, where copper mines are also located. Another image of the Virgin Mary – Our Lady of Regla, the ‘black Madonna’, the patron saint of Havana, is identified with Yemaya, the orisha of the sea. They are linked by the color blue, but originally the link between them was probably not the color, but the function and their connection to the sea: Our Lady of Regla is the patron of sailors and fishermen, and her cult has spread after a rich merchant from Havana had built a temple dedicated to her right next to the sea, in the town of Regla (nowadays a district of Havana) (Dannenerg 2011: 156).

Elegua, the orisha of entrances and crossroads is identified with different Catholic saints on different grounds: with St. Anthony of Padua, because one of the traditional images of Elegua is similar to St. Anthony as depicted on religious lithographs, a poorly dressed old man with a staff; with St. Peter, the gatekeeper, who, much like Elegua serves as the opener of doors (Herskovits 1937: 637). Besides that, Elegua, sometimes depicted as a child, is also identified with Nino da Atocha (in Catholic Spain and Latin America seen not as one of the martyrs of Antioch, but as Jesus Christ as a child, iconographically – as a child sitting on a throne); the similarity of functions of the medium between the worlds of orisha and humans allows for identification of Elegua with the Anima Sola – a lonely soul in Purgatory.

Babalu-Aye, the healer orisha, is firmly identified with St. Lazarus, from the Evangelical parable of the poor Lazarus and the rich man. He is depicted in lithographs and plastic figurines as an ulcer-ridden old man on crutches, accompanied by two dogs. In Africa Obalu-Aye is a menacing deity of smallpox. According to the pataki, he spread the sickness among humans in a fit of rage, but regretted it later and devoted himself to healing. On Cuba he is considered a caring and merciful healer (probably due to Christian influence (Kanizares 2005: 44)), especially helpful in case of skin disease. On his feast day, December 17, his statues, both in the homes of worshipers and in churches, are decorated with purple covers and crowns, purple candles

are lit in churches, and hundreds of pilgrims travel to Rincon near Havana, where, on the grounds of the first hospital built on Cuba (Hospital de San Lasaro), the temple of St. Lazarus is located.

Oshosi, the patron of hunters and warriors carries (and sometimes is embodied in) a bow and arrows, possibly because of his identification with St. Sebastian, canonically depicted as a young man pierced by arrows. Oshosi's function has evolved in Cuban tradition – he is considered here the *dueño de la cárcel* 'the patron of the prison' and is called upon in case of troubles with the law.

The Ibeyi twins, sons of Shango and Oshun, patrons of children and bringers of luck are identified either with dual images (Sts. Cosmas and Damian being the most popular one, though Sts. Crispin and Crispinian, Sts. Justa and Rufina, Sts. Porphyry and Onesiphorus are used sometimes), or with St. Nicholas, the patron of children.

Orishaoko, the patron of agriculture (depicted with a plough and oxen) is identified with St. Isidore of Seville, the patron of students (depicted with a book and a staff). According to Dannenberg, the reason for this identification is the fact that among the writings of St. Isidore was an agricultural encyclopedia (Dannenberg 2011: 155).

The logic of the identification of Orula/Orunmila with St. Francis is seen primarily in both of them possessing the gift of healing (Dannenberg 2011: 155).

So, the main connection between the African deities and their 'Catholic faces' seems to be the colors and the material attributes. It is almost completely based on the iconographic canon, and the hagiography is not taken into account, unlike the *pataki* – the oral mythological tradition of the Yoruba, which contains, among other things, the legends of the orisha. The feast days tend to join together – each orisha has a day of the week particularly well suited for sacrificial rituals and calling for help, and to this are added the feasts of the saint – December 4 for St. Barbara/Shango, December 17 for St. Lazarus/Babalu-Aye, etc. During these celebrations, many ritual actions connected to visiting a Catholic church are performed. For other orisha those days can be different in different congregations (ile) or they can have multiple such days during a year, depending on what saint or saints the orisha is identified with in a particular ile.

Some orisha may be associated with many saints: Ogun, for example, is identified with St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John the Baptist, St.

Anthony, St. George, the archangels Michael and Rafael; Oshosi – with St. Sebastian, St. Norbert, St. Albert, St. Humbert, St. Michael; Oya – with Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria (Our Lady of Candelaria), Nuestra Señora del Carmen (Our Lady of Mount Carmel), St. Teresa of Jesus (of Avila). The reasons for this are multiple: the lack of a written canon, the secrecy of the practice, the lack of communication between congregations, some immanent qualities of the Yoruba mythology.

Considering the illegality of worship and the deliberate oral-only preservation of the tradition (until mid-20 century), different *ile* or *templos* (Spanish for ‘temple’) were very loosely connected, which led to the emergence of a variety of beliefs and practices – in images, names and genealogies of the deities, and especially evident in specifics of ritual (see (Kanizares 2005: 39), or, for Haiti (Herskovits 1937: 636–637)). This is especially evident for less important deities: if Shango is identified with St. Barbara throughout Cuba, then Orula, the patron of the Ifa divination system and an important one for the *babalawos*, but not for the common adepts (he is never the personal patron of a *santero*) can be identified with different saints in different congregations – St. Francis of Assisi, St. Jose de la Montagne, St. Philip. Different saint can also represent different *caminos* (roads) – faces, or aspects, of the orisha. According to various folk stories and the *pataki* the orisha have different *caminos*, each with its own set of mythological events, names, images and functions of the deities. Ogun, for example, has 44 *caminos*, even more than the number of catholic saints identified with him. During the time then the unified ritual space was emerging (since the late 19 century), the variety was reflected on – both in the oral tradition and later in written sources – and partially reduced, though sometimes the reflection seemed to enhance the variety in certain areas. One of the *Santeria*-related websites, for example, presents the following information: June 13 – day of St. Anthony, day of Ogun Alaguede, the patron of blacksmiths. ‘He is tireless, working through the day and the evening. He can be irritable, reserved and rude; he is the husband of Yemaya Okute’. June 24 – the day of St. John, the day of Ogun Oinle, the master of the land. ‘He is the first to arrive in a new, wild place and settle there to cultivate the land as a farmer’. June 29 – the day of St. Peter, the day of Ogun Arere, the butcher. ‘He is the builder and the designer of the best



weapons for war and the best tools for work. He works wonders with metal. He knows its toughness. He should be asked if one wishes to pen impossible-to-open doors or close, secure and guard the big mysteries of the Ocha'<sup>19</sup>.

The syncretization, which happens in a variety of ways is more than a 'code' which, according to Judith Gleason, the enslaved Lucumi had found to conduct the rituals forbidden by the slave owners – it is a universal mechanism, which can be seen in various areas of the world and in different eras. The interactions of peoples, languages and traditions was always based on finding similarities, often external and superficial ones; the adoption of cultural elements (spontaneous or deliberate) happens through finding familiar traits in unfamiliar entities or ascribing them to such entities.

### **Conclusion**

For most Cubans, Santeria is a natural part of the environment in which they had grown up and in which they still live today, employing the help and advice of santeros and babalawos to solve everyday issues. Both for outsiders and for most believers there is no contradiction between the 'African' and the 'European' faces of their deities. 'Santeros say this is Yemaya, and the catholic church says this is Our Lady of Regla. I believe in her very much', – say a 60 years old woman; 'we are used to calling her Our Lady of Regla, but for me she is an orisha', – says another woman, around 40 years old<sup>20</sup>. The Cubans see nothing unusual in the fact that a Santeria initiation is only available to baptised Catholics, or that the funeral of a santero must be accompanied by nine funeral masses; the amalgamation of two world-views is common and perfectly natural for them. The Catholic priesthood has other views on syncretism (mostly seeing it with a certain anxiety, as a key challenge facing the local church (Dannenberg 2014: 243)), and so does the higher-ranking priesthood of the Regla de Ocha-Ifa. The babalawos see the faith of most Cubans as a 'folk religion', 'made up' by the diaspora, a collection of superstitions and misunderstandings (they do not, however, reflect on their own deliberate creation of a tradition). They base their views on the opinions on the Nigerian Ifa priests. Raul Kanizares cites one such opinion, for example: 'You Cubans are crazy <...> You have corrupted my religion! What gave you the idea that Yemanja (Yemaya) and Osun (Oshun)

are sisters? You're saying that Orunmila (Orula) is a younger brother of Sango (Shango). This is complete nonsense! You do not understand, that Orunmila was present during the creation of the world, while Shango is a human, a historical figure, the fourth (*sic!*) alafin of Oyo? How can I understand you! (Kanizares 2005: 39).

This perception of 'folk religion' has recently become a basis for action. One of the leading babalawos of Cuba, Victor Betancourt Estrada, has organized and led the Ifa Íranlówo movement, aiming to 'cleanse' the Ifa tradition of the Catholic elements and the Spanish influence, to 'restore the Cuban system of faith, its ancient traditions and cultural roots, deformed by syncretism' (Betancourt 1995: 4). There is another organization with similar goals – the Ile Tuntun. Betancourt considers the Cuban Santeria (especially since the early 1990-s, when the government has expanded the freedom of worship and many foreigners began to travel to the island looking for consultations and cheap initiations) has turned into a commercial project. The Santeria rituals are 'inefficient', according to Betancourt, due to commercialization, and the influence of earlier processes – including the loss of some 'original knowledge' of the ancient African Ifa tradition in the diaspora, the knowledge his organization is supposed to reclaim, primarily through contacts with African priests and visits by Cuban babalawos to Nigeria for initiation and training. The fact that the modern Ifa tradition in Nigeria is not the same as the 'original religion' of the Ile-Ife state, the 'ancestral homeland' of the Yoruba, doesn't seem to concern the babalawos – they believe that the African tradition preserves the 'original knowledge' (ishehe), because it was passed down through generations 'correctly' in terms of preserving the ritual system.

