

Researching African Transmigrants and Border Crossers using Biographical Analysis

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Abstract

Biographic research has emerged as an interdisciplinary perspective in analyzing cross border and transmigration processes in Africa. This paper interrogates the methodological assumptions of this perspective, as a method of investigating processes of change and the mingling of individual and societal positioning and identity construction in migration processes in Africa. Cross-border interactions and movements in transmigration processes do not just function as links between two national societies, but are genuinely transformed into a kind of ‘new cross–border social texture’. Empirical migration research needs to conceptualise more clearly different types of transmigration phenomena subsumed under the heading of transnational social spaces and transmigration, and especially pay attention to the gender-specific aspects. ‘Transnational social spaces’ have primarily been investigated through ‘multi-sited ethnography’ approaches, which calls for research in the receiving and originating countries of migrants, in order to connect social changes in both countries and to decode transnational networks. Biographical narrative interviews, however, provide the necessary tools for researching ‘transnationalism from below’. This perspective offers a promising way of responding to the methodological challenge that the notion of transnationalism brings into the field of qualitative empirical migration research. The utility of this perspective is demonstrated with examples from the migration literature and five years of ethnographic fieldwork among Nigerian migrants.

Keywords: biography, transnational migration, narrative interview, methodological nationalism,

Introduction

For the past decade, researchers and policy makers have continued to debate the appropriateness of methods employed in migration research. The methods employed in migration research cannot avoid discussing the applied method’s underlying perspectives on immigrant societies and populations. Biographic research has emerged as an interdisciplinary perspective in analyzing cross border and transmigration processes in Africa. This approach provides an understanding of migration processes about life events that have led to migration as well as how migration has affected the following life events. In the interdisciplinary field of migration studies, the usage of the biographical approach has not only been extensive in Europe, North America, Asia, Latin America, but recently, has being applied in migration studies from and within Africa. The

biographical approach is well suited to empirical investigations of migration processes because it offers practitioners a way of “empirically capturing the diversity, complexity, and transformational character of migration phenomena and of reconstructing them through biographical analysis”¹

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the methodological assumptions of the biographic perspective, as a method of investigating processes of change and the mingling of individual and societal positioning and identity construction in migration processes in Africa. The research questions to be addressed are: (1) What do we understand by biographic research (2) What are the methodological assumptions of biographic approach? (3) How can we employ biographical research in studying African transmigrants and border crossers?

Biographical Approach- Historical Trajectories

The Polish Peasant in Europe and America written by sociologists William Isaac Thomas and Florian Znanieck in 1918 is regarded as the birth of biographic research. This study, emerging during the Cold War, developed biographical research as an innovative method to explain complex migration-specific social phenomena as qualitatively new in terms of the sending and the receiving society².

What was novel about Thomas and Znanieck methodology in studying migrants was the fact that they used biographical material to gain insight into the principles constructing the lives of migrants³. Biographical analysis gives us a good view of individuals (their identities, life trajectories, orders of indexicality), and their complex and dynamic, constantly shifting relations

1 Ursula Apitzsch and Irini Siouti, *Biographical Analysis as an Interdisciplinary Research Perspective in the Field of Migration Studies*. University of York: Research Integration, 2007. p. 3

2 Ursula Apitzsch Biographieforschung und Interkulturelle Pädagogik. In: Krüger, Heinz-Hermann/ Marotzki, Winfried (eds.) *Handbuch erziehungswissenschaftliche Biographieforschung*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. 2006 pp. 499-515.

3 Ursula Apitzsch and Irini Siouti, Op Cit

to others, to highly stratified and boundless social contexts, and to the local and global environment as a whole⁴. Therefore, by examining migrant biographies, Thomas and Znaniecki tried to understand in a comparative perspective how processes of personal and societal change were connected to migration, how they were dealt with, and, even more important from a scholarly point of view, how the changes on the personal and societal level were interrelated, in the society of departure and to the place of arrival. As Roswitha Breckner pointed out, “they tried to reconstruct how new patterns of creating the ‘individual’ in relation to the ‘community’ and vice versa emerged in Poland as well as the USA, initiated or supported by migration processes”⁵.

The biographic approach, however, went into decline in post-war sociological research. Since that time, the dominant approach has been to describe social structures by statistical observations rather than by processes of creating meaning in everyday life contexts. Yet, this approach could not be suppressed for too long. It was revived in the 70s and 80s. Specifically, the new revival of this approach in migration studies lays emphasis on the social embeddedness of individuals and its influence on their decision making⁶ hence recognises all the central themes of life course approach (historical and geographical context, timing of lives, linked lives, and human agency). Within this context, Ní’s *‘Settling back? A biographical and life-course perspective of Ireland’s recent return migration* posits that narratives underline the ‘role of the teller in constructing

4 Busch, Brigitta; Schicho, Walter; Spitzl, Karlheinz; Slezak, Gabriele; Rienzner, Martina. *When Plurilingual Speakers Encounter Unilingual Environments. Migrants from African Countries in Vienna: Language Practices and Institutional Communication*. WWTF Proposal, Diversity-Identity Call 2010, Research Project ”PluS“

5 Roswitha Breckner Case-Oriented Comparative Approaches: the Biographical Perspective as Opportunity and Challenge in Migration Research. In *Karin Schittenhelm, Concepts and Methods in Migration Research Conference Reader*. 2007 pp. 113-152

6 For further discussions, see Halfacree, K. and P. Boyle. The challenge facing migration research: The case for a biographical approach. *Progress in Human Geography*. 1993. 17, 333-348; Findlay, A.M. and F. N. Li . An auto-biographical approach to understanding migration: the case of Hong Kong emigrants. *Area*. 1997. 29(1) pp. 34-44

her/his own life narrative, through a process of selection, ordering and giving meaning to particular events and stories'.⁷

Another area of interest relates to the “the sequence of events and their significance for one another”. Migrant biographies provide insight into how individuals construct their life course in terms of both geographical and social mobility. Thus, the biographic approach, and in most instances, combined with life course framework is a means to comprehend the motivation and decision making process of migrants in the historical, social, and cultural.

The Concept of biography

Biographical analysis is a method to deconstruct and to explore current assumptions in the understanding of immigrants' living conditions and social worlds. The question however is, what is meant by the term 'biography'? Students of migration studies purport that biography is an instrument of social regulation⁸, and from a different but related perspective, 'a design template for subjective self-representation and self-authentication'.⁹ That biography is a social construction is no longer in dispute. For instance, Fischer-Rosenthal and Rosenthal refer to it as a 'social creation/construction', which 'constitutes both social reality and the subjects' worlds of knowledge and experience, and which is constantly affirmed and transformed within the dialectical relationship between life history knowledge and experiences and patterns presented by society'¹⁰.

7 Ní Laoire, C. 'Settling back'? A biographical and life-course perspective on Ireland's recent return migration. *Irish Geography*. 2008. 41(2), 195-210.

8 Kohli, Martin. 'Die Institutionalisierung des Lebenslaufs. Historische Befunde und theoretische Argumente'. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*. 1985. 37 pp. 1-29.

9 Ursula Apitzsch and Irini Siouti, *Op cit.* p. 4

10 Fischer-Rosenthal, Wolfram and Rosenthal, Gabriele 'Narrationsanalyse biographischer Selbstpräsentation', Hitzler, Ronald/ Honner, Anne (ed.) *Sozialwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich. 1997 pp 133-165.

At the heart of biography are the questions of how people ‘produce’ a biography in different cultural contexts and social situations, and which conditions, rules, and patterns of construction can be observed in this process. In *Taking the Knocks. Youth Unemployment and Biography- A Qualitative Analysis*, Peter Alheit argued that both the concepts of ‘biographical work’ and of ‘biographicity’ are significant in answering the above questions¹¹. However, it is imperative to stress that in theoretical construction of immigrants’ living conditions and social worlds, the concept of ‘biography’ or ‘biographical construction’ is often used instead of the term ‘identity.’¹² Moreover, ‘the aspect of ‘identity’ is conceptualised in biographical research/ biography theory as the accomplishment of building and maintaining continuity and coherence through changing situations. Developing an identity in the context of biographical analytical studies is understood as biographical work. Biographical research is interested in the process-related and constructive nature of life histories, and it distances itself from identity models which regard identity as something static and rigid’¹³.

Methodological Assumptions of Biographical Research

We have so far provided a window into what biographic analysis is about. The next question to be answered is what are the methodological and theoretical assumptions of biographic analysis? Before answering this question, however, it is imperative to introduce a caveat. There is no single biographical approach in the social sciences, but a variety focusing on different aspects (life courses, biographical trajectories, overall biographical constructions, gender aspects of biographical constructions, and many more). The common ground of different approaches is the assumption that *making sense* in order to get oriented in our actions in the modern era increasingly refers to the construction of biographies and institutionalised life courses¹⁴. This

11 Alheit, Peter *Taking the Knocks. Youth Unemployment and Biography – A Qualitative Analysis*. London: Cassell. 1994.

12 Fischer-Rosenthal, Wolfram and Rosenthal, Gabriele. *Op Cit*.

13 Ursula Apitzsch and Irimi Siouti, *Op Cit*. p. 6

14 Roswitha Breckner. *Op Cit* p. 116

approach assumes that people are organising their experiences and general patterns of orientation in a biographical framework, since other institutional contexts based on strong normative patterns such as ‘family’, ‘nation’, ‘class’ and their interrelation have been changing more or less profoundly.’¹⁵ This reality underscores the social construction of biography as a field of interference between societal reality and the experiential world of individuals. Within this context, therefore, we can assume that the construction of biographies is – apart from other social concepts of *making sense* on an individual as well as a societal level – a social practice in which orientation and patterns of action emerge and are institutionalised. The ‘social’ and the ‘personal’ in this view are conceptualised as closely interrelated. To detect their relation in different social fields is the general purpose of analysis.

In summarising the functions of ‘biographies’ in modern (or post-modern) societies, Roswitha Breckner¹⁶ has listed four areas:

- i. biographies provide members of society with a frame of orientation in which they can interpret and understand their experiences in constantly changing social contexts in order to become oriented in their past and present as well as for the future. These processes of *making sense* are especially intense in periods of radical social change, when institutionalised ways of interpreting social situations and developments are called into question, and new ones must be built. In general, ‘biography’ is regarded as a field in which processes of continuation and transformation constantly take place.
- ii. biographies help to let others know how we have become who we are and to communicate one’s self, specifically in social contexts in which one’s ‘being’ cannot be derived from a fixed social position that makes us definable for others.
- iii. biographies help to provide societal institutions and contexts with flexible life courses in which processes of change and transformation are organised and lived through

¹⁵ Fischer-Rosenthal, Wolfram and Rosenthal, Gabriele. *Op Cit.*

¹⁶ Roswitha Breckner. *Op Cit* pp. 113-152

individually. From the institutional perspective, the costs and risks of societal change are hereby diminished.

Apart from the functions that biographies serve, scholars such Schütze and Rosenthal have identified general principles by which biographies are constructed, and which are methodologically relevant¹⁷: Life stories are constructed and presented as a narration, telling someone else what has happened in one's life. The narrative form itself is a means to organise experiences in a temporal and thematic order which 'makes sense' of what we have lived through, allows us to communicate our experiences and let ourselves and others know who we are. Thus, biographies, are not a mirror of lived lives but 'texts' produced in a present situation. Each biographical text refers to different but interrelated time levels: the lived through past (we can change our concept of our past, but we cannot change what has actually happened); the present of narration (every narration is also structured by present perspectives, serving present interests and functions); and the horizon of future expectations (it makes a difference whether we narrate our life with the reasonable expectation of several decades yet to live or a shorter span of years or even months).

The methodological principles and methodical procedures of analysing biographical texts seek to reconstruct the interrelations in past, present and future perspectives from which a biography is formed. Case studies, employed in biographical research, can focus on specific experiences, on certain life spheres, periods, or trajectories. Research can focus on the overall biographical construction based on the lived through life and the narrated life story¹⁸ as well. The analysis can address the interaction and discourse of a group in generational or milieu contexts or an even broader collective entity like a society in a specific epoch.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ursula Apitzsch and Irimi Siouti, *Op Cit.* p. 6

¹⁸ See Rosenthal, Gabriele. *Op Cit* p. 60; Schütze, Fritz 'Prozessstrukturen des Lebenslaufs', in: Matthes, Joachim, U.A. (ed.): *Biographie in handlungswissenschaftlicher Perspektive*, Nürnberg: Nürnberger Forschungsvereinigung. 1981 pp. 67 – 156.

¹⁹ Alheit, Peter *Taking the Knocks. Youth Unemployment and Biography – A Qualitative Analysis*. London: Cassell. 1994.

It is worth mentioning that biographic analysis is intended to (a) reconstruct the structural processes in which orientations and action patterns develop and change, and (b) reconstruct the variety of typical ‘answers’ to a specific ‘problem’ in a specific social and historical context.

Using the Biographic Narrative Interview to Collect Data

Biographical narrative are employed in social science survey to elicit comprehensive and detailed impromptu narrative from the informant of personal involvement in events and corresponding experiences in the given theme field’. Moreover, the motif of the biographical narrative interview is to allow the individual to relate how he or she has experienced certain life history processes and his or her own life history. As succinctly put by Ursula Apitzsch and Irini Siouti, the main idea of the biographical-narrative interview is to generate a spontaneous autobiographical narration which is not structured by questions posed by the interviewer but by the narrator’s structures of relevance.

The first question is the opening of the first section of the interview and reveals, if successful, a chain of associations tying together the main phases of a life story. An important contribution to the biographic narrative interview is provided by Wengraf, who suggest the efficacy of the biographic-narrative-interpreted method as an appropriate tool to carry out social research, and characterises its conduct²⁰. The concrete course of an interview session, according to Wengraf is going to be roughly sketched in what follows. The first session of the interview is initiated by a single question. This first momentum of the narrative is always stimulated by the same question:

I want you to tell me your life story, all the events and experience which were important for you, up to now.

Start wherever you like.

Please take the time you need.

I'll listen first, I won't interrupt,

²⁰ Wengraf T. *Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic Narratives and Semi-structured Methods*. London: Sage. 2001. pp. 142-144

I'll just take some notes for after you've finished telling me about your experiences.'

In the first phase of a narrative interview, it is advised that the interviewer should avoid any kind of 'why' questions, because they hinder or destroy a narrative scheme and generate explanation, argumentation and a legitimation position. During an interview, the person concerned, the so-called biographer, is firstly requested to tell his or her own life history. While the life history is being narrated to the interviewer (who plays the role of the interested and empathetic listener), the latter does not interrupt the main narrative but encourages the biographer by means of non-verbal and paralinguistic expressions of interest and attention. The interviewer waits until the narrator breaks off the story of his or her own accord, and only then asks questions in the second part of the interview. The interviewer first asks narrative questions on topics and biographical themes already mentioned. In addition, as Gabriele Rosenthal argues, in the last part of the interview or in a second interview the interviewer asks about issues that have not been addressed by the biographer.²¹

According to Wengraf, it is advisable that the interview be split into three parts. The first session, should present the interviewer as passive. The flow of the memories should only be slightly influenced and further interventions be reduced to a minimum. The interviewer is expected to take notes during session one in regard with topics that he/she wishes to extend in the second session. Often a keyword like 'school' or 'Cotonou' can be written down in order to have a reminder to ask later for further details about these life phases. The second session is dedicated to extract more story from the topics raised in the initial narrative. It should therefore follow immediately after session one or, if circumstances permit, after a short break. It is strongly advised that the interviewer asks the questions in strictly the same order as the topics emerged in the initial narrative. Moreover, Wengraf recommends using the language and wording of the interviewee. Questions that are posed can only ask for more story; only story-eliciting questions should be used. For the purpose of further follow-up questioning, notes should be taken during

²¹ Rosenthal, Gabriele. 'Reconstruction of Life Stories. Principles of Selection in Generating Stories for Narrative Biographical Interviews.' In: Josselsen, Ruthellen and Lieblich, Amia (eds). *The Narrative Study of Lives*. Volume I. London: Sage. 1993. p. 60.

session two as well. Whereas session one and two take usually place on the same day, the third one will be a separate interview that requires at least preliminary analyses of the material gathered in the two previous sessions. This session may include 'narrative-pointed "asking for story" questions'. But, more important, this session can entail also structured question blocks that give the interview a more restricted flow. All topics that were not mentioned in the narrative, but seem to be supportive for the research design can be raised here.

A very important aspect, which has to be taken into account not only as a context but also as part of the method, is the working alliance between researcher and interviewee. Among other pertinent issues, Gerhard Riemann has highlighted the need for the 'social relationship between the parties, their specific interests and perspectives, and the social setting within which they meet and which they themselves produce during the interview, have to be reflected and are always part of the analysis of biographical narrative interviews²². However, theoretically the interview technique is based on the assumption that biographical self-presentations are most convincingly rendered using narrative as a text form to communicate events experienced by the self.²³ Moreover, it is expected that the narrative acts as a trigger in the interview situation, which is an interaction situation, but that it is not primarily controlled by the situation. It is controlled by the content and experience structure of the person who has experienced the events.

This flow of impromptu narrative, according to Roswitha Breckner citing Schütze, is guided by four principles. They include: (1) biography and event holders (2) frames of events and experiences (3) social structures: situations, life milieus and social worlds, and (4) the entire shape of the life history.²⁴ Apart from these four cognitive figures, Schütze further identified

22 Riemann, Gerhard. A joint project against the back drop of a research tradition: An introduction to 'Doing Biographical Research'. *Forum Qualitative Research. On-line Journal*, 2003, 4(3). <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/3-03/3-03hrsg-ehtm>. [Accessed May 18, 2011].

23 Fischer-Rosenthal, Wolfram and Rosenthal, Gabriele *Op cit.* p. 136.

24 Roswitha Breckner. *Op Cit.*

four kinds of process structures in his studies of biographical accounts. They are: (a) the process structures of action schemes, in which planning, initiative and action are dominant (b) the process structures in which institutional expectations are in the foreground (c) the process structures of trajectory, which indicate a potential loss of control over the life because of extraneous conditions, and (d) process structures which suggest an unexpected or unaccountable turn towards a creative transformation in the biography.

Biographical Research: From Migration from to Transmigration

From its earliest usage in the discipline of sociology, biographical research has spread to other disciplines such as educational science and other social and human science disciplines. It is often employed in psychology, and (oral) history.²⁵ Apart from these disciplines, biographical research is also employed in literary studies, theology, medical and health sciences, social work, gender studies and migration research²⁶. Most studies that show the interconnectedness of gender with migration adopt the biographical approach. However, it is the emerging transnational migration research that biographical research has increasingly gained currency. As Ursula Apitzsch and Irini Siouti pointed out, “in connection with transnational migration research, ‘transnational social spaces’ have primarily been investigated through ‘multi-sited ethnography’ approaches. The multi-sited ethnography approach calls for research in the receiving and originating countries of migrants, in order to connect social changes in both countries and to decode transnational networks. In order to understand and reconstruct transnational migration phenomena today, biographical narrative interviews can be considered as a main research component in researching ‘transnationalism from below’²⁷.”

²⁵ See Passerini, Luisa (ed) *Memory and Totalitarianism. International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories*, Vol.I, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1992.

²⁶ Apitzsch, Ursula and Jansen, Mechthild (eds) *Migration, Biographie und Geschlechterverhältnisse*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot. 2003. pp. 65 - 80

²⁷ Ursula Apitzsch and Irini Siouti, *Op cit.* p. 6

Since migration studies have become interdisciplinary, a good range of perspectives, terminologies, and methodological tools have emerged. However, four disciplines are noted for their advancement of knowledge in this field. Stephen Vertovec who describes Migration Studies as an interdisciplinary subject area that can transcend traditional classifications of the humanities or social sciences, identified the four main disciplines to include politics, sociology, geography and anthropology²⁸. In spite of common aims, scholars adopt different approaches in their investigation. The different methods which they employ to the subject matter are seemingly a main difference between the four disciplines.

Earlier theories on migration²⁹, focused on reasons and consequences of international mobility within one nation state setting. Theories of transnational migration on the other hand, in contradistinction, are interested in analyzing the formation of new social contexts which are simultaneously situated within two or even more nation state frames³⁰. In this regard, transnational migration is understood as a form of mobility which enables continuous involvement of migrants within different cross-border formations, such as networks, organizations, diasporas, and institutions³¹. Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller had earlier mentioned that these continuous cross-border practices of migrants create specific social fields which span between the sending and receiving countries and form alternative social realities³². A number of studies on transnational migration do not only shed light on the transformation of

28 Vertovec, S. "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism". *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 1999. 2 (2): 447-62

29 Alba, Richard and Nee, Viktor. *Remaking the American mainstream. Assimilation and contemporary immigration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2003.

30 Amelina, Anna. "Searching for an Appropriate Research Strategy on Transnational Migration: The Logic of Multi-Sited Research and the Advantage of the Cultural Interferences Approach" [46 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative*. 2010.

31 Faist, Thomas. *The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2000.

32 Levitt, Peggy and Glick Schiller, Nina. "Conceptualizing simultaneity. A transnational social field perspective on society". *International Migration Review*, 2004. 38(145) pp. 595-629.

kinship relations³³, due to cross-border mobility, but also on the formation of pluri-locally organized political³⁴, economic³⁵, and religious³⁶ fields.

Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller criticized the nation-bounded research ways and their methodological consequences. Their criticisms among others, led to the emergence of the relational concept of transnational space.³⁷ In their contention, nation-bounded research restricts theoretical and empirical analyses to the borders of nation states. The main assumption of methodological nationalism is that social reality consists solely of nation states. Besides, it is based on the notion that nation states are founded around nation collectives with common history and traits³⁸.

Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller added one more twist to the migration research by differentiating three types of methodological nationalism. First, they argued that classic

33 Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette and Avila, Ernestine. *"I'm here but I'm there: The meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood"*. *Gender Sociology*. 1997. 11, 548-571.

34 Østergaard-Nielsen, Eva *Transnational politics. Turks and Kurds in Germany*. London: Routledge. 2003.

35 Portes, Alejandro; Guarnizo, Luis and Haller, William. "Transnational entrepreneurs: An alternative form of immigrant economic adaptation". *American Sociological Review*. 2002. 67, 278-298.

36 Levitt, Peggy *Good needs no passport: How migrants are transforming the American Religious Landscape*. New York: New Press. 2007.

37 Pries, Ludger. "Transnationalism: Trendy catch-all or specific research programme? A proposal for transnational organization studies as a micro-macro-link". *Working Paper 34/2007*. Bielefeld: COMCAD—Center on Migration, Citizenship and Development, Bielefeld, http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/tdrc/ag_comcad/downloads/workingpaper_34_Pries.pdf [Date of access: January 5, 2011]. (2007).

38 Amelina, Anna Searching for an Appropriate Research Strategy on Transnational Migration: The Logic of Multi-Sited Research and the Advantage of the Cultural Interferences Approach [46 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative*. 2010.

migration studies do not pay attention to nationalism and its effects on nation-building processes in current societies. According to them, sociology defines "the limits of society as coterminous with the nation state, rarely questioning nationalist ideology embedded in such founding assumption"³⁹. Second, they pointed out that nation states are often understood as natural entities. Third, they assumed that social research focuses primarily on territorial boundaries of nation states. As they remarked, 'the origin of nation state formations is not rooted within geographically limited territorial entities but can be found in the cross-border transformations of imperial and colonial power'⁴⁰

The point been made here is that, methodological tools employed in nation-bounded research cannot effectively capture the dynamics of transnational migration. This type of migration is *taking place within fluid social spaces that are constantly reworked through migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society*⁴¹. In their study on *Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends*, Peggy Levitt and Nadya Jaworsky argued that transnational migration consists of arenas that *are multi-layered and multi-sited, including not just the home and host countries but other sites around the world that connect migrants to their conationals and coreligionists.*⁴²

The multi-sited research technique widens the social scientific methodology by considering complex transnational linkages. Different "trajectories" of action, for instance, of transnational

³⁹ Ibid p. 579

⁴⁰ Ibid p. 581

⁴¹ Levitt P, Glick Schiller N. Conceptualizing simultaneity: a transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*. 2004. 38:1002–39.

⁴² Levitt, Peggy and Nadya Jaworsky, B. (2007) Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends. *Annual Review of Sociology* 33:129–56.

families, communities, organizations and diasporas, can be indicated by the study of social practices in different localities⁴³

Doing Biographic Research on African Transmigrants and Border Crossers

The data to which I will be referring has been collected in the context of my doctoral thesis, on which I have been working since 2009. It concerns qualitative research into the participation in community politics of migrants of Nigerian origin: migrants who, at the moment of my survey, were living in Benin and others who had returned - more or less definitively – to stay in Nigeria. The main scope of the research is to describe particular migration realities, and how these realities are interwoven in their participation in community and local politics in both Cotonou and Nigeria.

A word about the research setting is appropriate. Benin, a Francophone country which shares borders with Nigeria (an Anglophone country), is satirically referred to as the thirty-seventh state of Nigeria⁴⁴. Benin has been described as an entrepôt economy, and the Cotonou market is a hub for transborder trade between Benin and Nigeria⁴⁵. As an entrepôt economy, the country is dependent on Nigeria to export its imported goods, especially those that have relatively high import duties in Nigeria. In addition, there are also those goods that are expressly prohibited by the Nigerian state, and so their importation through Nigeria's waterways is almost impossible.

43 Lauser, Andrea Translokale Ethnographie. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. 2005. 6(3), Art. 7, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs050374> [Date of access] June 5, 2011

44 Nigeria is made up of thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory. This allusion shows to the extent that Benin is integrated to Nigeria, since the saying 'Nigeria catches cold, Benin sneeze's.

45 Igue, Ogunsola John. Evolution du commerce clandestin entre le Dahomey et le Nigeria depuis la guerre du "Biafra".. *Canadian Journal of African Studies /Revue Canadienne des Etudes Africaines* 1976. 10(2) pp. 235-257.

Examples of goods in this category are used cars that are older than eight years, finished textile products and used clothing. These goods are imported into Benin and traded in the Cotonou market⁴⁶. The population of Nigerians in Benin, engaged in this economy is estimated to be over 25 percent of the total population of seven million.

While most studies in the field of transnational migration are interested in investigating immigrants in the developed democracies, my study is concerned with Nigerian immigrants in Benin, both countries sharing attributes of developing economies. The biographical approach allows me to examine migration patterns and processes, as well as to investigate the practices and strategies of migrants and their families.

Exploring movements across international borders requires a research method which adjusts to the mobility of networks and subjects. Thus, I adopted multi-sited research. This approach makes it possible to study not only the different sites, but also flows and circulations of people, money, information, and ideas. In my project, I narrowed my focus to the two countries of Nigeria and Benin, which enabled me not only to understand the meanings of social networks and transnational experiences of migrants, but also to analyze where people come from, how they move, and where they are going, and why.