But the complexity of the Cuban religious situation is not limited to the aforementioned confrontation between the African traditions and Catholicism. For example, an important part of the modern Santeria is the Kardecist Spiritism (following the religious and philosophical doctrines of Allan Kardec, which emerged in France in mid-19 century and later achieved a wide popularity in Latin America). We have briefly mentioned the common elements of the two systems: the image of the Native American – the Cacique, *boveda* altar-tables covered with white clothes, where the images of the deceased relatives are kept, together with a crucifix, candles, glasses of clean water according to the number of souls being venerated, and the role of Spiritist

mediums in the funerary ritual, where they have replaced the *egungun*. We should also mention the dolls in recognizable white-and-blue dresses, representing one of the popular spirits – *La Gitana* ('The Gypsy') (which can easily be confused with an image of Yemaya); or the black plastic dolls in clothing of various colors, representing not the orisha, but the nameless spirits of the dead, *los muertos*, dedicated to an orisha and serving as spirit guides or guardians. Those elements may be present in the homes of the santeros (though they are not traditionally 'necessary' and can be absent), or they may bear no connection to Santeria attributes, especially in the homes of white Cubans, primarily on the Eastern side of the island: Spiritism came to Cuba in late the 19 – early 20th century from Jamaica, the Canaries, Florida, Mexico and other regions of North and Latin America, primarily carried over by white migrants, and was initially confined to a social cluster entirely different from the one occupied by Santeria. And, even though after the abolition of slavery, the war of independence from Spain, the revolutions and coups of the 20th century, those older social borders are not as clearly defined as they once were, it is still said that 'all santeros are spiritists, but not all spiritists are santeros' (Kani-zares 2005: 50). There are other religious traditions which interact with Santeria to some extent: Regla de Palo (Palo Monte) (the Congo tradition), the Abakua secret society (the Efic and Ibibio tradition), and the currently almost extinct Regla Iyessa (Yoruba tradition from a different region), Regla de Arara (Eve and Fon tradition). Among the European traditions other than Catholicism, there are more than 50 protestant churches (often in much more active confrontation with Santeria than the Catholic church), the Jehova's Witnesses, the Freemasons (of the Great Lodge, which never dissolved on Cuba, currently more than 24 thousand people), and a small number of Ashkenazi Jews (Dannenberg 2014: 245–271). Among the migrants from Asia there are Muslims and Buddhists. Studying the relations of all those traditions with the Cuban Santeria is a subject for a separate study.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is an expanded version of the article previously published in Russian: Khristoforova O.B. 2019. 'All of them are our ancestors': Building from 'fragments' in Cuban Santeria. In Levkievskaya, E.E., and Petrov, N.V. (eds.), *'Fragments' in tradition*. Moscow: Forum-Neolit.

<sup>2</sup> Translated from Russian by Gleb V. Aleksandrov (editors' note).

<sup>3</sup> *The orisha*, or the *santos* – deities in Afro-Cuban religion of *Santería* (also known as *Regla de Ocha-Ifa/Regla de Lucumi*), which had emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is based on the Yoruba religion with Catholic elements. The word comes from the Yoruba language: *ori*, 'head', and *osha*, 'deity'. An *orisha* is a deity capable of 'entering one's head' (*santo de cabecera*, 'saint of the head', or *dueño de la cabeza*, 'master/owner of the head' in Spanish).

<sup>4</sup> Spanish-speaking Cubans do not pronounce the sound 'sh', replacing it with 'ch', so we have often heard 'Chango', 'Ochun', 'oricha' etc. Despite that, everywhere aside from direct quotes from interviews we will use the spelling traditionally used in research literature. Shango – Yoruba god of thunder, identified in *Santería* with St. Barbara; Our Lady del Cobre – the patron saint of Cuba (by decree of Pope Benedict XV, 1916), identified with the *orisha* Oshun; Cacique (Taino/Spanish for 'chief') – 'Native American' *orisha* representing the indigenous population of the island (practically extinct by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the influence of Cuban natives is still visible in the language, the mythology and the anthropological type of modern Cubans).

<sup>5</sup> Necklaces (Yoruba *eleks*, Spanish *collares*) and bracelets (Spanish *pulseras*) are worn by *santeros* as a sign of their connection to the *orishas*. Initially made from seeds or shells and colored, nowadays they are primarily made of colored beads.

<sup>6</sup> These figures are for initiated adepts only; many people sporadically consult the *santeros* or conduct rituals – up to 80% of the island's population (according to the 2010 report by the U.S. Department of State on religious freedom in the world, International Religious Freedom Report, 17.11.2010, URL: <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148748.htm>, accessed June 15, 2019). Even this data, though, is provisional at best – the reports from 2011 and onwards do not give any exact numbers, just mentioning that 'many individuals, particularly in the African Cuban community, practice religions with roots in West Africa and the Congo River Basin, known collectively as *Santería*. These religious practices are commonly intermingled with Catholicism, and some require Catholic baptism for full initiation, making it difficult to estimate accurately their total membership'. The number of Catholics is estimated at 60 to 70% of the population of Cuba (2016 Report on International Religious Freedom: Cuba 15.08.2017, URL: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2016-report-on-international-religious-freedom/cuba> (accessed June 15, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> We base our description of the Yoruba/Lucumi cosmology and pantheon on interviews with *babalawos* and *santeros*, and on the research by Ortiz, Bascom and Lachatanere.

<sup>8</sup> According to the data collected by Lazara Menendes in 1992–1995, primarily in Havana and Matanzas, out of 100 *santeros* interviewed 25 indicated

that their patron is Shango, 22 – Obatala, 16 – Oshun, 11 – Yemaya, 6 – Ogun, 5 (each) – Oya and Elegua, 2 (each) – Agayu and Oshosi, 1 – Babalu-Aye, 5 – refused to answer (Menendez 2002: 338–343) (Agayu, Oshosi and Babalu-Aye are not considered *santos de cabecera*, i.e. they can't 'enter the head' of the adept, their spiritual guidance must be obtained by other means; Babalu-Aye and Agayu can, however, *montar el caballo*, 'ride a horse' – that is, possess the human body during a ritual).

<sup>9</sup> A traditional domestic or temple altar may contain several special pots, painted in the colors of the orisha. Those are used to store *secretos del santo* 'secrets of the saints' – the sacred stones (*otan*), representing the orisha and the latter's attributes. In the 19 – early 20th century in rich houses the altars were organized in *casilleros*, 'glass-fronted cupboards, with *soperas*, soup-bowls replacing the traditional clay pots as containers, and devotional images of the orisha – wooden or plastic *ire* figurines or the figurines of the Virgin Mary and the saints.

<sup>10</sup> Native American figures in the Santeria pantheon are an unusual addition. Given that their sculptural images, like the images of other guiding spirits (not considered orisha), are often present at *boveda* altar-tables in the homes of the Spiritists, it is possible to suggest that they appeared after the influx of American spiritism in the 19th century. See also (Kanizares 2005: 52, 98).

<sup>11</sup> The ritual involves placing ('settling') the orisha (or, in other interpretation, the orisha's ashe) into the head of the initiated.

<sup>12</sup> There are mentions in written sources of African *cabildos* in Havana as early as the 16th century, one of them named after the orisha Shango (*Cabildo Shango*) (Dannenberg 2011: 152).

<sup>13</sup> Confrontations with authority and attempts to preserve forbidden religious practices creates a whole spectrum of tricks to keep within the area of a perceived compromise: mimicry, doublespeak, hidden meanings. Such 'hidden transcripts' (according to James Scott (Scott 1990: 27)) are the foundation of what was known as syncretization in the conceptual language of cultural relativism – at least at the early stages of this process.

<sup>14</sup> An attempt, perfectly natural for a late-20th century anthropologist (and a highly engaged one), to expand the agency of the enslaved Africans in their dealings with the authorities.

<sup>15</sup> In Matanzas we were told that the price of an initiation on Cuba is around 1 thousand U.S. dollars, while in the U.S. it can reach 10 thousand dollars (FD 2016: 41); according to Kanizares, the price of all the rituals required for initiation can reach 5 to 50 thousand dollars (Kanizares 2005: 25).

<sup>16</sup> Since the mid-1990s, there are bands performing folk music using the ritual *bata* drums, such as, for example, 'Obini Bata' or 'Niños en la Frontera Buscando Raíces' ('Children at the border looking for roots'); recently, an international project called 'Sintesis de Cuba' ('Synthesis of Cuba') was organ-

ized, with assistance from the embassies of Cuba in Russia and Ukraine. The project showcases professional dancers performing the dances of the orisha, choreographed by Paul Renaldo, to the music of contemporary composers.

<sup>17</sup> Researchers have noted that the growth in the number of Santeria adepts correlates, among other factors, with a growing crime rate: ‘thieves and bandits’ tried to use the help of the orisha to avoid troubles with the law enforcement (Dannenberg 2014: 240); according to our own field data, this is the domain of the orisha Oshosi.