My first interviewee (although my study involves three interviewees, only one is reported here) is Sadiq Ibrahim. I met Sadiq in Cotonou when I travelled with my cousin to buy a car in 2009 in Missebo. He spoke Hausa fluently, so was of tremendous assistance to us, enabling us to get the best our money could afford. I later on met him seven months afterwards in Lagos when he came visiting family friends. Sadiq had moved to Benin since 1992 as a car merchant, involved in exporting fairly-used cars to Nigeria.

46 Olumide Abimbola. "Being similar: other-identification during fieldwork" *Anthropology Matters Journal*. 2009. 11 (1) p. 1

Although the interview was done in Hausa, I have transcribed it to English. Let us start observing how Sadiq began:

T: this is what I wanted to ask you to do... if you can tells me a little just as it comes to you....tell me how you decided to come to Benin, how you managed to, how it happened... if you tell me a little a little about the story of your arrival in Missebo from Nigeria... start from wherever you like...from when...

S: from where I came from, like my state in Katsina?

T: from when you decided to come, just tell me everything you know! Because everything is interesting

S: that will certainly take time, don't you think so? My mother's younger brother, whom we had not seen for twelve years, came home for Sallah in, I think August 1992. He came with a 'tokunbo' (fairly used car), and we learnt he was big 'car dealer' in Cotonou. I knew that it was a matter of time before I was going to travel out to meet him...."

(Sadiq, Ibrahim, 3rd December, 2010).

An aspect that has been a little neglected by authors, who have dealt with migration, is the perception that individuals have of mobility. This perspective allows us to partially free the migration issue from mere economic factors. The narratives of the migrants help to reveal the deep motivations, or the elements that make up the choice of leaving: they are those which intersect their story. This is especially noticeable at the beginning of the narration, where the moment, place or events put together become important in understanding the whole text. The reading and analysis of the stories subsequently proved that the beginning is interesting not only in itself, but because it often directs the entire narrative.

Biographic approaches aim at reinstalling individual persons and their experiences at the center of understanding and analysis. As with most migration research, economic factors have been at the centre of Sadiq's eventual migration to Missebo, where he also joined the 'tokubo' business, rising to an enviable position of the Secretary of 'Cross-border Vehicle Dealers' Association', who operate along the Lagos-Cotonou border route. Even though it is undeniable that migration

also means this, and the fact that economic factors are important in considering its causes and processes, it is a more complex phenomena and other factors should not be ruled out. Each time individuals reinterpret in their own way their decision to leave and their experience of mobility, intersecting it with their own history, wishes, facts of experience with which it is dotted. Recalling Foucault's words, one can say that migration is a process of *subjectification* (French: *subjectivation*) by means of which the individual elaborates his migratory experience.

T: I remember yesterday, you were talking about your involvement in vehicle dealers association, I would like you to tell me about your involvement... when you started playing a key role, you can start from where you want, what you think was the important moment and tell me what you feel to tell.

S: business here is difficult for new comers in the trade... I have gone through this challenge before... my role is quite different now! I arbitrate in disputes between importers from Nigeria, and sometimes our Beninese dealers..... I stopped 'flying' vehicles to seme-lagos border in 2005, when my wife Aisha came to stay with me in December...I think that was when I was elected as a member of the vehicle dealers association... I nearly forgot to tell you that my wife's elder brother who came to stay with us for two years, contested councillorship elections in her state (back in Nigeria) and won! We were in Nigeria during the 2009 elections, where we rallied around him to clinch the ticket.

(Sadiq, Ibrahim, 4th February, 2011).

Grounded in first evidence deriving from the narrative, it can be argued that Nigerian migrants are involved in social networks that stretch over traditional national borders as they sustain social ties to their homeland. The brief narrative above also suggest that Nigerian migrants in Benin maintain strong relationships with their home community, what is referred to as strong ties,⁴⁷ characterised by substantial time, investment, high emotional intensity, intimacy and the

⁴⁷ Granovetter, M "The Strength of Weak Ties". *American Journal of Sociology*. 1973. 73 pp. 1360-80.

reciprocal exchange of services, would be able to contribute more to nation-building and development.

In narrating his own migration, Sadiq Ibrahim puts forth his experience in a creative act; analysis of this performance can tell us, each time, what migration is and what its processes are. Besides the variety of life paths, in fact, the narratives tell us of the social dynamics implied in mobility processes and of the transformations which they bring about. Thus, they can bring new suggestions to the study of migration and to the concept of the phenomenon itself.

Conclusion

Scholars in the field of migration have stressed the need for interdisciplinary approaches that are able to avoid the pitfall of methodological nationalism. One of such approaches suggested is biographical research, which offers a way of investigating processes of change and the mingling of individual and societal positioning and identity constructions in migration processes. Biographic research also provides methodological tools to overcome the nation state perspective, what Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller called ‘natural unit of the analysis’ and the ‘methodological nationalism’ of migration research⁴⁸. Biographic approaches aim at reinstalling individual persons and their experiences at the center of understanding and analysis.

The study has adopted the biographic narrative of Sadiq Ibrahim, a Nigerian immigrant in Benin. Even though the study is just unfolding, I have begun to analyse the biographical narratives that I have collected, intersecting them with the histories of the storyteller. Rather than focusing on storytelling as an elicitation method, I would rather concentrate on the possible types of considerations stemming from the narratives of the migrants. Using political participation as starting point- from the formal choices regarding content and performance- it is possible to effect considerations on a larger scale. In fact the interpretations and considerations that I have drawn would not have been possible aprioristically, without fieldwork.

48 Wimmer, Andreas and Glick Schiller, Nina ‘Methodological Nationalism, the Social sciences and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology.’ In: *International Migration Review*. 2003. 3 pp. 576-611.

In Still Motion: what travel practices of researchers can tell (and not) about travel practices of Zimbabweans in northern South Africa

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Border zones are full of movement and the prevention of movement, of routes and individuals and groups potentially looking for some sort of roots, of people and goods traveling through officially regulated crossings or through officially unregulated crossings as state authorities and, at times, those outside the state with their own forms of coercive authority seek to regulate such passage of individuals, groups, and goods. As Hilary Cunningham and Josiah Heyman observe, “a key thread in border studies is the movement of people and things across politically defined geographic boundaries or the inverse, the creation of barriers to such movement.... [B]orders permit, monitor and halt movement” (2004: 293). What they call a “mobilities-enclosures continuum” is clearly found in the border-zones throughout Africa, including the Zimbabwe-South African border-zone where we have carried out research since 2004.

Scholarship on African border-zones has examined some component of mobilities or enclosures or both, analysing important topics such as labour migration (e.g., Coplan 2000, Crush and MacDonald 2000), the regulation of refugees and immigrants (e.g., Malkki 1995, Peberdy 2009), transnational livelihoods and remittances (e.g., Little 2003, Feyissa and Hoehne 2010), the formation or dissolution of sovereignty (e.g., Zeller 2010, Chalfin 2010), conflict (e.g., Lentz 2003, Johnson 2008), and the cultural politics of borders on identity formation (e.g., Nugent 2003, Hughes 2006). Our research has followed some of these well-worn paths, examining the politics of immigration for Zimbabwean migrants in the border zone in northern South Africa (see, e.g., Rutherford 2008, 2011).

This paper turns its attention to methodological issues of this research in the border-zone. In so doing, we draw on some of the heuristic tools deployed to analyse the border-zone to explore the methodological challenges found in the practices of research itself. Here we are influenced by the scholarship that has critically examined the “travel practices” (e.g., Clifford 1997) of researchers and those they studied and their occlusion by the spatial and temporal politics that have been hegemonic in the discipline of anthropology over time. This work, for example, shows how conventional ways of writing and conceptualizing “the field” in socio-cultural anthropology have tended to erase the different forms of mobilities of the researchers, often spatializing and rooting individuals and communities to certain locations. Such forms of analysis, according to this critique, thereby have generated a sense of the research site being hermetically sealed, a stage waiting for the researcher to study and represent it, and ignoring how the researchers are differentially enmeshed in the varied forms of mobilities and enclosures affecting the people under study and the contours of the “stage” itself:

Some strategy of localization is inevitable if significantly different ways of life are to be represented. But “local” in whose terms? How is significant difference politically articulated, and challenged? Who determines where (and when) a community draws its lines, names its insiders and outsiders? ... Localizations of the anthropologist’s objects of study in terms of a “field” tend to marginalize or erase several blurred boundary areas, historical realities that slip out of the ethnographic frame.... [Thus], the ethnographer has localized what is actually a regional/national/global nexus (Clifford 1992: 97, 99, 100; see also Clifford 1997, Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

From the means of mobility to the duration of the stays, from the racialized, classed, and gendered dynamics of travel to the permissibility and impermissibility of access to different people and spaces, amongst many other examples, researchers themselves encounter and engage in particular forms of mobility and enclosures which may have consequences for research. This is particularly accentuated in a border-zone, where mobilities and enclosures are inherent in these locations.

Studying those living in, and passing through, border-zones, including those involved in clandestine movement across state borders, provides a number of methodological and ethical challenges in and of themselves for research in general and ethnographic research in particular. Unlike, say, research that relies more on quantitative methods, ethnographic research seeks to have more robust interpretations of the social practices and “webs of meaning” informing the everyday lives of the people residing or passing through locations, including that of the spaces themselves. This rests in part on building up relations of rapport and spending sufficient time in quotidian contexts. Those whose citizenship status and/or livelihood practices may not be fully legitimate or legal may be wary about researchers and their questions. In turn, the travel practices of researchers, particularly expatriate, can compound the methodological challenges of carrying out such research, as the movement of the researcher(s) in and out of the border-zone and their duration in the area of research shapes both the possibilities of co-presence and the types of research conducted.

Critically reflecting on research conducted on Zimbabweans living in the border-zone of northern South Africa for short periods of time annually since 2004, we will critically focus on the methodological limitations and insights coming from the different set of travel practices used by a researcher and his research assistant in their periodic research trips to northern South Africa. We suggest that the cultural politics of travel of us as researchers sheds light into some of the ethical dimensions and analytical framings – and occlusions – of our research on Zimbabweans in the border-zone of northern South Africa.

In this paper, we examine the methodological implications of our different travel practices through exploring how they have enabled us to learn about certain particular social nodes of “mobilities and enclosures,” including those that are durable and others that shift over time, and how they have made it difficult for us to find others. By training our analytical focus on such social practices, we are seeking to highlight specific slices of the mobility-enclosure continuum through which Zimbabweans in northern South Africa operate which are opened up, or not, through our own differential travel practices; in other words, to put them in “still motion.” Before exploring this in more depth, let us first briefly discuss our varied practices of movement in this research.

Researchers in Motion

Blair

Blair first started to do research on Zimbabweans in northern South Africa in June 2004. It was an exploratory visit after he had spent the previous 12 years carrying out research, off and on, on issues concerning farm workers in Zimbabwe. Continuing that broad research interest, he

initially focused his research on the livelihoods of Zimbabwean farm workers in northern South Africa, in particular on those working on the commercial farms in the border-zone with Zimbabwe.

At that point, there had been very little research conducted on Zimbabweans in northern South Africa (other than, e.g., Lincoln and Maririke 2000) and he began by contacting researchers, research institutes, farmers' associations, and non-governmental organizations he had identified as possible sources of knowledge and networking. After spending a few days in Cape Town and Johannesburg, he rented a car and traveled north, initially stopping in Polokwane, the capital of Limpopo, the northernmost province of South Africa that leads to the Zimbabwean border, and Thohoyondou, the capital of Vhembe District, in the north. In these cities, he met representatives of the commercial farmers' associations, which in northern Limpopo largely represent white Afrikaans-speaking farmers, and NGOs, mainly staffed by black South Africans working on land issues and public health issues concerning farm workers in Limpopo. Representatives of both of these often divergent sets of organizations gave him names of farmers in the border-zone and NGO officials based in Musina, the South African border town.

After such initial contact and meetings, Blair then drove to meet these individuals to discuss the proposed research, learn about their understandings of Zimbabweans in the border-zone at the time, and through them to meet some Zimbabwean farm workers. He also drove with a representative of a land rights NGO who took him around farms and along farm roads with which he had some familiarity.

Since that year, Blair has traveled to Musina every year but one for a short period of time (10 days to 6 weeks) to conduct research. He comes by air from his home in Canada, driving up to Musina in a small and new rental vehicle. When he is in Musina, he has stayed with one of the officials from a Musina-based NGO, living with him and his family in one of the townships of Musina. While based in Musina, he also drives to some commercial farms, including those with whom he made original contact in 2004, to talk to farm workers and farmers. Over the years, he has also become more interested in the livelihood practices of Zimbabweans in Musina itself. He has thus walked and drove around the growing border town to meet people and to spend time in particular locations carrying out participant-observation. He finds, however, these travel practices often make him dependent on finding particular social nodes of mobility and enclosures and then negotiating through the particular gate-keepers. He has also relied heavily on the work – and the travel practices – of his main research assistant, Rinse Nyamuda.

Rinse

In clear contrast to Blair, Rinse is black. He is not an academic. He is a research assistant to Blair. He has been coached, mentored, nurtured and groomed by him for more than a decade and a half and continues to be. He comes from Zimbabwe, a country whose economy is in shambles, as a result of both, economic mismanagement by its handlers and a political standoff between the two main contending political parties. This has led many Zimbabweans to live outside its borders, as political refugees or economic (il)legal immigrants in neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana, among others. He is assisting Blair in carrying out research on the livelihoods of such Zimbabweans living in Musina, a border town.