<sup>18</sup> This plot may not be as random as initially seems. As S.Y. Nekludov notes, ‘in different mythological traditions, the Thunder (~ the thunderstorm spirit) that ends up on Earth becomes not just a smaller being, but indeed a ‘baby-like’ one, usually a child: a child fall out of the sky during a storm in a peasant’s field, and the peasant refuses to harm him, instead helps him to get back to the sky (Japan); child-Thunder (~ boy-Lightning, boy-Cloud) gets stuck in a tree, a human helps him go back to the sky (Mesoamerica (Texitlatek, Sapotek, Cinantek, Soke) an Chaco (New-Mexico)); only ones (among the Mataka) the Thunder that fall from the sky resembles a lamb (Berezkin I4A (Thunder in trouble: falls to Earth)’ (Nekludov 2017: 167). Although, further exploration of this subject is, of course, beyond the limits of this chapter.

<sup>19</sup> Ogun and His Roads (The Mystical Africa. New Horizons. <http://www.yoruba.su/showthread.php?t=54>, accessed June 15, 2019).

<sup>20</sup> Cultos afro cubanos. Pt. 2 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXfmyMMMOPE>, accessed June 15, 2019).

## Abbreviations

FD – the author’s Field Diary

## References

- Aleksandrenkov, E.G. 1998. *Stat’ kubintsem: Problemy formirovaniia etnicheskogo samosoznaniia (XVI–XIX vv.)* [To be Cuban: The Problem of Creating of Ethnic Identity (16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> Centuries)]. Moscow: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Aleksandrenkov, E.G. 1999. Privoenie elementov kul’tury (na primere kolonial’noi Kuby) [The Appropriation of Elements of Culture (on the Example of Colonial Cuba)]. In Istomin, A.A. (ed.), *Naselenie Novogo Sveta: problemy formirovaniia i sotsiokul’turnogo razvitiia* [New World Population: Problems of Formation and Socio-Cultural Development] (pp. 143–164). Moscow: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology Press.
- Bascom, W.R. 1944. The Sociological Role of the Yoruba Cult-group. *American Anthropologist. New Series* 46 (1, part 2): 1–75.
- Bascom, W.R. 1950. The Focus of Cuban Santeria. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 6 (1): 64–68.

- Bascom, W.R. 1969. *Ifa Divination: Communication between Gods and Men in West Africa*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Bascom, W.R. 1972. *Shango in the New World*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bascom, W.R. 1980. *Sixteen Cowries. Yoruba Divination from Africa to the New World*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Berezkin Iu.E., Duvakin E.N. Tematicheskaia klassifikatsiia i raspredelenie fol'klorno-mifologicheskikh motivov po arealam. Analiticheskii katalog [Thematic Classification and Distribution of Folklore and Mythological Motifs by Areas. Analytical Catalogue]. <http://ruthenia.ru/folklore/berezkin/index.htm> (accessed June 15, 2019).
- Besmer, F.E. 1983. *Horses, Musicians and Gods: The Hausa Cult of Possession-trance*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Betancourt, V. 1995. *El Babalawo: Medico tradicional*. La Habana: Pagina Regional.
- Boddy, J. 1989. *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bolivar, N. 1990. *Los Orishas en Cuba*. La Habana: Ediciones Unión.
- Brown, D.H. 2003. *Santeria Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cabrera, L. 1954. *El monte: igbo finda, ewe orisha, viitinfinda (Notas sobre las religiones, la magia, las supersticiones y el folklore de los negros criollos y del pueblo de Cuba)*. La Habana: Ediciones C.R.
- Cabrera, L. 1957. *Anago: Vocabulario Lucumi (El Yoruba que se habla en Cuba)*. La Habana: Ediciones C.R., Col. del Chicherekú.
- Cabrera, L. 1974. *Yemaya i Ochun: Kariocha, iyalorichas y olorichas*. Madrid: Ediciones C.R.
- Dannenberg, A.N. 2011. Kubinskaia santeriia: opyt religioznogo sinkretizma [Cuban Santeria: An Experience of Religious Syncretism]. *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 3–4: 150–160.
- Dannenberg, A.N. 2011a. Religii perekhodnogo tipa (na materiale afrokubinskogo religioznogo sinkretizma [Religions of Transition (By the Data of Afro-Cuban Religious Syncretism)] *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 3–4: 144–151.
- Dannenberg, A.N. 2014. *Religiia na Kube: filosofsko-religiovedcheskii analiz* [Religion in Cuba: Philosophical and Religious Analysis]. Moscow: Delo.
- Dridzo, A.D. 1995. 'Bratstvo po korabliu' kak variant psevdorodstva ['Ship Brotherhood' as a Version of Fictive Kinship]. In Popov, V.A. (ed.), *Algebra rodstva: Rodstvo. Sistemy rodstva. Sistemy terminov rodstva* [Algebra of Kinship: Kinship. Kinship Systems. Kinship Terminologies]. Vol. 1 (pp. 231–246). St. Petersburg: Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography Press.

- Herskovits, M.J. 1937. African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Belief. *American Anthropologist. New Series* 39 (4, pt. 1): 635–643.
- Herskovits, M.J. 1966. *The New World Negro*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Garcia-Cortez, J. 1980. *Pataki: Leyendas y misterios de los orishas Africanos*. Miami: Ediciones Universal.
- Garcia-Cortez, J. 1983. *El Santo (la ocha): secretos de la religion Lukumi*. Miami: Ediciones Universal.
- Gleason, J. 1975. *Santeria, Bronx*. New York: Atheneum.
- Gonzalez-Wippler, M. 2004. *Santeria: The Religion: Faith, Rites, Magic*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications.
- Kanizares, R. 2005. *Kubinskaia santeriiia. Zhizn' i dukhovnye traditsii afroamerikantsev* [Cuban Santeria. Life and Spiritual Traditions of Afro-Americans]. Moscow: GRAND; FAIR-PRESS.
- Kulakova, N.N. 1993. *Gaititsy: formirovanie etnosa* [Haitians: Formation of the Ethnic Group]. Moscow: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology Press.
- Lachatanere, P. 2007. *El sistema religioso de los afrocubanos*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Larra Lomas, L.E. 2007. Sincretismo religioso en Cuba. *Catolicos y santeros. Negro Mundo* 519.
- Lavretskii, I.R. 1967. *Bogi v tropikakh. Religioznye kul'ty Antil'skikh ostrovov* [The Gods in the Tropics. Religious Cults of the Antilles]. Moscow: Nauka.
- Lewis, I.M., Al-Saffi, A., Hurreiz, S. (eds.). 1990. *Women's Medicine: The Zar-Bori Cult of Africa and beyond*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Llorens Alicea, I.I. 2003. *Sincretismo religioso: Pervivencia de las creencias yorubas en la isla de Puerto Rico*. Tesis. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/19709450.pdf> (accessed June 15, 2019).
- Menendez, L. 2002. *Rodar el coco: Proceso de cambio en la santeria*. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Metraux, A. 1959. *Voodoo in Haiti*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nekliudov, S.Iu. 2017. Mnogolikii drakon [Many-faced dragon]. In Antonov, D.I., Khristoforova, O.B. (eds.), *In Umbra: Demonologiia kak semioticheskaia sistema* [In Umbra: Demonology as a Semiotic System]. Vol. 6 (pp. 157–202). Moscow: INDRIK.
- Nunes, L.M. 1992. *Santeria. A Practical Guide to Afro-Caribbean Magic*. Woodstock: Spring Publications.
- Ortiz, F. 1906. *Los negros brujos*. Madrid: Libreria de F. Fe.



- Ortiz, F. 1950. *La africanía de la música folclórica de Cuba*. La Habana: Ministerio de Educación, Dirección de Cultura.
- Ortiz, F. 1984. *Ensayos etnográficos*. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Ramos, M.W. 2003. La División de La Habana: Territorial Conflict and Cultural Hegemony in the Followers of Oyo Lukumi Religion, 1850s–1920s. *Cuban Studies* 34: 38–70.
- Robaina, T.F. 2008. *Hablen paleros y santeros*. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Scott, J.C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Stoller, P. 1995. *Embodying Colonial Memories: Spirit Possession, Power and the Hauka in West Africa*. New York; London: Routledge.
- Tishkov, V.A. (ed.) 1998. *Narody i religii mira. Entsiklopediia* [Peoples and religions of the world. Encyclopedia]. Moscow: Great Russian Encyclopedia.
- Turner, V. 1968. *The Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes among the Ndembu of Zambia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Wedel, J. 2004. *Santería Healing: A Journey into the Afro-Cuban World of Divinities, Spirits, and Sorcery*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- Wirtz, K. 2007. *Ritual, Discourse, and Community in Cuban Santería*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- Wirtz, K. 2014a. *Performing Afro-Cuba: Image, Voice, Spectacle in the Making of Race and History*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wirtz, K. 2014b. Spiritual Agency, Materiality, and Knowledge in Cuba. In Johnson, P.Ch. (ed.), *Spirited Things: The Work of 'Possession' in Afro-Atlantic Religions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

# HISTORICAL MEMORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF INDIANS IN TANZANIA

*Daria A. Dronova*

Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology  
of the Russian Academy of Sciences

## **Introduction**

The Indian Diaspora ranks second after the Chinese in number and is 25 million people according to the report of the UN Development Program (Overcoming barriers: human mobility and development). The most numerous communities of Indians live in Nepal (4 million people), the USA (2.8 million people), Malaysia (2.4 million people), Great Britain (1.4 million people), Canada (1 million people). East Africa is also included in the list. The number of Indian Diaspora in Tanzania is about 60 thousand people according to the High Commission of India (India-Tanzania Relations 2017). The population census of Tanzania does not take into account nationality, so it is not possible to determine accurately the number of Indians permanently residing in the country on the basis of these data. According the results of the census 2012 the total population of Tanzania is 44.9 million people, of whom citizens of India are to 41.1 thousand people (Citizenship and Birth Registration(a) 2014: 31; Citizenship and Birth Registration(b) 2014: 46). Presumably, these are people who came to Tanzania in recent times or those who received Indian passports after independence by East African countries.

## **The beginning of the relationship of the Indians and East Africans**

There is information on trading relations between India and East Africa, dated back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. In the VII-VIII centuries Arabs actively penetrated the East African coast (Davidson 1962: 70). Around that time Indian merchants started actively cooperate with the Arab sultans. It was easier for Indian Muslims to establish both business relations and to arrange life in Arab settlements. However, the Hindus, although not being in a hurry with moving to permanent residence, managed to found their own niche. An example would be usury, which was prohibited by the religious norms of Islam. Marco

Polo was mentioning about ships from the West India off the coast of Zanzibar in the late thirteenth century in his notes (Dridzo et al. 1978: 134). When in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese appeared in East Africa on ships under the command of Vasco da Gama, they also reported about the presence of Indian merchants. The trading ties have not only strengthened economic relations, but also cultural exchanges between continents. This is confirmed by an the complex and multifaceted (diverse) links between Gujarati and Arab and African regions, including East Africa (Goody 1996). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this historical picture was violated by the Sultan of Oman, Seyyid Said, who ensured sovereignty over the small East African sultans. By 1840 Sultan Seyyid Said moved his capital from Oman to Zanzibar island. Indian merchants moved together with him to wage commercial and financial affairs. In the 40s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Zanzibar became a trading base for merchants, a kind of transit point. On Zanzibar the redistribution of imported goods was organized: most of them went to the African continent; Indian ships returned home laden with African food; some of the products went to the ports of European and American cities.

Before becoming an independent state, until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Zanzibar belonged to the Sultanate of Oman (Hollingworth 1960). The Indians were not only in trade, but also in the service of the sultans as guards and officials. Together with Arab caravans, Indians travelled from island to continent, gradually establishing their settlements there (Lobo 2000: 17). One of the first settlements was organized by the Indian Muslim community of Aga Khan by 1815 in the area of the present location of Bagamoyo in Tanzania (Himbara 1997: 7). Although entrepreneurial activity was conducted primarily along the coast, some traders went inland, reached the Kenyan cities, including the Kikuyu, Machakos, Kibwezi, and opened their own shops. By the 70s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian merchants have created a developed network of trade relations, covering the territory of East Africa. They mediated with European suppliers, selling their goods to the local population, and Arab caravan traders.

Who were the Indian merchants and the workers holding due course on the ships to East Africa? Merchants traced their origin from Indian Hindus and Indian Muslims. The Goans, who professed Christianity held more administrative positions (Gupta 1998: 107). Hindus were mainly represented by three castes: Bhatia, Lohana and Patidar

(Mehta 2001: 1739). The first Indians who lived on the East African coast in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, belonged to the caste of Bhatia. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century representatives of caste Lohana, and in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Patidar and Jains began to arrive. Muslims attributed to the following branches of Islam: Bohra, Khoja, Ismaili. There was a significant difference between the two religious groups of Indians regarding their plans for permanent residence in Zanzibar. Hindu men came to the island solely for the purpose of work and intended to return home, so their families were left in India. In turn, Muslims arranged their lives more thoroughly, moving the whole family. This is confirmed by the data on the population. According to R. Gregory (1971) the number of Indians in Zanzibar doubled from 1,000 in 1844 to 2,000 in 1856. In 1879 there were already 5466 people, of which 3,000 Khoja, 1,000 Bohra and about 1,000 Hindu. By 1887, there were 6,345 Indians throughout East Africa (Nagar 1996: 63). In 1921, the number increased up to 54,434, of whom 10,209 lived in Tanganyika.

### **The situation of Indians in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> – mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

The most extensive migration from India to East Africa began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the onset of colonial conquests. Since 1886, the British colonial administration had been importing Indian workers to build a railway inland. These were mainly Sikhs from Punjab, with whom they signed a three-year contract to perform various kinds of public works (Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora). Under the terms of the contract, after its termination, workers could either extend it, or return home, receiving all payments, or stay for permanent residence. It was assumed that the railway will contribute to the development and resettlement of Europeans in the new territories of East Africa. Indians not only laid the railroad tracks, but also performed agricultural work, and held positions in the administration. They were the only skilled labor force with knowledge of English, some of them had a European education – mostly Goans, as a result, Europeans preferred to hire them for public service. In addition, along the construction of the railway, Indians opened small shops to provide workers with a set of basic necessities (Gupta 1998: 110). The Indian villages along the railway, later turned into cities. However, the work on railway undermined the health of many Indian

workers. The difficulties had been aggravated by an unusual climate, serious diseases (malaria, tropical fever, etc.), predatory animals. About 7,000 Indians with disabilities returned home, and 2,500 people died (Mangat 1969: 39). From 32,000 contracted workers 16,000 people went home and only about 7,000 Indians remained for permanent residence. Gradually they were joined by relatives. Simultaneously with the importation of contracted workers to East Africa came Indians, pursuing their own interests. They were called "passengers" or "free" immigrants (Lobo 2000: 18). The colonists, mainly the British in Kenya, were not happy with such a neighborhood, so in every way they were forced into unfavorable territory for Europeans. Similar situation was in Uganda, where Indian merchants were firmly established by the beginning of the twentieth century, and Europeans were in no hurry to settle there. In addition, Indians were engaged in agriculture – the production and marketing of cotton and sugar cane. The Indians who settled in German Tanganyika were more successful. The Germans supported the Indian community, counting on their help in the fight against the spread of English influence throughout East Africa. After the First world war, Tanganyika came under the protectorate of England, as a result of which the Indians got vast areas of fertile land, which previously owned by the Germans. Indians have received the management of about 350 farms, which employed the thousands of workers, including Africans. By the mid-1930s, Indians controlled wholesale and retail trade, and in Dar-es-Salaam they owned more than 90% of the land, hotels and shops (Hollingsworth 1960: 66). Held positions in the administrative apparatus.

Before the end of the First World War, the territory of Tanganyika was a German colony, which caused differences in the attitude of colonial authorities to the Indians in Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda. The Germans treated the Indians with sufficient care, as the latter had the status of British subjects. In 1912, the situation of Indians began to deteriorate: they were forbidden to buy land in Dar-es-Salaam, to use the native language of Gujarati for document management. However, after the end of hostilities in 1918 and as a result of the transition of Tanganyika under British rule, the situation with the Indians began to change for the better. The British employed them as civil servants, managers. It is important to stress, that the economic recovery was mainly carried out by Indian entrepreneurs. So gradually the Indian

community regained its former lost status, which contributed to the growth of the number of Indians. In addition, the Indians were able to buy at auction sold confiscated from the Germans plantations and real estate in major cities. Due to the lack of competition, Indians have taken a leading role in both wholesale and retail trade.

India's policy towards its compatriots abroad has been ambiguous. J. Nehru called African Indians to cooperate with the local population. However, the colonial authorities tried to set forth the Indians to the Africans as economic exploiters. The negative image of Indians in East Africa also influenced the attitude of the Indian National Congress (INC) to the Indian Diaspora. At such moments, the INC tried to distance from foreign citizens. At the same time, while in need of the financial assistance, the Indian government appealed to the Indian Diaspora for support.

After the Second World War, Indian economic activity in East Africa was entering a new phase. Successful traders begin to invest in industry. Indians establish enterprises for the production of aluminum, steel, sugar, soap, plastic products. At the same time, there is the Association of Entrepreneurs of East Africa (ACCEA), which is headed by a large Indian businessman R. J. Mehta. He was an active supporter of the creation of legislation on commercial and industrial issues. Thus, in East Africa, the Indians became representatives of the industrial bourgeois class.

The British government organized the East African Royal Commission in 1953 to assess the economic development of its colonies in East Africa (East African Royal Commission 1956). The conclusions referred to a developed trading system with great potential, noting the primary role of Indians in the formation of a strong economy by means of their skilled work and diligence, including their involvement of the local African population in commercial relations.

### **Postcolonial period in the life of the Indian Diaspora**

After India gained independence, a wave of Indian migration began. Emigration from Tanzania was due to the state's policy of ousting Indians from leadership positions and reducing the participation of non-Africans in the economic and political arena. At this point, the role of British managers and Asian businessmen in Tanzania's economy was decisive (Ngowi 2009). Parliamentarians, leaders of various organiza-

tions, workers opposed the presence of Indians. There were massive layoffs of Indians from public service. In order to limit their influence in trade, it was decided to introduce cooperatives. In 1967, with the adoption of the Arusha Declaration, the situation vis-à-vis the Indians changed dramatically. The author of this document, then acting President of Tanzania J. Nyerere, proclaimed the policy of building socialism (Heilman 1998). It implied the equality of rights of all citizens that is related to, including, and Indians with the Tanzanian passports. Indians along with other citizens were elected to the Parliament, actively participated in the political life of the country, also served in the army. The process of nationalization of private property has dealt a severe blow. Most of the production in almost all major areas came under the control of the state. The authorities offered the owners of nationalized enterprises not to leave their leadership positions (they were left with a certain percentage of shares), in addition, the state paid compensation. These measures failed to change the migration sentiment among Indians.