Rinse doubles as a research assistant and a student with a local, provincial university in South Africa. This outlines his travel practices in and out both of Musina and South Africa. He relies on public transport for long trips. When conducting research in Musina townships, he heavily relies on foot, walking side-by-side with people whom he is carrying research on.

Rinse started doing research work in Musina in winter 2008. Blair had invited him to come to South Africa to continue his broad research interests which had shifted from Zimbabwe into northern South Africa. Since then, he has been going into this town twice per year, winter and summer. He spends an average of three to four weeks on each visit. During both winter and summer of 2008, he stayed with the family of an official of a local NGO. Thereafter, and in subsequent years, he has been staying in one of the townships with an unmarried local male South African official of a local security company.

Based on the networks established by Blair since 2004, Rinse has met farmers, NGO officials, Zimbabwean farm workers and cross-border traders, Zimbabweans resident in Musina and individuals in transit in pursuit of this broad research interest. He travels to the networked farms to meet farmer(s) and farm workers. He walks around in the townships in Musina and in the town itself. He meets people, spends time with them in their homes, refugee shelters, refugee reception centre, refugee food centre(s) vending sites and social centres such as churches, small grocery shops or sporting events doing participant observation and conducting brief detailed interviews on their livelihoods, when an opportune arises.

However, Rinse's reliance on public transport obviously entails less distance is covered. His identity as a black middle-aged man coming from one of the poorest countries in southern Africa curtails his interactions and encounters with NGO officials, farmers(s), government officials and people in general. Thus, he is perceived in light of a cross-border trader, an asylum seeker, an economic (il)legal immigrant or one of the suffering lot who is job-hunting. More often than not, he is compelled to produce his student identity card or passport to refute this identity and show that he has a student visa for South Africa. Yet, this identity of being a student raises suspicion among many of the interlocutors. Conversely, this former identity puts him squarely into the people who are the subject matter of the research. He is not as visible as Blair who is white and has access to a car.

These travel practices and identities are complimentary. Rinse's relative immobility enables him to penetrate into the lives of the (il)legal immigrants. He can easily mix, mingle and follow the foot-paths and foot-steps of the interlocutors. His identity, both in terms of colour and language, has legitimated this acceptance among the interlocutors. They often agree to have free discussions with him without any expectation of anything in return, though it is not unusual for people asking what benefit will accrue to them for participating in the research. On the other hand, those who fled the country due to political persecutions are very much uncomfortable and suspicious of him. The latter, would often seek his political opinions on the Zimbabwean political and economic crisis before opening up conversations with him – a somewhat delicate position he encounters on a daily basis. But he too finds that his access to, and ability to gain the confidence of, Zimbabwean migrants requires him to work through particular social nodes.

What have these travel methods meant for the conduct of our research in the border-zone? What forms of mobilities and enclosures have we learned about, engaged in, and have been unable to learn about due to our own travel practices? The practices have generated different insights and limits for each of us into learning about the lives of Zimbabweans in this South African border-zone. We will examine in particular the varying forms of prestige associated with our travel practices, our ability to establish links to particular nodes of mobility and enclosures, and our inability to find more information about others because of our own itinerant mobilities to the research site.

In Focus: Mobilities & Enclosures for Zimbabweans in northern South Africa

Blair's access to a car has not only allowed him to cover distance quickly but when combined with him being racialized as "white," middle aged, and his accent signalling that he is from the global North have enabled him to relatively easily interact with white farmers and officials from NGOs and government offices. This embodied travel practice and the often short periods of time in which he visited sometimes led his interlocutors to think he was (also) a tourist or a development official, particularly as more and more international agencies began to open up offices in Musina in 2007 onwards as the numbers of Zimbabweans jumping the border into South Africa increased and their presence in northern South Africa increasingly viewed as a "humanitarian crisis."

His motorized travel practice has also given greater credibility to his research project for many of these interlocutors. By driving in his own (rented) car, Blair was perceived as someone who was "mobile" and, moreover, able to easily go to meetings elsewhere. Often, from the farmers and officials Blair was able to learn about their practices towards, and understandings of, the Zimbabweans in the border-zone and their perceptions of any changes regarding the migration of Zimbabweans and responses to them over time in the border-zone.

For some officials, his access to a car also meant that he was someone who could also drive them, and their dependents, to different meetings or to places where they carried out their work, allowing them to forego the use of public transportation or from hitching a ride, as they usually did. This ability has facilitated his entry-way into some of these organizations. This travel practice thus has allowed him to gain insight into some of the daily practices of these organizations working with Zimbabweans, including those which permit particular forms of mobility and those which generate barriers in this border-zone.

For example, on the farms the commercial farmers put Blair in touch with Zimbabwean workers who they thought were the appropriate interlocutors. These were typically young, educated men who were permanent farm workers and held lower management positions. Although the precarious labour relations and the uncertainty of immigration rules meant their position on the farms is still uncertain, they are generally more rooted to the farm than the majority of Zimbabwean farm workers in the region who largely form the numerous seasonal and casual labour force on the citrus, vegetable, and game farms in northern Limpopo province. So Blair has been more easily able to gain insight into the lives of the permanent Zimbabwean workers – men and women who he has met each time he returns for his research – than the seasonal ones,

many of whom do not stay too long on the farm or are not necessarily back on the farm when he returns for his research.

For Zimbabwean migrants in Musina, Blair initially spent some time with the humanitarian organizations that began operating in 2006 onwards who were focused on these Zimbabweans. For instance, he helped out with a faith-based organization providing food relief to Zimbabweans in the winter of 2007. This was a time when there were very few organizations working with the Zimbabweans were operating in Musina. By traveling with the cars of those in the faith-based organization he learned of some of the locations where undocumented Zimbabweans were hiding from authorities in the vicinity, as they were fearful of deportation. Through interacting with the officials and the Zimbabweans, he learned of the barriers to mobility of these Zimbabweans and the brief spaces of safety from arrest these daily food drops provided for them in the town, as at that time there was an understanding that the police would not intervene in these humanitarian efforts to try to arrest and deport undocumented Zimbabweans.

Whereas Blair was able to learn about forms of enclosure and enabling factors for certain forms of mobility on the farms and in Musina due in part to the prestige in which his travel practices helped to generate, his itinerant research schedule thus meant he has relied more on those generating different “modes of belonging” (Rutherford 2011) for Zimbabweans in this border-zone rather than many of the Zimbabweans who were passing through. Farmers, permanent workers, NGO officials, and Zimbabweans living permanently in Musina’s townships have been his main interlocutors. Most of these have helped to shape some of the dominant channels through which Zimbabweans have found some forms of claims and livelihoods in northern South Africa, precarious as they may be. As a consequence, Blair’s research has focused on the social nodes with their attendant power relations and forms of enclosures faced by many Zimbabweans who seek to remain in northern South Africa, while his own travel practices and short periods of time spent in the research sites have limited his ability to make connections to and learn from the Zimbabweans who are in a more vulnerable positions, responding to, and engaging with, these modes of belonging. Here, Rinse’s research has been vital, though he too has had to operate through those in key positions of the nodes of mobility and enclosure, given his own itinerant research schedule.

In Musina, Blair put Rinse in touch with NGOs, farmer(s) and farm workers with whom he had maintained contacts. These contacts were accessible to Rinse’s reliance on public transport or more often on foot. By contacting, interviewing and interacting with them, he has given content and meaning to the wider research interests cast by Blair. Though there are many instances in which his travel practices have done this, the following four instances are noted.

Firstly, his attachment to a certain faith-based NGO found himself being involved in it at both an administrative and personal level with its officials. Administratively, he assisted in drafting various correspondence and project proposals for its various projects and activities. Among its projects included the distribution of food and assistance of unaccompanied minors. He had the privilege of attending some of its meetings held within the township halls. His easy access to internet facilities made him a conduit for transmitting messages between the officials and Blair and others. This gave him an internal theoretical understanding of its operations and organisational arrangements. This theoretical understanding was backed by regular visits to other

informal faith-based affiliate groups that operated from the nearby mountains. On the personal level, he spent much time visiting and socialising with the family members of the NGO staff and even visiting patients with them at the local hospital. In this way, he learnt how religion shapes the lives and livelihoods of (il)legal immigrants, in that, one way or the other, they are loosely connected to faith-based organisations for comfort in events of mishaps such as deaths or serious illnesses.

The main faith-based NGO official with whom Rinse has befriended is also a local religious leader. He is mainly involved in community based organisations including being a founding member of a number of church organisations in Musina. According to him, the purpose of these organisations is to help undocumented immigrants with shelter, food, clothes and to cater for their spiritual needs and to give them hope in their endeavours. Yet, he hardly talks about his own livelihood practices. He enjoys talking about his accomplishments and how he has helped Zimbabweans in Musina. He is proud of having been one of the first initiators of the shelters, the feeding schemes and, claims to be the one who suggested the introduction of asylum permits in Musina. He claims that his ideas were stolen by other NGOs in Musina which were better funded than his organisation. Through his organisation he asserts that he has been able to get donor funding from overseas but at the moment he laments that there is donor fatigue. He claims that this donor fatigue is a result of the continued Zimbabwean situation, which has no end in sight and secondly, the way in which donor funds, have greatly been misused, by the recipient organisations.

On the other hand, this religious leader is more of a politician. He enjoys being engaged in political debates and speculating on how the Zimbabwean situation could be brought to an end. In this context, he is always questioning Rinse, trying to find out whether he is pro-government or anti-government; whether he was an investigator sent by the present Zimbabwean regime or was a genuine research assistant doing purely academic work. This has been a big challenge for Rinse.

This is particularly so since Rinse has come to realise that this Zimbabwean NGO official is highly unpredictable. He can change sides very easily. In Rinse's interactions with him, at times, he would be so passionate about being pro-government and on other occasions be extremely anti-government. He has been so proud of telling Rinse of his association with the top members of pro-government and how well connected he is to them. At one time, he passionately talked about the strategies that would be used by pro-government members during the unscheduled 'forthcoming elections' to help the regime stay in power. On the other hand, he would talk about the strategies to be employed by anti-government members to effect a regime change. Therefore, Rinse's disclosure of his political affiliation to a particular political party would be a committal of suicide. Rinse had to constantly, keep reminding himself of the purpose, ethics and reasons for conducting research.

The risks of taking sides are subtle and consequences great especially when it comes to the Zimbabwean situation. A person can easily slide into either side, yet the reward for doing so would be pain and disaster. This NGO official holds a tremendous influence over many Zimbabweans in Musina as a result of his being a religious leader in a number of church organisations formed by Zimbabweans in Musina. By virtue of his religious leadership, his

utterances are not taken lightly by the followers. For instance, when he spoke about the imminent and looming second xenophobic attacks that were to occur, the feelings of many Zimbabweans in Musina were raised. As a result, some people left Musina and some were kept on their toes so that they could jump the border back into Zimbabwe on hearing of these attacks in any part of South Africa. With this type of influence, his announcement at any church gathering that Rinse's political opinions were either pro- or anti-government would subsequently jeopardize and undermine the broad research interests cast by Blair. In a sense, Rinse has become captured himself in the node of belonging through this Zimbabwean NGO official based in Musina.

Secondly, through these officials, he was introduced to a female single prospective Zimbabwean entrepreneur. This woman has been very pivotal in Rinse's research. She linked him up to her network of friends. Initially, she was very suspicious of him as usual. According to her, she thought that Rinse was doing work for the present Zimbabwean regime, which had sent him to carry out some investigations on Zimbabweans who had run away from the country. As Rinse observed in his research, most Zimbabweans in Musina apparently have one thing in common – the fear of arrest and subsequent deportation. Even though at the moment we are not sure of her perception of Rinse she has been comfortable enough with him to introduce him to her friends without any fear. She would actually tell her friends that Rinse was not an investigator from the Zimbabwean authorities but merely a university student carrying out some studies. In this way, Rinse has been able to make 'her place' a meeting place with other Zimbabweans for the purpose of carrying out interviews.

Unlike most female Zimbabwean immigrants who vend by walking around town and in the townships with wares on top of their heads, she prefers some form of organised business. She rents a shelter where she sells some grocery items (known as a spaza) and beer or operates from her sleeping room when she fails to secure one. She is popular for offering provisions common among Zimbabwean (il)legal immigrants. As it became clearer with his repeated visits and spending much time with her, Rinse learnt that this woman makes a livelihood by providing provisions smuggled into the country for (il)legal immigrants. How these items are smuggled, however, is still unclear to him as his own intermittent presence in Musina hampers his ability for completely gaining her trust.

'Her place' became a meeting place. Rinse would meet, mix, mingle and socialise with many other Zimbabweans at this place. He would carry out detailed interviews or listen to stories of how (il)legal immigrants cross into the country, their sad and horrible encounters with 'magumagumas' (the organised thieves who have control and authority over illegal crossing paths and points or trading routes into South Africa). He observes and participates in the informal conversations and picks up the latest gossip stories on possible xenophobic attacks, deportations, who is going to the trucks (a popular prostitute centre among Zimbabwean females where they make a living by servicing long distance truck drivers), among others.

Besides, as Rinse learnt, the place is a social centre where Zimbabwean (il)legal immigrants would come to socialise, make friends or just sit after a day's hard work, walking around looking for piece jobs or vending. In this way, the immigrants would exchange information on possible places to look for piece jobs, prospective employers or pass information if someone was looking

for a room to rent.

What makes this place (that has become recently more of a “shabeen,” a vendor of beer) popular is that smuggled Zimbabwean cigarettes highly sought by smokers in South Africa, are sold there. Most of these magumaguma come to ‘this place’ with various items (such as cellphones, shoes and clothes), in most probability, forcibly taken away from innocent people who would have used or lured to use illegal crossing points to enter South Africa. These items are disposed of cheaply in order to get money to buy beer, cigarettes and other items.

As Rinse had become a regular visitor at ‘this place’, he gained the owner’s trust to learn more of the type of social nodes in which she was involved. For instance, on a number of occasions she would alert him of the presence of deadly magumagumas who would have come to buy beer or just relax. At one time, the owner of ‘this place’, linked Rinse up to one of these magumagumas who agreed to have an interview. Rinse was happy after exchanging introductions to hear that this interlocutor was coming from the same rural area in Zimbabwe as Rinse. This Zimbabwean was once a temporary primary school teacher at a local school in the rural area. He came into South Africa as a long distance truck driver with a truck company based in Johannesburg. His wife is still based in Johannesburg. He left employment as a long distance truck driver and then moved to Musina as it was a place for making quick money. However, this interview did not last long from the point when Rinse wanted to know how he is making quick money in Musina. The man told him blankly that he was not at liberty to talk about his personal life. Further, he even mentioned that even his wife was not privileged to know of what he was doing and how he was making a living in Musina. The wife was just happy to receive money regularly from him for her upkeep and that of the children.

In short, this Zimbabwean woman’s spaza shop/shabeen in the township acts as a meeting place for many Zimbabweans especially, the magumagumas. They are asleep during most of the day as they operate during the night. When they wake up, they gather at this place drinking beer or just buy and leave. Rinse slowly realised that the owner even offers them beer on credit when they come with no money. They simply tell her that last night it was not a profitable day so they do not have money but need some beers. This woman informed Rinse that the presence of too many people at her spaza has caused her trouble with the man who owned the spaza which she was renting who then invited the police to have her arrested. This led her also to be evicted from the spaza without notice by the owner. According to her, the spaza owner was just jealous of her success which is why he invited the police to arrest her. However, she avoided arrest by bribing the police.

This woman does not live a high life according to the standards of successful Zimbabwean immigrants neither does she put on expensive clothes. However, evidence that she makes a lot of money from her activities is visible when you enter her sleeping room. She has to herself some of the expensive furniture compared to other immigrants who are gainfully employed. She is even able to ask other immigrants to come and have meals at her place.

She operates the spaza shop alone. However, more often she acts as a good Samaritan to young Zimbabweans girls who come into Musina alone. If she happens to see young Zimbabwean girls or those running away from the shelters, she offers to give them shelter and food. At one time,

she was staying with two girls and one boy. She would ask them to help her at her spaza in return for free accommodation and free food. At the same time, these juveniles would sometimes steal from her spaza and disappear when they felt that they would have accumulated enough to help them move further into the farming communities or elsewhere inland South Africa. Consequently, she would not report them to the police for fear of exposing herself to the police as an illegal immigrant who is involved in illegal activities (her asylum permit had expired by then).

By making connection with her, 'her place' has been an anchor for Rinse during his itinerant travel practices, providing insight into some of the nodes operating in or through it. At the same time, his own temporary presence in the townships, even if on a regularly basis, has made it difficult for him to establish strong enough relations with her or others to completely understand all the social relations, forms of (inter)dependencies, that have been occurring.

Thirdly, through his regular visits to the Refugee Reception Centre, Rinse met a Zimbabwean woman working as an informal vendor there. She linked him up with her friend, a Zimbabwean working as an international NGO official. The interaction was on a personal rather than official capacity. When they met for the first time, the official had just bought a laptop and requested his assistance in surfing the internet for possible jobs. He gladly offered his assistance, doing internet job searches, going through many of the application forms that he downloaded. He would print these forms at a local NGO where he is affiliated to as the official had no access to a printer. By spending much time with this official, Rinse learnt that the official maintains close ties with her relatives from her home country. She sends remittances and goods for a son who schools in Zimbabwe regularly.

In addition, though the official has a stable income and works for an international NGO, she was not secure as she worked on contract basis whilst in possession of an asylum permit. Yet, she offers soft loans to a number of (il)legal immigrant vendors to start fruit vending businesses. However, Rinse was unable to ascertain how much interest they pay back in return. Through this official, he was able to interview many of the recipients of the soft-loans. Whether they agreed to be interviewed by him hoping to get more loans or fear of losing the soft loans, he is not certain. Interestingly, although the official organised people for him to interview and interact with, she was evasive on having a detailed interview with him, a common trend he observed among (il)legal immigrants (NGO) employees in the town.

Nevertheless, these individuals have been important levers in the research as they continue to link Rinse up to their network of friends, clients and followers. Their nodes of connectivity are important because generally conducting research into the social lives in which illegality occurs and where people are continuously on the move is difficult. Either people will suspect you for gathering information in order to have them arrested by passing it to the relevant authorities which they are generally trying to evade or people may not have time for you as they are continually mobile and busy with town life. You need someone to link you up. These individuals have enabled Rinse to conduct interviews with those people who were initially conservative, reserved or maybe scared of talking with him when he first went into Musina in 2008.

Finally, feeding centres form another type of social node relevant to many Zimbabweans based in or passing through Musina. Since 2008, in each of his two annual visits to this border town, Rinse became a frequent visitor to them. His identity as ‘black’ fits squarely in their clientele so his access to them could hardly be denied. However, for him to be able to conduct interviews, he has had to seek permission from the authorities at the centre. At one centre, this permission has not been easily forthcoming. Though he has met and was given verbal authority by the founder(s) of the centre to carry out interviews at the centre, these founder(s) are not always present due to other commitments elsewhere. Rather, Rinse has had to negotiate with the camp’s “ushers” (people who ensure that order is maintained at the centre). Thus, the ushers have some form of control and authority. What does this mean to his activities as a researcher?

This means that whenever he visits the centre, the ushers present do not allow him to carry out interviews on the people present. The ushers blankly tell him that there were under strict orders not to allow any person to conduct interviews at the centre, without first, having obtained permission from the founder(s). This practice has denied him access to the people who are sheltered at this centre.

As a consequence of his movements in and out of Musina, bi-annually, it has been extremely difficult for him to establish lasting or long term relationships with the ushers. This is partly due to his own movements and also partly to the movements of the ushers. On each of the annual visits, he meets new ushers, with the same orders not to allow persons to interview people sheltered at the centre. Interestingly, these people to whom he is denied access are the same people that he is able to meet and interview freely at other places, feeding centres, and many others. Thus, once the people are at this ‘enclosure’, they are under the strict control and authority of the rules and regulations of the centre. Through his bi-annual visits, Rinse has thus observed and experienced how seemingly protective these ‘nodes’ are to themselves than the people they purport to care for. This, in particular, exposes another challenge for the research assistant in that the ‘enclosures’ become hermetically sealed in his presence.

Conclusion

We have suggested that our different travel practices have enabled particular understandings of different social nodes of “mobilities and enclosures” operating in the South African border-zone with Zimbabwe. Our critical reflections on the methodological implications of travel have noted how our differentiated spatial practices have informed varied responses to our research by our interlocutors, providing us insight into different forms of mobilities and enclosures shaping the lives of Zimbabweans in northern South Africa. In respect to the ‘field’ or ‘stage’ where the research is conducted, we can contrast the commercial farms and the townships in terms of how the travel practices of us as researchers and those of the Zimbabweans have shaped our research.

With more resources and marked as someone from the Global North, Blair has often traveled by car, adding to his social capital when meeting employers, NGO and government officials. This has helped him to gain permission to meet many (white) commercial farmers who, in turn, have often allowed him to talk to Zimbabwean employees. On these farms, there is concentrated authority and power relations from the farmer permeating into the various farm authority structures (which elsewhere has been called “domestic government”; see Rutherford 2001).

With the authority from the farm owner, key farm workers were instructed or informed by senior management of the presence of a researcher in the farm compound. Through these authorities, they are urged to co-operate in assisting the researcher. This does not guarantee the Zimbabwean workers will speak openly and it can make them suspect the researcher is really working for the farm owner. Yet, on the whole, the particular mode of belonging operating in this social node makes them relatively accessible for the researchers once permission has been granted by the farm owners. But given the itinerant characteristics of our research, we have tended to spend more time with the permanent Zimbabwean workers who are there each research visit, building up relations with them and thus enabling easier entries into their lives. As a result, we have learned less about the many Zimbabwean seasonal workers on the farm.

Correspondingly, Blair has had more entry ways than Rinse to NGO and government officials in Musina as well. Rinse has also found similar social nodes, though more at the scale of the township communities themselves. His travel practices and citizenship have made him appear at times as a subject of governmental and non-governmental interventions rather than as a researcher.

In contrast to the commercial farms, the social nodes found in the townships are quite different. There is an absence of central authority and control. Each individual or household is an authority in itself. This curtails the movement and freedom of Rinse in and around the township households. For instance, Rinse has tried to move from door-to-door conducting interviews in the townships on several occasions, yet it has generally been unproductive as it raises a lot of security concerns in an area infested with criminality. People were suspicious of a black Zimbabwean coming to the door, uncertain of his intentions or for whom he is working. And he had no wider well-known organisation or forum to help facilitate his introductions to them.

Faced with this township setting, Rinse has also relied heavily on contacts, visiting nodes, meeting people at vending sites, shopping centres, spending time at their homes, all of which have given him an opportunity to meet other people as well. He has entered into these township-grounded social nodes, which have afforded particular insights and have generated some barriers and insecurities for him, as we have discussed above.

Finally, one could talk of the social node between Blair and Rinse. For some of his research activities, Rinse has relied on contacts and entry-ways Blair has forged amongst farm owners, permanent farm workers and NGO officials. In turn, Blair has relied on contacts and entry-ways into learning about the lives of some of the Zimbabweans living in the Musina townships. As Blair's travels and Rinse's travels to northern South Africa occur at different times, there exists a type of continuity for the research which helps to strengthen existing ties to our research interlocutors. While we do not claim to have a thorough understanding of all the mobilities and enclosures which inform and help constitute the lives of Zimbabweans in the border-zone with South Africa, our own travel practices have helped to open up research insights into some of the social nodes, while occluding others. By putting such socially situated travel practices into focus in this paper, we hope such "still motion" vignettes provide insight into elements of ethnographic research practices that enable or hinder better understanding of the lives of the Zimbabweans in this South African border-zone in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

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PANEL 1: Methodologies for studying cross-border movements

Coordinator: Tara Polzer (tara.polzer@wits.ac.za)

Panel abstract

Research on migration and border areas in Africa brings together methodological challenges from both migration studies and borderland studies. On the one hand, these challenges arise from the context, including mobile research targets; multiple bureaucratic institutions with their respective actors, processes and archives; oftentimes uncertain legal or security conditions; a lack of reliable and comparable official data sources, etc. On the other hand, both migration and borderland studies are multi- and interdisciplinary fields, which may open up opportunities for innovative and multi-pronged methodological approaches, but which may also lead to confusion regarding comparisons and collaborations between researchers and communication with policy actors. This panel will bring together papers to present examples of interesting methodological approaches to studying mobility in and across borderlands, and to engage with broader disciplinary, strategic and ethical issues.

The panel will be structured as a roundtable discussion to enable maximum interaction and discussion among the presenters and between presenters and other conference participants. After all, we all 'do' methodology. After brief presentations by each panel participant (focusing on raising key issues rather than on presenting a formal paper), the panelists will discuss the following themes, inviting inputs from the audience as well:

- Capturing multi-sited (and mobile) subjects (cross-border people, institutions, territories, etc.): is the only option multi-sited research?
- The researcher and the (performed) state: passports & permissions, only logistics or something more significant to the research process?
- Researcher effects in borderland studies: beyond the 'usual' dynamics of in/outsider, power and privilege?

The panel discussions will be documented and written up as a collaborative paper for publication after the conference.

Tara Polzer Ngwato (Panel Chair)

Full papers are available for:

Terhemba Nom Ambe-Uva, Researching African Transmigrants and Border Crossers using Biographical Analysis

Blair Rutherford & Rinse Nyamuda, In Still Motion: what travel practices of researchers can tell (and not) about travel practices of Zimbabweans in northern South Africa

Additional panel inputs from:

Oliver Bakewell, Researching in the margins of the state: methodological and ethical challenges for borderland researchers

Thenjiwe Nkosi, Reflections on community organization and collective creative film production as a means of engagement in a borderland

*Importance of Somali Social formation in Kenya-
Somalia border crossing*

*A Paper Presented at the Fifth Annual Conference of the
African Borderlands Research Network (Aborne): Crossing
African Borders: Migration and Mobility, Lisbon, Portugal on
21-25 September 2011*

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Introduction

Ethnic Somalis inhabit much of north-eastern Kenya, Djibouti, former Somali Democratic Republic and eastern Ethiopia. After the overthrow of Dictator Siad Barre in Somalia in 1991, continuous sporadic outbursts of fighting have caused people in southern Somalia to flee to neighboring north-eastern Kenya. While crossing different tribal and international borders, these refugees face abuse, deprivation or even death. Based on my recent field work in three Somali refugees' camps in Dadaab, north-eastern Kenya, this paper briefly highlights delimitation of internationally recognized Kenya-Somalia border and important roles played by Somali clan social formation during the process of crossing internal clan borders. The presentation will explore Somali refugees various motivations, implications, different types of settlement and strategies.