In 1957, in Tanganyika and Zanzibar Indians there were 92 687 thousand people. In 1962, the number of Indian Diaspora decreased slightly and amounted to 89 thousand people in Tanganyika (Dridzo 1978: 141). Between 1968 and 1969, more than 150,000 Indians left East Africa, mostly technical and public-and private-sector professionals. The government of India invited the victims to return to their homeland, but the Indians began to move mainly to the UK, Canada and the United States, where they served as the nucleus for the formation of South Asian diasporas (Kotin 2003: 69). However, the population of the receiving countries was extremely dissatisfied and concerned about the sharp increase in the migration flow of Indians. In this regard, for example, a number of bills were passed in the UK (1967, 1971, 1981, 1988), restricting the entry of East African Indians into the country (Kotin 2002: 106).

The Indian government tried to create better conditions for its compatriots in African countries and called on them to cooperate economically with the local population. For example, the idea of creation of the Development Corporation of India-Africa was supported by India and the Indian community of Kenya, the capital of which played a major role. Through the work of the Corporation, the government of India hoped to strengthen the influence of Indians in the Kenyan eco-

conomic sector and society as a whole. But Indian entrepreneurs did not respond to this initiative. Thus, the measures taken by the Indian government have not been successful. However, the India Technical and Economic Cooperation program (ITEC), established in 1964, supported partner countries of India, including the African continent, in the field of training, technical and economic development (Usov 2010: 41). This contributed to the establishment of relations between Indians and Africans. There was a transfer of knowledge on economic and political issues, the exchange of experience, the formation of the political elite. The ITEC Program has proved to be quite effective in relations between African countries and India and is continuing its work at present. In the 1990s, the scope of the Program was expanded to include training of military personnel, economic consulting, work of Indian experts on a wide range of issues, organization of visits for officials. In the first year, 24 students were able to undergo training under this Program, for 2012–2013 the number of graduates increased to 288 people, and in total received training about 1,400 Tanzanians according to the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Deych, Usov 2014).

The development of relations between East African countries and the Indian continent in 1970–1990 is precisely characterized by the following description:

One of the reasons for the stagnation in the development of Indo-African relations in the 1970s–1980s was the excessive rigidity and overregulation of the economic systems of India and African countries, which greatly hampered the development of their international relations and bilateral contacts. Although this situation began to change in the second half of the 1980s, the beginning of the late 1980s and early 1990s was particularly important economic and social reforms in India and African countries, commonly referred to as "liberalization", have focused on economic deregulation and the removal of restrictions on freedom of trade and movement of capital, the denationalization of entire sectors of the economy and their transfer to private hands, including foreign investors (Usov 2010: 56, the present author's translation from Russian).

By the early 1990s, with the development of market economies in East Africa, Indians had also intensified their activities.

In the 1990s, the government of India began to attract representatives of Indian diasporas as investors in the Indian economy. To do this, a system of cards Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) was developed



and launched in 2002. The \$1000 card provides an opportunity to participate in the economic and educational spheres on a par with the citizens of India, as well as to carry out various types of real estate transactions. In addition, the holders of this card are allowed visa-free entry into the country, their children are entitled to enter higher education institutions according to the requirements for citizens of India. Restrictions are imposed on participation in voting and the purchase of agricultural land. However, due to the high price, the card was not in great demand. In addition, Indian nationals residing in other countries for at least 183 days of the fiscal year may be classified as Non-Resident Indian (NRI). The status of NRI also gives certain advantages: opening Bank accounts in Indian banks; continue to own land and real estate in India; income received abroad is not taxed by the Indian party, subject to payment in the country of residence, but all necessary taxes are paid from income received in India; special quotas in Indian universities; the ability to vote, but to be in India. It is forbidden to purchase agricultural land, to work in the public service, to be elected to political positions, in addition, it is necessary to obtain permission to export money from India. In 2006 to the two available categories added a third – Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI). The OCI status can be obtained by an Indian who was previously a citizen of India, but refused it, or an Indian who never had Indian citizenship, but at least one of his parents, grandparents, great-grandparents was or is a citizen of India. Also, if, the person is the spouse of an Indian citizen or Indian with OCI status for the last 2 years. Holders of the OCI status gives the right to a multiple-entry visa for a lifetime in India. There is no need to register your stay in the country, regardless of the duration (foreigners are required to register with the Foreign Regional Registration Office (FRRO), if the duration of the trip is more than 180 days). Preferential conditions for obtaining citizenship – it is enough to have the status of the OCI for 5 years and reside in India for at least a year. The status of the OCI allows to work and study without special visas (work and student), open a special Bank account in India, act as an investor in India, buy non-agricultural land, receive the same economic, financial and educational benefits as the Indians of the NRI category, etc. The main restrictions largely coincide with those indicated for the NRI category, the lack of opportunity to vote is added. At the moment, the cards giving the status of PIO have ceased to be

issued by the Indian government. There is a gradual transition from PIO to the OCI. It is assumed that it will completely replace the system card PIO. The status of the OCI is as close as possible to the functions of dual citizenship.

In 2000, the Government of India established the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora. Its competence includes the following issues identified on the official website of the Committee: verification of the status of persons with the status of PIOs and NRIs in the context of the constitutional provisions, laws and regulations applicable to them both in India and in their countries of residence; study of the characteristics, aspirations, views, requirements, strengths and weaknesses of the Indian Diaspora and the expectations of its representatives from India; to study the role that persons with the status of PIOs or NRIs can play in the economic, social and technological development of India; to check the current system of arrival and stay of persons with the status of PIOs in India and, within the framework of this examination, to recommend measures to address the problems, if any, they face in these areas; recommendations on the formation of a political system and specific plans to create conditions for the development of mutually beneficial relations with persons with the status of PIOs or NRIs, and to facilitate their socio-economic cooperation with the Indian side (Mandate of the Committee). During the first two years, experts of the Committee conducted an analysis of the situation of Indian diasporas in all countries of the world where their representatives live.

In recent decades, serious competition to Indians in Tanzania are Chinese. According to the census, 22.5 thousand people live in Tanzania (Citizenship and Birth Registration (b) 2014: 46). China is actively developing cooperation throughout the African continent, given the increasing role of African countries on the world stage. In particular, in Tanzania, China is the largest investor in the economy, investing in improving the country's infrastructure (Deych, Usov 2014). In terms of investment in Tanzania, China ranks second and India ranks fourth. The relations between India and Tanzania have a slightly different character. Cooperation is maintained to ensure the conditions for the development of small business in Tanzania and India. For example, during the recent visit of the Prime Minister of India to Tanzania in 2016, another joint action Plan was signed be-

tween the Organization for the development of small enterprises of Tanzania and the National Corporation of small enterprises of India (India-Tanzania Relations 2017). Indian companies regularly participate in exhibitions, fairs, offering cooperation in different fields: chemical industry, cosmetics, oil production, etc. Conducted joint business seminars and forums, including for the training of Tanzanians, business promotion, discussion of export issues, commercial transactions. Also, in 2011, the Agreement on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion, previously signed in 1979 (Ibid.), was renegotiated. Special attention to the development of small business in the relationship between the Indian and Tanzanian governments is understandable, since Tanzania is home to a large Indian Diaspora, the basis of the formation of which, along with the construction workers were small entrepreneurs, merchants, traders mainly from Gujarat (state in Western India). Entrepreneurs Indians have taken their niche in the economy of Tanzania and continue to maintain their positions at the present time.

Cooperation in the field of small business development in India and Tanzania is not limited, active interaction takes place through information technology and communications. Modern Centers and Laboratories in the field of information and communication technologies, equipped with the latest world-class equipment, are opening in major cities of Tanzania. The training of specialists, exchange of experience, conducting scientific research, a joint Tanzanian-Indian development, etc. the Indian government strongly supports the education system of Tanzania. Since the 1970s, India Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program provides training in the main branches of science (more on this was discussed above). Tanzanian students are provided with scholarships for study in Indian higher education institutions, admission to postgraduate and doctoral studies, grant support. Along with cooperation in the humanitarian and business sectors, India invests in infrastructure facilities aimed at improving water supply in the areas of Dar es Salaam and Chalinza (\$178.13 million), lake Victoria (\$268.35 million), Zanzibar (\$92 million) (Ibid.). The Indian side is also engaged in full technical support, consulting services, training of specialists for equipment maintenance.

Under the credit lines, India has supplied vehicles to the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior of Tanzania, and to the agricul-

tural sector. These are the main areas of cooperation that contribute to social, cultural and economic development, mainly in Tanzania.