Somalis were colonized by Britain, Italy and France. Somali territory of Djibouti was ruled by French Colonial Empire to counter British rule in and around the Suez Canal and gained its independence in 1977. Somalis inhabit also in what is formerly known as the Northern Frontier District (NFD)¹. The NFD was part of British East Africa and after the dissolution of the former British colonies in East Africa, Britain annexed NFD to Kenya. The fifth part where ethnic Somalis inhabit is Ogaden region (south-eastern Ethiopia) which was ruled by the British and annexed it to Ethiopia in 1954. Northern part of Somalia was ruled by the British government, which granted independence on 26 June, 1960 while Italy occupied Southern Somalia and left the region on July 1, 1960 after nationalist movement struggle of Somali Youth League(SYL)². These two parts of Somali territory united as one nation and formed the Somali Republic on July 1, 1960³. In 1991, a civil war broke out and the Somali state collapsed. Since then, the north-western province of Somalia has declared itself as an independent state of Somaliland in 1991⁴, while in the north-east part of the country an autonomous state of Puntland was established in 1998. Both Somaliland and Puntland are relatively stable and peaceful. In south and central Somalia, there is still ongoing civil war.

Clan membership plays an important role in Somali politics and culture. There are five main Somali tribes: Darood, Dir, Rahanweeyn, Isaq and Hawiye. The Darood

¹ NFD covers most of north-eastern Kenya

² SYL was the first Somali nationalist movement, which played a key role in gaining independence.

³ Lee Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1982) and David Laitin and Said Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder: Westview, 1986)

⁴ No country has so far recognized the self-declared independence of Somaliland.

mainly inhabit in north-east (puntland), south-western (Gedo) of Somalia, in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and north-eastern Kenya. The Dir live in Djibouti, south-western Somalia and in the Ogaden. Hawiye clans live in south and central Somalia and in small numbers in the Ogaden and north-eastern Kenya. In the north-west of Somalia (Somaliland), the Isaq are the main clan and Rahanweyn mainly inhabit in Bay, Bakol, Middle Juba, Middle Shabelle and Gedo regions of Somalia⁵.

The border between Somalia and Kenya is characterized as lawlessness and dangerous area. On the Kenya side of the border, state institutions such as police are very weak or non-existent. Armed conflicts, clan tensions, militias, warlord fighting, and banditry occur frequently in both sides of the border⁶. There are two official border crossings between Kenya and Somalia⁷. However, my paper focuses on only one border crossing point: *Doble-Liboi* border point. Liboi is a small Kenyan town located about 18 kilometres of the Somalia border town of Doble. In both sides of the border, Darood clans are dominated. But a number of other Somali tribes in small numbers live in the border areas. As I will show in my interviews with people who crossed the border, clan identities matter a great deal in crossing artificial internationally recognized border between Kenya and Somalia.

This presentation is based on my fieldwork research visits in Kenya-Somalia border crossing point of Liboi. As part of my ongoing PhD research project, I undertook three fieldwork research visits to Dadaab refugee camps, the world's largest refugee settlement⁸. In each visit, total days spent in the border crossing point and refugee camps were 11 days. I observed daily arrivals of refugees to the camps and interviewed a total of 15 newly arrived refugees, 5 religious leaders, 6 clan elders and three local authority officials from Kenyan side. During May, 2011, in Nairobi and Garissa, I conducted four group discussions (two in Nairobi and two in Garissa) 6 individual interviews (3 women, 3 men) with Somali refugees who settled in Kenya. My objective of the group discussion was to find out various motivations, implications and different types of settlement.

⁵ There is no agreement among the Somalis of who owns what part of region. However, this is just to mention the main area where a particular clan is concentrated.

⁶ Abdalla Ali Duh (forthcoming): Importance of Somali social formation in Kenya-Somalia border crossing.

⁷ Department of Immigration, Kenya, <http://www.immigration.go.ke/index.php?id=27> (accessed February 24, 2009) the border was officially closed by Kenyan government on January 3, 2007.

⁸ UNHCR Global Appeal 2011 (updated)-Kenya

Doble-Liboi border point: Police abuses and banditry attacks

Since Kenya officially closed its internationally recognized border with Somalia, the only route available for refugees fleeing the war in Somalia is smuggling routes that are operated by different criminal groups. Police corruption in Kenya is well-known and documented⁹, but according to many informants, the situation is worse in the border areas. However, it should not be forgotten that Kenya generously provides asylum to about 350,000 registered Somali refugees and may be more than that number unregistered Somalis inside Kenya¹⁰. The following interview excerpts will illustrate Kenya's notoriously abusive police force and refugees strategies to survive:

“I left Kismayo on March 17, 2001 with other three families because there were fighting during the night in our area. I had six children, four girls and two boys, and other families were together nine persons, one woman with three children, and other with four. Myself, I belong to Rahanweyn, but my children are Darood-Absame sub-clan. The other two families were also Rahanweyn. We paid \$100 each family to a smuggler in Kismayo to take us to Doble because we were all Rahanweyne and were afraid that tribal bandits will rape or kill us. It took us 10 days to reach Doble. During the journey from Kismayo to Doble, we were stopped several times by tribal bandits who demanded money, but our smuggler always convinced them to let us continue our journey. Our smuggler told us that he knew most of the bandits because they were from same Darood clan and they could not harm anyone with his presence. On March 28, 2011, we tried to cross the border and walked through the bush toward Kenyan town of Liboi. Al-hamdulillah, we reached Liboi safely on March 30 and stayed two nights with a family who was same sub-clan as my children. Unfortunately, on April 2, a policeman came to the house where we were staying. We don't know who informed the police our presence. The police asked us to pay \$50 from each member of the family. We didn't have that money so he took us to the Liboi police station. The police kept us with our children in a small cell for three days beat us with plastic rod in front of our children. The police later gave us three alternatives: they send us back to Somalia, pay at least \$100 for the three families or they will keep us in their cell and beat. A local religious leader heard our plight and collected the money from the mosque, came to the police and paid them. On April 6, we tried to reach the Dadaab refugee camps. Unfortunately, only one kilometre from Ifo camp, a police intercepted us. We told the police that we are new refugees from the war in Somalia and want to register. They took us to Ifo police station and again demanded \$50 from each member of the family. We told them we have already paid to the police in Liboi. They said: But you didn't pay

⁹ Transparency International, “The Kenya Bribery Index 2008,”

¹⁰ UNHCR Global Appeal 2011 (updated)-Kenya

us yet. They kept us two days in a small cell, beat us. Our children were traumatized and were all crying every time a police enter the cell. Later, people from my children's sub-clan in the camp collected money and released me with my children. The other two families stayed 4 more days and they released when the police could not find any relative to pay for them”¹¹.

The above Ifo9 interview is a reflection of Kenyan police abuses and what happens to nearly all refugees trying to cross the border. Majority of those interviewed confirmed similar brutal treatment by the police including rape, torture, deportation and arbitrary arrest. The official statement from Kenyan police claims that they are just enforcing Kenya's immigration laws and protecting the country from Islamic terrorists. However, it is well-documented by various international Human Rights Organization¹² that the police in the border areas extort refugees to pay bribery. Majority of those crossing Doble-Liboi border are women with children, unaccompanied children and elderly men. The above mentioned interview excerpt illustrates also clan (hierarchical descent groups originated from a male ancestor) as sometimes ultimate source of personal security¹³. While crossing Kenya-Somalia border¹⁴, the refugees become the target of attacks from tribal bandits and militias. The following interview excerpt illustrates how clan identity has been used as strategy for survival:

“On February 18, 2011, fighting started in Karan¹⁴. It was between Hawiye militias fighting for control of a checkpoint. Later in the evening, some young men from the militias have begun entering our houses, shooting at random, stealing all our valuables and beating us with butts of their guns. Then I decided with other six families from Darood clan to flee Mogadishu to refugee camps in Kenya. After five days, we reached Afnadow. Alhamdulillah, we felt at home because we were in Darood territory. While travelling by truck to Liboi, armed bandits stopped us and demanded money. I told them who we are: that the entire group belong to Darood clan and they can't demand us any money, this is our land. Some young men in the armed bandits recognized our Darood dialect and let us continue our journey unharmed. After fifteen days of journey,

¹¹ Ifo 9 interview on 20.04.2011, the interview was conducted in Somali and this is my rough translation into English. I omitted the name to protect the identity of the interviewee.

¹² See Amnesty International, From life without peace to peace without life: the treatment of Somali refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya (AI index: AFR 32/015/2010), at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR32/015/2010/en>

¹³ People from her children's sub-clan collected money and secured her release from the police.

¹⁴ A village in the Somali capital, Mogadishu

we have arrived Liboi. The Kenyan police tried to arrest and send us back to Doble, but people in Liboi protected us by paying money to the police.”¹⁵

The chronic police abuse along the Kenya-Somalia border can be understood as part of a larger pattern of weak state institutions in Kenya and civil war, state failure and lawlessness in Somalia. On both sides of the border, clan identity has been used as survival strategy to deal with both police abuse and armed clan militias. The border area is dominated by the Somali Darood clans. But a number of other Somali tribes cross the border and employ the practice of “Sheegad” (clan adoption) and “Hidid”¹⁶ (ties established by marriage) as strategy for protection from bandits. Cross border violence occurs between Doble and Liboi, including rape, killing, violent tribal fighting, kidnapping and armed banditry.

“We were walking in the bush between Doble and Liboi. A group of armed young men attacked us. We pretended to be from Darood clan because one old woman knew very well all Darood sub-clans: She asked the young men who were they? She recognized some of their relatives, and they decided to let us go unharmed.”¹⁷

Settlement strategies, implications and motivations: Dream of resettlement in the West and urban refugees

There are various motives for emigration from Somalia to Kenya including security, family connections, natural disasters such as droughts and floods, poverty or just hope of resettlement to the West. My interviews in Dadaab strongly support these motivations. Here are few excerpts:

- “I left Somalia because my sisters live in Garissa.” (Dagahley 9)¹⁸
- “We came to Dadaab because there was poverty, hunger, and fighting in Bakol.” (Hagarder 8)
- “I belong to Aulyahan, this is part of our territory. I can get Kenyan citizenship if I want.” (Ifo 6)
- “Three members of my family were killed in Mogadishu in 2006, and I heard that UNHCR help Bantu people to go to America. Life is good there, my aunt told me.” (Dagahley 4)¹⁹

¹⁵ Liboi 7 interview on 28.04.2011

¹⁶ The clan of your wife should protect you if you are in their territory.

¹⁷ Interview, Hagarder 13

¹⁸ To protect the identity of the interviewees a number is assigned instead of their real names.

Conflict, family connections, dream for better life caused many Somalis to become refugees in many Kenyan cities including Dadaab, Garissa, Nairobi, Mandera and Mombassa. The combination of 21 years devastating civil war and recurring humanitarian disasters (ongoing drought and famine in much of the Horn of Africa) and artificial colonial border are the main push factors. Most refugees first live in Dadaab camps. The first priority for refugees is to get resettlement in the West through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Only few and the lucky ones could get this chance:

“I arrived this camp in 1992. All my six children were born here. The oldest one is 19 years. We have been waiting to get resettlement in the USA, but every year they tell us we have to wait. I pray to God that one day we will be out of this misery and my children will get better future.”
(Ifo3)

Many Somalis left the camps and became established²⁰ in Nairobi. They started new live based on business activities in Nairobi’s Eastleigh neighborhood. Eastleigh was a predominantly Asian village in Nairobi until Kenyan independence in 1964 when the Kikuyu became the dominant ethnic. From 1991, Somali refugees have invested heavily in retail outlets. Many Somali Diasporas in the West and Arab countries invested in real estate businesses. Many of those who arrived empty-handed in 1991 are today well-established business people running their hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, supermarkets, real estate businesses and travel agents²¹. However, their illegal status put them in the category of urban refugees:

*“An individual living in an urban area outside of his/her country of origin who meets the criteria put forth in the Refugee Convention or OAU Convention, even if the person has not been recognized by a host government. This includes asylum seekers, refugees with “closed files” (refugees who have been denied refugee status), refugees who have not applied for asylum, and refugees who have been granted refugee status.”*²²

Hundred of thousands of Somalis live in Eastleigh without any legal protection or status. Neither the UNHCR nor the government of Kenya provided them any document. Only refugees living in Dadaab camps are given refugee cards.

¹⁹ Bantu Somalis live in southern Juba River valley, Gedo, Kismayo, Mogadishu and Bardera. The United States identified the group as a priority to get resettlement in the USA.

²⁰ With the help of other family members in the West, Arab countries, South Africa and Kenya

²¹ Discussion with Eastleigh hotels, restaurants and shopping mall owners, May 2011

²² Bailey, Sarah. 2004:7. IS LEGAL STATUS ENOUGH? Legal status and livelihood obstacles for urban refugees, Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis, the Fletcher School. See also: Campbell E. H. 2006. Urban Refugees in Nairobi: Problems of Protection, Mechanisms of Survival and Possibilities for Integration, Oxford University press.

According to many informants, Somali refugees transformed Eastleigh neighborhood of Nairobi:

“ Eastleigh was a ghost town when we first arrived here as refugees in 1991. We have invested and transformed it into a commercial centre in Kenya. Somalis own big modern shopping malls such as Eastleigh mall, Garissa Lodge, Amal Plaza, Liban shopping, Baraka Bazaar, Sharif shopping centre, Sunrise shopping centre and Day-to-Day shopping complex. These shopping malls attract customers from all East Africa. We are not any more refugees. Kenya is our country. Remember north eastern province is a Somali territory.”²³

Somali refugee businesses in Nairobi operate largely outside the formal economy and rely mainly on Somali kinship and clan network of trust. There are two main investment sources for these urban refugees. First, some refugees came with cash from Somalia and secondly, close relatives and members of the same clan in the Diasporas invested in these businesses. Wealthy Somali refugees²⁴ are engaged in sectors such as real estates, wholesale, transportation and retail. Newly arrived refugees and those with less resource have small shops selling food and other items such as textiles. Some Somalis who crossed the border recently settled in urban areas such as Mombasa and Garissa²⁵.

The success of refugees businesses in Nairobi and Mombasa has caused some friction between native Kenyans and Somalis. Some local residents suspect that source of funding for some wealthy refugees are from illegal activities such as piracy, warlord’s money and money-laundering²⁶. Refugees deny any illegal business activities:

“Main source of capital for Somali refugees in Kenyan towns originates in Somalia and from the Somali Diasporas. When Somalia ceased to exist as a nation in 1991, most business class people run with their money to Kenya for protection and continue their businesses. The insecurity in Somalia forced many wealthy Somalis to become urban refugees.”²⁷

Some refugees mentioned the Kenyan-Somalis as playing a major role in protecting their businesses from corrupted Kenyan politicians. Ethnic Somalis from north-eastern province of Kenya have on numerous occasions occupied high ranking leadership positions in the Kenyan government. For instance, the current Defense minister, Deputy Speaker of parliament,

²³ Spokesperson for Eastleigh business community, May 2011

²⁴ Here I am using the word ‘refugees’- although these people lived in Kenya for more than two decades and they are very wealthy. Kenyan government does not recognize them as citizens of Kenya.

²⁵ My observations of Somali refugees resettlement strategies in Kenya, May 2011

²⁶ There have been claims in the media: Nick Wadhams, ‘Somali pirates take the money and run to Kenya’, NPR (2010), <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126510891>. See also: Anna Bowden, ‘The Economic Cost of Maritime Piracy’, One Earth Future Working Paper (December 2010).

²⁷ Interview with a member of the executive committee for Somali business community in Eastleigh, Nairobi, May 2011

former Chief of General Staff and the former Kenyan police chief were all ethnic Somalis. In addition, the newly adopted Kenyan Constitution had two Kenyan-Somalis²⁸. Some of those who arrived as refugees two decades ago managed to acquire Kenya citizenship²⁹.

Conclusion

This brief presentation sought to explore social, economic and political importance of the Somali clan organization in Kenya-Somalia border crossing. My observations and excerpts from interviews showed that Somali migrants in Kenya draw on social networks of family and clan membership as a survival strategy during the border-crossing process. Clans also played an important role in refugees' motivations and settlement strategies by serving as a force for protection from police abuse, armed militias and access to Kenyan citizenship.³⁰

The border between Kenya and Somalia is an artificial colonial border which has no real meaning for ethnic Somalis who inhabit in both sides of the border. Somalis migrate to Kenya for many different reasons including ongoing civil war in Somalia, hope of resettlement to the West, family connections and for natural disasters such as droughts and floods. My observations and interviews showed that refugees managed to integrate economically and socially without any help from UNHCR or Kenyan government. Somali urban refugees in Nairobi, Mombasa, Garissa and Mandera were helped by their kin, the Kenyan Somalis.

²⁸ The chairman of Parliamentary Select Committee and the chairman of the electoral body were both ethnic Somalis.

²⁹ Some got citizenship legally while others bribed corrupted officials.

³⁰ Clans serve sometimes as a source of conflict

African refugee camps: political spaces inside sovereign states

Joelma Almeida

Since the independence process, violent conflicts are a recurring phenomenon in central and eastern African regions, and particularly in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa. The intensity and duration of the violent conflicts assumed its greatest expression during the period of the multi-party system, however. Political conflicts resorting to extreme violence caused fleeing of large masses of individuals to neighboring countries. As conflicts prolonged the range of hosting states widened. Mobility increased. And often a different combination of borders was sequentially crossed.

The higher volume of refugees substantially accounts for the shifting from a spontaneous settlement-based humanitarian model into a containment structure-based humanitarian model (i.e. refugee camps). Temporarily designed, these political devices became the norm. In this paper, we will explore the ruling of refugee camps like political autonomous political spaces. They reproduce two of the most basic tenets of statehood: delimited territory, equipped with control mechanisms, and people. As under an autocracy, where a ruler or a small political group governs the lives of their citizens, their inhabitants are deprived of most of the basic rights, including that of freedom of movement.

The conflict-induced international migrations in Africa¹

Since late 1950, the phenomenon of *refugeeism* gains a new expression in Africa². In 1960, the number of Africans seeking refuge in another African country was limited to 9,000. In the following decades, the number has escalated to 998,000, 4,153,000, and 5,891,400 in 1970, 1980, and 1990 respectively. This steady increase in the number of refugees was only interrupted in the new millennium. The number of refugees waned to 3,627,120 in 2000 and to 2,861,254 in 2010 (UNHCR 2000 & 2010). This decrease seems to occur at the expense of an increase in the volume of internal displaced persons: 10,190,000 in 1995 (Cohen & Deng 1998), 13,556,000 in 2001 and 11,100,000 in 2010 (Internal Displacement Project Website)³

The explosive rise in the number of refugees is mostly associated with the closeness, intensity, recurrence and/or long-lasting character of the violent intra-state conflicts. In the sixties, the majority of the refugees were escaping from the

¹ This section is based on a chapter of the author's Ph.D. Thesis on decision-making processes in

² By *refugeeism* is meant the state of being a *refugee de facto*. In this paper, the term "refugee" is used as defined by the OUA Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa (1969), which is an extension of the definition proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Thus, refugee is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. The refugee is also a person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave the place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside the country of origin or nationality (article 1 and 2).

³ The estimates presented are crude approximations. They do not reflect the reality. It has long been recognized that the refugee data is unlikely to be accurate in most countries due to several deficiencies in the availability and the nature of the data. This level of inaccuracy increases as far as it concerns the developing countries (Bisborrow *et al.* 1997, UNHCR 1998, Crisp 1999).

The internal displacement is an old phenomenon that was neglected until 1990s, in particular because it meant to interfere in the sovereignty of the states. Therefore, no data before data period was collected in a consistent way by international organisms.

colonial war in Portuguese-speaking colonies located in the mainland, and secessionist wars between the Arab-led Kharthoum Government and the Anya Nya rebels in Sudan, the Haile Selassie regime and the Oromo rebels in Ethiopia, the Hausa-led Government and the Ibo separatist group in Biafra (Nigeria), the Congolese Government and the Tshombe's separatist group in Katanga (Congo). Furthermore, they were escaping from the violent conflicts between groups which were fighting for gaining/holding control of the political power - such as those between the Hutu-led Government and the UNAR Tutsi rebels in Rwanda and the Government and the pro-lumbumbist groups in Congo -, or from the violent political persecution to opponents group such as the Kaunda's United National Independence Party persecution to the Alice Lenshina's Lumpa Church and the Sékou Touré repressive regime in Guinea Conakry⁴.

In the following decades, the continent has witnessed the end of the colonial and secessionist wars as well as the waning of the violent conflicts for political power. At the same period, the escalations of self-determination wars, which have started in mid-sixties (Eritrea, South West Africa/Namibia, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Western Sahara, Ogaden, again Southern Sudan and Katanga), the emergence of new civil wars (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Chad and Uganda), and the terror campaigns against presumed civilian opponents (Idi Amin's and the Obote II regimes in Uganda and Derg's regime in Ethiopia) have raised to the number of refugees to almost six million in 1990, a period in which the bipolarity in the world geopolitics was disintegrating and, as a consequence, the former sponsors of African wars were no long willing to sustain them financially. This change of stance led to a different kind of violent situations from the 1990, of which wars are only a component (e.g. genocide). As a consequence, a new caseload of refugees took place and organized settlement mushroomed at the expense of spontaneous settlement. In this presentation, the analysis will be focused on the organized refugee settlements, in particular camps, implemented until the end of the eighties.

Organized settlements: from settlement schemes to camps

From sixties to eighties, half of the people who crossed an international African border in search of protection were mostly settled where the refugees had some ethnic, linguistic or cultural affinities with the local communities (Chambers 1979, Clark & Stein 1997). Most of the times, no formal authorization was granted to spontaneous settlement. Rather, hosting states tend to designate specific areas to settle refugee population. Despite the United Nations Convention regarding refugees (1951 & 1967) provides for the possibility of the refugees to choose their place of residence and to move freely within the Contracting State territory, subject to any regulations applicable to aliens generally in the same circumstances (26th article), several African countries made reservations to the 26th article (i.e.

⁴ Despite of the high number of Guineans who escaped from the Sékou Touré's repressive regime, they are not counted as refugees. Western African states ignored the phenomenon and treated them like migrants because their official recognition would be an implicit criticism of the state of origin and that criticism could be incongruent with the hosting government political considerations.

Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). The Zambia government attempt to control refugees resettlement and restrict it to the appropriate camps. For instance, based on national security, pro-national independence and humanitarian concerns, the Angolan refugees from the colonial war were settled in camps. Zambia had experienced bombing raids along the Angola-Zambia border by the Portuguese troops (Hansen 1979).

Even those states which did not make reservations, they ultimately decide where to settle refugees and this decision was increasingly towards organized settlements. Over the time, the increasing number refugees and their long staying had become a *burden* to the hosting state in financial, social, environmental and security terms. Organized settlements are mostly funded by the international community (via United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and run jointly by the hosting state and then non-governmental organization and/or the UNHCR itself. Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda are a case in point. After the initial inflow of the main Rwandese refugee populations in 1960, Rwandese population was forwarded to Karagwe and Muyenzi in Tanzania; Muramba, Kayongazi, Kigamba and Mugeru in Burundi, and Oruchinga, Nakivale, Ibuga, Rwamwanja and Kyaba in Uganda. For this decision, the Rwandese refugees invasion of Rwanda in 1959-1963 contributed a great deal.

Rural settlements first appeared as a form of international assistance in early 1960s during the large inflow of African refugees fleeing from independence and nation-building struggles. The earliest of these settlements were related to the Rwandese tutsi who flew to Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Congo-Kinshasa with few prospect of returning home. Bibwe in Kivu (Congo-Kinshasa) was the first rural settlement (1961), soon followed by other settlements in Uganda, Burundi, and Tanzania for Rwandese and, later, extended to Burundese, Guinean-Bissau, Sudanese, Mozambican, and Angolans. From 1961 to 1982, UNHCR opened 107 settlements in Africa. Urban settlements were rare. In Sudan, out of the 23 organized settlements in the eastern region, one is semi-urban. The refugees are expected to work in the town of Gedaref, 7 km far from the settlement, and in the surrounding rainfed mechanized areas (Kibreab 1987).

As the number of refugees grew, and the hosting countries plunged in socioeconomic crisis, the settlement schemes decreased on behalf of the camps. Both settlements are in general spaces delimited physically (i.e. fences) or virtually (i.e. located in a deserted area), administered by a Government-appointed officer, mixing people from different cultural (e.g. ethnicity) and social (e.g. urban/rural, several social classes) origins. They differ, however, in the type of assistance received. The settlements are mainly distinguished from camps⁵ in that they tend to self-reliance, by integrating income-generating programs. The refugees are given plots of land to build a more permanent shelter and farm some land to develop their

⁵ The difference between settlement scheme and camp is highly controversial. Different researchers used different criteria. The criteria more widely used is level of freedom of movement, dependence on external aid, control exercised over inhabitants, population size and/or density, and type of shelter.

own livelihoods. They are also given a chance to engage in a wide range of economic activities. In camps, they are almost totally dependent on full assistance (Schmidt 2003). Because of it, often the adjective “transit” qualifies the term “camp”, a dispositive which is often depicted as overcrowded tented cities, supplied wholly from the outside.

The above characterization of camps does not coincide with that provided for the first camps in Africa. The origins of camps can be traced back to the second Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902). In short, the British move the Boer and African families into camps, as gained control of conquered territory from Boers. These camps were military controlled zones, located near town, mines, and railways siding. Its population was separated and addressed along racial lines. African civilians were incarcerated in to “satellite” camps, located about one mile from Boer camps. The Boer civilians received a basic food ration, medical assistance, and shelter, whereas the Africans received less food, infrequent medical help and virtually no building materials with which to build shelters. In exchange for food, African adults and children worked for British troops and the administrators. Later, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the mine labor recruiting agency, was allowed to recruit mining labor amongst the African inmates (Weiss 2011, Rawlings 2005).

Organized settlements: total institutions and spaces of exception

The organized settlements were often described as a total institution (Chambers 1979), very likely inspired in the work of Erving Goffman in early 1960s. Goffman defined a total institution as “*a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. [...] the total character of the institution is symbolized by the barrier of social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant, such as locked doors, high walls, barbed wire, cliffs, water, forests, or moors*” ((Goffman 1991:11-15). The American sociologist identifies the following main features on the total institution: a) breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating the sleep, play and work places. All aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority; b) each phase of the member’s daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together; c) all phases of the day’s activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials; d) the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution (idem: 17).