In addition, the Indian Cultural Center in Dar-Es-Salaam, which opened doors to visitors for the first time at the end of 2010, is engaged in serious cultural and educational activities (India-Tanzania Relations 2017). At the Center there are clubs of different orientation: arts and crafts, sports, music, dance, linguistic classes; a library. Since the Center is focused primarily on the dissemination and maintenance of Indian culture, respectively, attention is paid to the acquisition of skills in a particular area of traditional art, any other direction, be it yoga, playing traditional instruments (eg, tabla), Indian dances, Hindi languages, Gujarati, etc. Regularly held sports competitions, Indian calendar holidays, thematic events, meetings with Indian masters, concerts, festivals not only in Dar es Salaam, but also in other cities of Tanzania. The cultural center actively cooperates with both the Indian side and local organizations in the implementation of joint activities on various topics.

### **Socio-cultural characteristics of the Indian Diaspora**

As in the past, so now the main flow of migration comes from the Indian state of Gujarat. There are several reasons for this. First, favorable conditions for the development of trade relations. Second, the impoverishment of people, overpopulation, and lack of resources in India have forced and compels people to seek new opportunities for life (Biswas 2010: 27). The initial appearance of Gujarati in East Africa served as a powerful catalyst, subsequently attracting new settlers from the same state, due to cultural factors. It is based on family ties; the presence in the new place of the familiar environment – familiar surroundings, rules and norms of life, features matrimonial relations, in which marriages Tanzanian Indians are often concluded with immigrants from Gujarat or persons living in Gujarat at the time of marriage (Dronova 2014).

Indians continue to maintain contact with their relatives living in India. Returning from work, you can go to one of the meeting points, which also hold the Indians, and for a modest fee to call relatives. For the same purposes actively use the Internet: e-mail, social networks, instant messaging programs. In addition, every year they go to visit their relatives in India. However, 21% of respondents do not have re-

lations with relatives from India. These are the representatives of the Indian Diaspora who were born in Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika and Zanzibar). Most likely, they have no relatives living in India or lost contact with them. Basically, they include adherents of Islam. Of the total number of Muslim Indians who responded, 54.5 per cent were in contact with relatives and 45.5 per cent were not. Almost all Hindus are related to their country of origin and their responses were distributed as follows: 89.4% are in contact, 10.6% are not.

The Indian Diaspora, although a closed group, is a heterogeneous community within, divided by caste and sectarian affiliation (Anand, Kaul 2011: 185). Representatives of the Diaspora are organized by numerous groups on the caste principle, have their own temple, often geographically close to each other or even built an apartment house completely for members of their group, organize joint cultural and leisure programs for the weekend (this can be a trip to nature, sports competitions, sightseeing, etc.), celebrate traditional holidays. Also, Indian communities can be formed around one of the religious movements. When, for example, one big temple is visited by representatives of different castes, but their faith unites them.

Almost all religious denominations in India are represented in Tanzania, with the exception of Judaism and animism. Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. The most numerous are the communities of Hindus and Muslims. The religious life of the Diaspora is quite rich. It tried to involve the largest possible number of adherents of specific currents of Hinduism. On weekends, they arrange trips for joint recreation, hold sports competitions. Occasionally visit religious leaders from India lectures. Such visits can be timed to one of the holidays. Indians celebrate all the holidays of the religious calendar, which are prepared with great care. Temples are decorated according to the theme of the celebration. Women bring offerings for God from the house, children and teenagers prepare concert performances – dances, scenes from the life of the gods, songs under the guidance of adults. Sometimes competitions of children's drawings are arranged. The celebration ends with a common meal. Guests are offered only traditional Indian dishes.

Indians who received secondary education in Tanzania own Swahili, which is most often used in conversation with the African population. In some private schools, organized with the support of the Indian

government and individuals, Hindi (the official language of India) is a compulsory subject. As additional subjects offered the study of Sanskrit, French. However, Gujarati remains the language of everyday communication. Serious competition to it is English, which has become an instrument of interpersonal and interethnic communication. Parents try to teach their children Gujarati from infancy at home. On average, representatives of the Indian Diaspora speak three languages: Gujarati, English and Swahili.

The Indian Diaspora in Tanzania has Indian schools. There are Muslim schools in which boys and girls are taught separately. In schools, there is a practice of visiting teachers from India. Such teachers know the latest teaching methods according to Indian standards. Before the start of classes in the yard of the school are built all classes for the Indian anthem. All this contributes to the transfer of traditional values to the new generation and the preservation of ties with the Motherland. After graduation, many Indians seek to continue their education in India on the grounds of higher levels of teaching and lower tuition fees, as well as the opportunity to live in their country of origin for some time. African, European and Chinese children also attend such schools.

Hindus continue to perform transitional rites of life cycle according to the established tradition of *sanskaras* (a set of ritual actions associated with a certain ideology, and aimed at moving to the next stage of the life cycle). Currently, it is accepted to speak about the 16 *sanskaras*, the last of which, called *Antyesti* associated with a funeral rite. Representatives of the Diaspora retain the fundamental features of the funeral ritual. Immediately after the death, if it occurred in the hospital, the deceased is taken back home. The ablutions are performed, the body is wrapped in white cloth, the priest is invited to perform the necessary rituals and reading sacred texts, and a few drops of water is poured into the mouth of the deceased. The family is considered unclean for 14 days, a ban on cooking is practiced, relatives or neighbors have to bring ready-made food. At the end of this period, a priest is invited from the temple, who reads special texts, after which the family is considered purified. According to a respondent from Arusha, it is not always possible to maintain the prescribed 14 days because of the too fast pace of life. So this time is often reduced, for example, to three days. The cremation has to be held as early as pos-

sible, although, if necessary it will not be conducted until all relatives arrive. Women participate only in the part of the funeral ceremony that takes place at home. They are not allowed to go to the cremation site. In the last decade, the territorial authorities of Tanzania began to prohibit the cremation of the dead on an open fire, discontent is the close location of such sites to the city, a strong smell and smoke. In this regard, in large cities, Indian communities began to establish crematoria. The dead are taken for cremation from the neighboring cities to larger ones. So, for example, it occurs in the Hindu community in Bukoba. Respondents report that after the ban on the burning of the dead in the same place, which was located in the city, they are forced to carry the dead to the crematorium in the city of Mwanza. They get there by ferry, which will be about 12 hours, or by car about 680 km. In Arusha the Indian community is represented by Shree Hindu Mandal, which includes all the religious Hindu groups of the city including the Sikhs. The Cremation furnace was purchased 9 years ago, but began its to work only 3 years ago. The funeral ceremony is organized according to traditional norms, but also includes modern features. Members of the whole Hindu community selected the Chairperson who has responsible for organization of the process of cremation. For quick communication and instant notification of the death of a relative and the need for cremation, a specially organized group (chat) is used in the messenger Whatsapp. A mandatory condition for the permission of cremation is a death certificate obtained from a doctor. In the event of an unnatural death, the police are called, before the arrival of which no one has the right to touch the deceased. After cremation, the ashes are taken to dispel over the ocean as the authorities forbid to dispel the ashes over the nearest rivers and lakes. But as an ideal, the Hindus view the opportunity to take the ashes to India and scatter it over the sacred river Ganges. This is not possible for everyone because of the high transport costs and, most importantly, the need to obtain a special permit for the export of ashes from the country. In contrast, cremation is free for Hindus, however, relatives and the community collect a reasonable amount as a donation and partial reimbursement. However, to resort to the services of cremation is allowed to any person with the necessary documents, but the cost will then be equal to \$ 500. In Arusha where now there is a crematorium, Hindus used to arrange a funeral pyre. For this purpose, a special platform is prepared, a roof is

installed on top, a place for a fire is determined on the side, a pedestal is separately designed for the last farewell of relatives with the deceased. Behind the fence there is a place for the burial of children who died before the age of two years. Hindus are unhappy about the ban the burning of the dead on an open fire, as prescribed by cultural norms. In India, the funeral pyre can afford not everyone because of the high cost of the required amount of firewood for the funeral pyre. In the absence of a sufficient amount for funeral pyre, the Hindus resort to the services of the crematorium. On the island of Zanzibar today Hindus burn the bodies of the dead on a funeral pyre. And the ashes are also scattered over the ocean, and someone takes to the sacred river Ganges.

### **Conclusions**

Summing up, it should be said that the Indian Diaspora in Tanzania is a closed self-sufficient system. Indians live in compact groups, occupying fully apartment buildings, and forming separate Indian neighborhoods. They own shops that offer goods brought from India, have their own hospitals, teach children in Indian schools. Indians, according to their religion, visit Hindu temples or mosques, celebrate traditional Indian holidays, perform traditional life-cycle rites, wear traditional clothes and eat traditional food. Indians speak their native language; regularly visit their country of origin; remember their roots and maintain a close relationship with India. In their self-awareness, they clearly identify themselves as a separate community living next door to the local African population. The data we have analyzed show the preservation and reproduction of traditional culture, as well as the existence of the Indian Diaspora in Tanzania itself.

### **Acknowledgements**

This chapter was prepared with support of the RSF, grant 18-18-00082. We thank the COSTECH for the permission to conduct field-studies in Tanzania, the Russian Center for Science and Culture for valuable help in our research over more than 14 years. Special thanks for our respondents for their friendship and cooperation.

### **References**

Anand, D., and Kaul, N.A. 2011. Disruptive Ethnography of Tanzanian-Indians. *South Asian Diaspora* 3 (2): 183–195.



- Biswas, A. 2010. Overseas Indians in East Africa. In Dubey, A. (ed.), *Indian Diaspora in Africa: A Comparative Perspective* (pp. 25–28). New Delhi: MD Publications.
- Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora. 2001. New Delhi: Indian Council of World Affairs. <http://indiandiaspora.nic.in/contents.htm> (accessed December 7, 2015).
- Citizenship and Birth Registration, Table 5.1. 2014. *Basic Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile. Statistical Tables. Tanzania Mainland*. [https://tanzania.go.tz/egov\\_uploads/documents/Descriptive\\_tables\\_Tanzania\\_Mainland\\_sw.pdf](https://tanzania.go.tz/egov_uploads/documents/Descriptive_tables_Tanzania_Mainland_sw.pdf) (accessed March 29, 2015).
- Citizenship and Birth Registration, Table 6.1. 2014. *Basic Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile. Tanzania – Zanzibar, 2014*. [https://tanzania.go.tz/egov\\_uploads/documents/Tanzania\\_Zanzibar\\_socio\\_economic\\_profile\\_sw.pdf](https://tanzania.go.tz/egov_uploads/documents/Tanzania_Zanzibar_socio_economic_profile_sw.pdf) (accessed March 29, 2015).
- Davidson, B. 1962. *Novoe otkrytie Drevnei Afriki* [A New Discovery of Ancient Africa]. Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura.
- Deych, T.L., and Usov, V.A. 2014. ‘Voskhodiashchie’ aziatskie derzhavy osvivaivaiut Vostochnuiu Afriku [Asian ‘Emerging Powers’ Master East Africa:]. *Azija i Afrika segodnja* 12: 21–26.
- Dridzo, A.D., Kochnev, V.I., and Semashko, I.M. 1978. *Indiitsy i pakistanttsy za rubezhom* [Indians and Pakistanis abroad]. Moscow: Nauka.
- Dronova, D.A. 2014. Indiitsy Dar-es-Salama [Indians of Dar es Salaam]. *Et-nograficheskoe obozrenie* 5: 175–185.
- East African Royal Commission 1953–1955, Report*. 1956. London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office.
- Goody, J. 1996. *The East in the West*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Gregory, R.G. 1971. *Indian and East Africa. A History of Race Relations within the British Empire, 1890–1939*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gupta, D. 1998. South Asians in East Africa: Achievement and Discrimination. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 21 (1): 103–136.
- Heilman, B. 1998. Who Are the Indigenous Tanzanians? Competing Conceptions of Tanzanian Citizenship in the Business Community. *Africa Today* 45 (3–4): 369–387.
- Himbara, D. 1997. The ‘Asian Question’ in East Africa. *African Studies* 56 (1): 1–18.
- Hollingsworth, L.W. 1960. *The Asians of East Africa*. London: Macmillan.
- India-Tanzania Relations. *High Commission of India*. 2017. <http://hcindiatz.org/india-tanzania-relation.php> (accessed April 9, 2018).
- Kotin, I.U. 2002. Indiiskaia diaspora i ee izuchenie v Indii i Rossii [Indian Diaspora and Its Study in India and Russia]. In Kurilov, V.I. (ed.), *Ros-siia – Indii: vzaimodeistvie v oblasti nauki, kul'tury i obrazovaniia* (Ma-

- terialy mezhdunarodnogo simpoziuma. Vladivostok, 12-14 noiabria 2002 g.*) [Russia – India: Interaction in the Field of Science, Culture, and Education (Proceedings of the International Symposium. Vladivostok, November 12–14, 2002)] (pp. 100–107). Vladivostok: Far Eastern Federal University Press.
- Kotin, I.U. 2003. *Pobegi ban'iana: Migratsiia naseleniia iz Indii i formirovanie 'uzlov' iuzhnoaziatskoi diaspory* [The Banyan Shoots: Migration from India and Formation of the 'Nodes' of the South Asian Diaspora]. St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie.
- Lobo, L. 2000. *They Came to Africa. 200 Years of the Asian Presence in Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: Sustainable Village.
- Mandate of the Committee. *Mandate*. <http://indiandiaspora.nic.in/mandate.htm> (accessed April 12, 2018).
- Mangat, J.S. 1969. *A History of the Asians in East Africa c.1886 to 1946*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Mehta, M. 2001. Gujarati Business Communities in East African Diaspora: Major Historical Trends. *Economic and Political Weekly* 36 (20): 1738–1747.
- Nagar, R. 1996. The South Asian Diaspora in Tanzania. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 16 (2): 62–80.
- Ngowi, H.P. 2009. Economic Development and Change in Tanzania since Independence: The Political Leadership Factor. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 3 (4): 259–267.
- Overcoming barriers: human mobility and development. Reports (1990–2011). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/chapters/russian/> (accessed April 12, 2017).
- Usov, V.A. 2010. *Indiia i Afrika na rubezhe tysyacheletii. Proshloe, nastoiashchee, budushchee* [India and Africa at the Turn of the Millennium. Past, Present, Future]. Moscow: Institute African Studies Press.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Anastasia A. Banshchikova**, Ph.D. (History), is Senior Research Fellow of the Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences; Research Fellow of the Center for Scientific Design, Russian State University for the Humanities; Vice-Director of the International Center of Anthropology, National Research University Higher School of Economics. Her main research interests are culture and cultural anthropology of Ancient Egypt; Ancient Egyptian literature and its folklore components; perception of Ancient Egypt in medieval Arab sources; historical memory of the slave trade in modern Tanzania; urbanization and its challenges in modern Tanzania. Anastasia has done fieldwork in Nigeria, Tanzania, Benin, and Rwanda. Among her main publications are “Urbanization and Mutual Help Groups: Contribution to Nation-Building in Tanzania” (*Social Evolution & History*. 2018. Vol. 17. No. 1, with Oxana V. Ivanchenko); “Crucial Periods in Ancient Egyptian Historical Tradition and Consciousness” (Moscow: LENAND, 2015, in Russian); “The Images of Women in Ancient Egyptian Literature” (Moscow, LIBROKOM, 2009; 2nd ed.: Moscow: LENAND, 2014, in Russian).

**Everisto Benyera** is an Associate Professor of African Politics in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. He is a decolonial reader and holds an M.Sc. in International Relations from the University of Zimbabwe and a Ph.D. in African Politics from the University of South Africa. He researches on transitology and transitional justice focusing on indigenous, traditional and non-state reconciliation, peacebuilding and healing mechanisms. He is the editor of the journal *Politeia, Journal of Political Sciences and Public Administration and Management*.

**Dmitri M. Bondarenko** is an anthropologist, historian, and Africanist. Dmitri has graduated with M.A. (cum laude) in World History, Anthropology and English from Lomonosov Moscow State University and completed Ph.D. (World History and Anthropology) at the Russian Academy of Sciences from which he also holds the Doctor Habilitatus degree in the same disciplines. He holds the titles of Professor in Ethnology from the Lomonosov Moscow State University, Professor in Global Problems and International Relations from the Russian Academy of Sciences, and Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences in History. Dmitri is Vice-Director for Research of the Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Director of the International Center of An-

thropology, National Research University Higher School of Economics, and Full Professor in Ethnology, Russian State University for the Humanities. Bondarenko was a visiting scholar with the Program of African Studies of Northwestern University (Evanston, USA), Institut für Geschichte (Göttingen, Germany), and Maison des sciences de l'homme (Paris, France). Besides several Moscow-based universities, Dmitri has taught at the Agostinho Neto University in Angola. He has delivered guest lectures at universities of the USA, Egypt, Tanzania, Slovenia, and Uganda. Dmitri is a co-founder and co-editor of the international journal 'Social Evolution and History'. His major research interests include social theory, anthropological and historical theory, political anthropology, culture and history of Africa south of the Sahara, socio-cultural transformations and intercultural interaction (including ethnic, racial, and religious aspects) with special focus on Africa and people of African descent worldwide. Bondarenko has conducted fieldwork in a number of African countries (Tanzania, Nigeria, Benin, Rwanda, Zambia, and Uganda), as well as among people of African origin in Russia and the USA. Dmitri has authored over 500 publications, including seven monographs.

**Marina L. Butovskaya** is Professor, Dr. Habil., Head of the Department of Cross-Cultural Psychology and Human Ethology, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, and Principal Researcher of the International Center of Anthropology, National Research University, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia. She graduated from the Department of Anthropology, Biological Faculty of Lomonosov Moscow State University. Marina has published over 350 articles and 7 monographs. Her main research interests include evolutionary basis of human social behavior, specially aggression and reconciliation, conflict management and cooperation, partner choice, nonverbal communication. Fieldwork: rural Tanzania (hunters and gatherers, pastoralists, and farmers), Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia.

**Lorenzo D'Angelo**, Ph.D., University of Milan-Bicocca, is an anthropologist interested in extractive industries. His research on Sierra Leone advocates the value of an approach that links together micro- and macro-historical analyses and establishes a dialogue between ethnography and history. His areas of interest also include the colonial history of East and West Africa, ethnographic theory, anthropology of time, environmental anthropology, and global labour history.

**Daria A. Dronova**, M.A. (Social Anthropology), is a Junior Researcher in the Department of Cross-Cultural Psychology and Human Ethology, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. She graduated from the Russian State University for the Humanities with a degree in Social Anthropology in 2008. Daria's research interests include human ethology, evolutionary psychology, traditional societies, the current state of the Indian Diaspora. She has extensive experience in doing fieldwork in Russia and Tanzania. An important part of Daria's fieldwork has been conducted among representatives of the Indian Diaspora. Dronova has authored more than 30 publications.

**Emery Patrick Effiboley** studied History at the University of Abomey-Calavi before enrolled in a Master's Degree Programme in Museology at the Amsterdam School of the Arts in the Netherlands. He graduated in 2005 and after that embarked for Doctoral Studies at Paris Nanterre University in France where he defended a Ph.D. dissertation in Anthropology in 2013. Emery Patrick furthered his research in 2014–2016 at the Centre for the Creative Arts of Africa from the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa as an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellow. His research includes history of African collections in European museums, history of African museums, history of African art, among others. Since 2016, Dr. Effiboley is Assistant Professor at the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin where he teaches Introduction Course in Art History, History of Classical African Art, etc. He is the Deputy Head of the Department of History and Archaeology. Dr. Effiboley authored several articles and book chapters published in French and English among which one of the most recent is: Interrogating Museum Development in Africa: From Museum Cooperation to the Appropriation of Praxis. In Laely, T., Meyer, M., and Schwere, R. (eds.), *Museum Cooperation between Africa and Europe. A New Field for Museum Studies* (pp. 179–193). Bielefeld; Kampala: Transcript-Fontain Publications, 2018.

**Nicholas K. Githuku** holds Ph.D. from West Virginia University in African History. He also holds degrees in Peace, Development and Conflict Studies and in History, Political Science and Public Administration. Githuku is an Assistant Professor of African History at York College, CUNY, Queens, New York, New York. Nicholas' research interests focus on Eastern Africa in general, and contemporary political history in Kenya in particular and include cross-cutting themes in the making and evolution

of the generic colonial and postcolonial African state such as the political economy of race and ethnicity and emergent politics; gender & women history; class; and social movements. He is also a student of the history of science and technology; the history of capitalism; British national and imperial history; the Indian Ocean and the Transatlantic Trade; the link between power or government legitimacy and resistance in the generic African state; human rights, development and democratic governance issues in Africa south of the Sahara; auto/biography theory and history; memory and memorialization of war; and many other topics of academic interest.

**Oxana V. Ivanchenko**, M.A. (Social Anthropology), is Junior Research Fellow of the Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences; Junior Research Fellow of the Center for Scientific Design, Russian State University for the Humanities; Junior Research Fellow of the International Center of Anthropology, National Research University Higher School of Economics. Her research interests include urban anthropology, Sub-Saharan Africa, social movements, informal settlements, rotating savings and credit associations, mutual help groups, ethnic identity, socio-cultural processes in Tanzania, *uswahilini*. Oxana has done fieldwork in Tanzania, Zambia, and Russia. Among Ivanchenko's publications are "Urbanization and Mutual Help Groups: Contribution to Nation-Building in Tanzania (Social Evolution & History. 2018. Vol. 17. No. 1, with Anastasia A. Ban-shchikova) and "Formal and Informal Foundations of Trust in Mutual Help Groups of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) Residents" (Vostok / Oriens. 2017, No.1, in Russian).

**Asiya R. Khalitova** is a Ph.D. student at the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Her research interests center on the history of the Republic of Guinea, French policies in African countries, African elites, African cinemas. She graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations MGIMO (M.A. in International Journalism) and the Institute of Communications of the Lumière University Lyon 2 (M.A. in Communications in Humanitarian Sector). From 2014 to 2017, she served as press attaché at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Guinea, lectured at universities of Guinea and Cameroon.

**Olga B. Khristoforova** is Director of the Centre for Typological and Semiotic Folklore Studies, and Full Professor at the Centre for Social Anthropology at the Russian State University for the Humanities in

Moscow. She is also Leading Research Fellow at the School of Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Moscow. Olga graduated with M.A. in History and Ethnology from the Lomonosov Moscow State University, her thesis was on the voodoo cult in the context of the ethnic history of Haiti. After that, she got Ph.D. in Cultural Studies (1997) and Doctor Habilitatus in Philology and Folklore Studies (2011) from the Russian State University for the Humanities. Khristoforova specializes in folklore studies, anthropology of religion, witchcraft and spirit possession studies, medical anthropology. She is the author of 200 publications including four monographs (all in Russian): *The Logic of Interpretation: Folklore and Modeling of Behavior in Archaic Cultures*. Moscow: RSUH, 1998; *Witches and Victims: Anthropology of Witchcraft in Present-day Russia*. Moscow: RSUH; OGI, 2010; *Ikota as a Mythological Character in the Local Tradition*. Moscow: RSUH, 2013; *Spirit Possession in the Russian Village*. Moscow: Forum-Neolit, 2016. She is a co-founder and co-editor of the series *In Umbra: Demonology as a Semiotic System*. Vol. 1-7 (Moscow: RSUH; INDRIK). Her other publications include: Spirit Possession in a Present-day Russian Village. *Folklorica. Journal of the Slavic and East European Folklore Association*. 2010. Vol. 15. P. 27–64; Pourquoi les chamanes nganassanes ont-ils disparu? Le potentiel herméneutique du système de mythes et de rituels des peuples sibériens face aux défis du temps. *Transferts culturels en Sibérie. De l'Altai à la Yakoutie*. Éd. par J.-C. Tamisier. Paris: Édition Demopolis, 2018. P. 221–233.

**Sergey V. Kostelyanets**, Ph.D. (Political Science), is Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Center for Sociological and Political Sciences Studies at the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Senior Research Fellow at the International Center of Anthropology of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, and Associate Professor at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. His research interests include the study of armed conflicts and conflict resolution in Africa, particularly in North Africa and the Horn of Africa, terrorism, secessionist movements, involvement of African troops outside the continent, and relations between Russia, Turkey, GCC countries and Africa, from the perspectives both of Political Science and Cultural Anthropology. Dr. Kostelyanets has published a book *Darfur: A History of the Conflict* (in Russian) and over 70 research papers in Russian and foreign academic journals and anthologies. Dr. Kos-

telyanets worked previously at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the sections for human rights and for combating human trafficking.

**Jean-Claude Meledje** got his doctoral degree in International Relations and Politics from Flinders University, Australia, for a dissertation on the ongoing crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. At present, Jean-Claude works at the Federal Department of Industry, Innovation and Science in Canberra as a Policy Officer, providing policy advice on emerging and cross-cutting policy issues. Part of the work includes closing the gap for Indigenous people, immigration and energy policy. Jean-Claude attends seminars at the Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, University of Canberra. Issues range from climate change to deliberative democracy.

**Jason Nkyabonaki**, Ph.D. (Public Administration) is Lecturer of African Politics and Public Administration. He researches on areas of public service, corruption and local governance. Several publications have been made on the research areas of interest and he has contributed many papers to international Conferences on areas of Corruption. He occupies membership in International Corruption Forum Network (ICRN) and has also designed and successfully organized an international conference on State Building in Africa: Prospects and Challenges. He is talented on networking and capable of managing the diversities. Currently, he serves as the Deputy Principal Academics, Research and Consultancy at the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy – Zanzibar Campus in Tanzania.

**Cecilia Pennacini**, Ph.D. (Cultural Anthropology), teaches Ethnology of Africa, Visual Anthropology and Media Anthropology at the University of Turin in Italy. Since 1988 she has carried out research in the Great Lakes region of Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda) as a member of the Italian Ethnological Mission in Equatorial Africa (supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation), taking the direction of the Mission in 2005. She is the responsible of the Cooperation agreements between the University of Turin and Makerere University (Kampala, Uganda). She has published extensively on traditional religion, spirit possession and cultural heritage in the Great Lakes region, and realized several ethnographic films (among others: *Kampala Babel*, 2008, Archivio Nazionale Cinematografico della Resistenza with the support of Piemonte Doc Film Fund). Among her major publications: *Kubandwa. La possessione spi-*



*ritica nell’Africa dei Grandi laghi* (Torino: Il Segnalibro, 1998) and *Filmare le culture. Un’introduzione all’antropologia visiva* (Roma: Carocci, 2004). Since 2017, Pennacini is the Scientific Director of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the University of Turin.

**Pino Schirripa**, Ph.D. (Anthropology), is an Associate Professor of demo-ethno-anthropological disciplines at the Sapienza University of Rome. For more than twenty years, he has been conducting field research in Ghana and Ethiopia, and currently directs the Italian Ethnological Mission in Ghana and the Italian Ethnological Mission in Tigray – Ethiopia. He mainly deals with medical anthropology, religious anthropology and migration. Among his publications: *L’ambulatorio del guaritore* (edited with P. Vulpiani; Lecce: Argo 2000), *Le politiche della cura* (Lecce: Argo 2005), *Health System, Sickness and Social Suffering in Mekelle (Tigray – Ethiopia)* (editor; Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2010), *Terapie religiose. Neoliberismo, cura, cittadinanza nel pentecostalismo contemporaneo* (editor; Roma: CISU, 2012), *La vita sociale dei farmaci* (Lecce: Argo 2015).

**Daria A. Zelenova**, Ph.D. (Political Science), is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre of Anthropology, National Research University Higher School of Economics, and Research Fellow at the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Her research interests include urban anthropology, social history, social movements studies, and postcolonial studies. Her focus is on South Africa while she has also done fieldwork in Namibia and Russia.