Nowadays, the organized settlement tends to be analyzed under the umbrella of biopolitics, in particular according to Agamben philosophy of state of exception. Agamben identifies the camps is a structure characterized by a state of exception, in which law is temporarily suspended. This temporary character often extends itself

for an undetermined length of time. What is supposed to be an exceptional becomes the rule. Its inmate leads a bare life, deprived of any political rights which usually associated with citizenship status. The sovereign power exercises direct power upon his or her physical life (2000 & 2003).

The above analysis can hardly be applied *ipsis verbis* to the organized settlements in Africa. All aspects of life can be conducted in the same place, but the camp authority/administer does not completely regulate the life of the refugees. Refugees demonstrated a great agency in governing their fates. For instance, in Tanzania and Burundi, the politicized Rwandese Tutsi refugees refused to engage in activities that seemed to conduct to their local settlement, as they envisaged their exile as temporary (Clark & Stein 1985).

Refugee conducted few daily activities in the company of a large batch of others, due to the imposition from above (e.g. fetch food ratio). They had their own housing, run by each household. Some activities are spontaneously conducted are conducted together with other inmates because of security (e.g. collecting firewood in the forests) or logistics (e.g. collecting water).

The organized settlement is run according to a plan decided by the hosting state, the sponsors (i.e. UNHCR) and the executors (i.e. ngos). Refugees seldom participated in the decision-taking of the management of the camp, not even when they are invited to participate in the decision-making of some activities as it often happens in the settlement scheme. However, they are passive inmates to whom the top imposes its decisions. Very often they develop strategies to counteract the decisions if they are not willing to abide by the top decisions.

Camps are not zones where inmates have a bare life. Refugees do not hold political rights, as they do not hold the nationality of the hosting states. However, organized settlements, in particular those in which the inmates belong to the same nationality, are politicized spaces. Refugees not only organized themselves to remove the group who holds political power in their state of origin, but also they organized themselves to claim for what they believe to be their rights.

In addition, hosting states usually do not formally grant freedom of movement to individuals. The organized settlement has boundaries, whose crossing is forbidden to its inmates. In principle, the inmates can leave the institution only when permission is granted. Formal granting is not immediate because of the bureaucracy involved. However, very often refugees cross the institutional boundaries without official permission. In cases where the organized settlements are located near the border, refugees even return to their homeland in same days, or periods of the year (e.g. crops), such as the case of Mozambican refugees in Malawi and Sudanese in Uganda. The difficulty often lies in the means of transportation, as the institution might be located in an isolated place. Malkki description of Mishamo, a Tanzanian settlement for Burundese refugees located in an isolated area of northern Mpanda District, is a good example: *“It is spatially the most isolated of the three settlements. While Ulyankulu offers relatively convenient access to the town of Tabora and the central railway line and Katumba is near the district capital of Mpanda and another segment of the railway line, Mishamo is buffered by virtually uninhabited forest zones in all directions and is accessible by only one north-south motorable dirt road which is seasonably damaged by rains, occasionally to the*

point of impassability. Driving to the nearest village or town, whether north or south, takes several hours ...

Thick forest, and stretches of bush and swampland, surrounded Mishamo on all sides. Clouds of tsetse flies and occasional groups of wary monkeys were the only living things one could depend on encountering in the forest the way to Mishamo.

The landscape quite suddenly lost some of its forbidding quality as the road improved at the points of entry into Mishamo, where road barriers were attended by armed gatekeepers. Here, documents authorizing entry into the camp were officially required (Malkki 1995: 39-40).

Final considerations

In Africa, organized settlement became the rule from mid-sixties onward. These institutions are political devices in the sense that they are run as a state of exception. The institution has a boundary that separates life inside the institution from life outside the institution. Inside people do not hold citizenship, and as such are deprived of some human rights such as the freedom of movement, participation in the decision-making in matters that regards their own life. Their lives are ruled by an exceptional law that is created by the sovereign (the hosting state and the international community). However, the inmates should not be seen as passive but rather as agents. Often they adopted strategies that counter the decisions taken at top position.

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PANEL 2: Rethinking hierarchies of borders and border crossings?

The Concept of Boundary and Indigenous Application in Africa: The Case of the Bakassi Boarder Lines of Cameroon and Nigeria

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Abstract

The notion and function of boundary differed fundamentally in the European and African contexts. In traditional Africa, the concept of an ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom the particular polity shared a territory and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region or a narrow zone fronting the two neighbours marked off by it. Thus, the boundary was the zone where two States were joined together. In other words, African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contact. But European partition of Africa conceived boundaries as physical separation points. Africans who had become frontiersmen had no immediate knowledge that their lands and kin divided by the boundary were now “foreign”. They did not know that the new boundaries functioned differently from the traditionally familiar ones. They thought the former were only for the white men until they were checked at crossing points. Its impact on their relations with their kin and neighbours made them to create secret routes across the frontiers. But these new borders soon faded in their minds. This paper, therefore, attempts a theoretical approach to the valorization of ethnic rather than international prescript boundaries by the inhabitants of Bakassi, and how their activities challenge the application of international decisions.

Keywords: Concept, Boundary, Indigenous Application, Boarder Lines, Bakassi, Cameroon, Nigeria

Introduction

The bakassi border lines of Cameroon and Nigeria is situated at the far end of the Gulf of Guinea, at the upper angle of the Bay of Biafra in Ndiian Division in the South West Province of Cameroon, the Nigeria-coveted Bakassi Peninsula is a feature of the Rio del Rey estuary

complex. This complex occupies an approximately 60 km-stretch between River Akpa Yafe and the west-side boundary of Mt. Cameroon and is 30 km deep, about 1800 km square. Shaped roughly like a trapezoid, this area is 12 km long at the smallest base and 35 km high between the small benmong village to the north and the village of Kimbo, MunJa to the southern coastal boundary. It thus covers a total area of 665 km- that is, a third of Rio del Rey estuary complex as shown on figure 1.

Figure 1. Location of Cameroon-Nigeria Lines of Bakassi



Source: Mashood Issaka and Kapinga Yvette Ngandu, rapporteurs “Pacific Settlement of Border Disputes: Lessons from the Bakassi Affair and the Greentree Agreement,” <http://news.bbc.uk/2/hi/africa/7559895.stm>, 6 June 2011.

The geomorphology of the area is characterized by tens of islands of varying sizes and shapes. There are four major peninsula groups. From east to west, they are the Pelican, the Fiari, the Erong, and the Bakassi Peninsulas, all situated along rivers Meme, Andokat, Ngosso and the Akpa Yafe; which intersect with the large Cross River estuary to the South. Bordered to the West by the River Akpa Yafe and to the East by Rio del Rey, the Bakassi peninsula itself is made up of many small islands demarcated by a network of creeks at least 100 metres wide. The Bakassi peninsula, which is coveted by Nigeria, stretches over 3 of the 7 Ndian sub-divisions, Isangele, Kombo Abcdimo and Idabato. It has about 8,562 inhabitants distributed as follows: Isangele (4,517 inhabitants in 1987), Iclabato (3,250 inhabitants in 1987) and Kombo Abedimo (796 inhabitants in 1987). These people are spread over some thirty small villages scattered along the main rivers: Rio del Rey, Akpa Yafe, Akpa Bana, Bakassi creek and so on with principal economic activities of fishing and related activities;

trade; and oil exploitation. The discovery of oil in the area plunged Cameroon and Nigeria into a prolonged war over the control of the area, all caused by colonial politics.

In July 1884 the Cameroon became German protectorate following the Germano-Douala Treaty, and in October, Germany notified the other European powers and the USA, in general terms, of the extent of this territory. On 23 July and 10 September 1884 the kings and chiefs of Old Calabar signed a treaty placing their territories under the protection of Great Britain. Other kings and chiefs of the region, including those of Bakassi, signed treaties acknowledging that their territories were subject to the authority of Old Calabar and consequently under British protection. The Berlin Conference of 1884/85 recognised the validity of the British claim to this area as the Oil Rivers Protectorate, which became part of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893, and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1900.¹ In 1906, Southern Nigeria, still including the Bakassi peninsula, came under the administration of the Colony of Lagos, but in November 1913 the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated into a single Nigerian Protectorate, though Lagos remained a separate colony. By then, however, the status of Bakassi was already in question. Since 1884, it had been accepted that the boundary between British and German spheres of influence ran along the west bank of the Rio del Rey. Anglo-German Protocol signed on 11 March and 12 April 1913 in Obokun and the exchange letters between governments of both countries on 6 July 1914 redefined the maritime boundary as the Akpayafe River, placing the Rio del Rey and the entire Bakassi peninsula under German authority.²

But with the outbreak of First World War in August 1914 and its subsequent results, which included the defeat of Axis Powers by the Allied forces and the eventually conquering of the German colony of Cameroon by an Anglo-French force, the territory was divided between Britain and France in 1919 under mandates of the League of Nations. The Bakassi peninsula formed part of the British mandate, along with a broad strip of territory along the Cameroon-Nigeria border. For now, British Cameroons was administered as an integral part of Nigeria. For the next forty years the old boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon thus ceased to be a matter of any importance. In February 1961, the 1913 agreement again came to the fore when the UN conducted a plebiscite in the British Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons to decide their independence by either joining the independent Nigeria or reunifying with *La République du Cameroun*.³ The plebiscite included the people of the Bakassi peninsula, which Nigeria, rejecting the 1913 delimitation, claimed to have been an irregular procedure. Nonetheless, the majority of people decided to vote for this second option. It is perhaps important to note here that there existed 21 polling stations on the

¹ Felicia Price, "The Bakassi Peninsula: The Border Dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon", *ICE Case Studies*, No. 163, November, 2005.

² W.V. Nugent, "The Geographical Results of the Nigeria-Kamerun Boundary Demarcation Commission," *Geographical Journal*, 1914, pp. 630-51; Omoigui, *The Bakassi story*; Victor Julius Ngoh, *Cameroon Since 1800s* (Limbe: Pressbook, 1989), pp. 276-277; Tazifor Tajoche, *Cameroon History in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Buea: Education Book Centre, 2003), pp. 265-266.

³ Ngoh, *Cameroon since 1800s*, p. 227; V.T. LeVine, *The Cameroon from Mandate to Independence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1971.

Bakassi peninsula itself, and 73 percent of the voters opted to "achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon"⁴

Donnalt Wet⁵ records that these nations, at first, did not pay attention to the Bakassi because of its remoteness, inhabited by a population considered inconsequential. However, when the oil and other natural resources and minerals were discovered in the peninsula, attention from both countries and also from colonial connections were ignited to create tension and/or argument over the control of the land, which in some cases resulted to numerous dead. Most scholars consider the escalation of the dispute only from the incidences of the 1980s, consequently by-passing one of the fundamental elements of the issue; the events from the 1960s, which significantly determined the trend and effect of the peace process. The prolonged conflict was finally settled by the decision of the International court of Justice. Cameroon was given benefit of the territory and in 2008, Nigeria handed over the territory to Cameroon. This boundary crisis, like many in Africa was due to colonial legacy.

The African colonial territories, which have attained independence and national sovereignty, cannot in a strict sense be regarded as national states. They do not embrace a common past and a common culture; they are indeed the arbitrary creations of colonialism. The manner in which European states descended on Africa during the closing years of the nineteenth century in their scramble for territories was bound to leave a heritage of artificially controlled borders that now demarcate the emerging African states, and serve as a source of conflict among many African states. Reflecting on the emergence of new states in contemporary Africa, Davidson believes that their history begins anew. They reappear today in the sad evening of the world of nation-states. Yet their own tradition, he notes was seldom of narrow nationality. Their genius was for integration – integration by conquest as the times prescribed, but also by an ever partful mongling and migration. “They were never tolerant of exclusive frontiers.”⁶ The nineteenth century imperialism cut across boundaries and peoples and left for Africa, the problems or redrawing frontiers on a rational plan.

East and Moody⁷ claim that all political boundaries are artificial because they are demarcated by human beings. The accidents of history, the vagaries of geography and the exigencies of economics have all played a part in determining even European boundaries. But the special circumstances operating in Africa makes its international boundaries doubly artificial in the sense that they are not, like most European boundaries, “the visible expression of age-long efforts of the indigenous people” to achieve political adjustment between themselves and the physical conditions in which they live.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 1608 (XV) of 21 April 1961; In 1962, Tafale Baleya’s Nigerian’s government confirmed its approval of the results of the plebiscite in a Diplomatic Note No. 570 of March 27, 1962 to Cameroun, which included a map showing Bakassi in the newly reunified Cameroun. From then on, until the 1990s Nigeria would have no serious administrative or military presence in the peninsula. [Even the much-touted ‘Bakassi local government’ was only created in 1997; a full three years after the case at the ICJ had begun]. During the first republic, in addition to the Embassy in Yaoundé, however, Nigeria opened a consulate in Buea, capital of the Southern Cameroons –latter Western Cameroon. Presumably this was in recognition of the large number of Nigerians living in the region, even after the plebiscite.

⁵ Donnalt Wet, *The Power of Natural Possession in Foreign Policy*, (London, Archon Books, 2006), pp. 56-57.

⁶ B. Davidson, *Old Africa Rediscovered* (London: Longman, 1967).

⁷ W.G. East and A.E. Moody, *The Changing World* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1956).

In the successive phase of the European partitioning of the African continent, the lines demarcating spheres of interest were often haphazard, hasty and badly arranged. The Europeans agents and diplomats were primarily interesting in grabbing as much as African territory as possible, and were not unduly concerned about the consequences of disrupting ethnic groups and undermining the indigenous political order. This generated great conflict between states such as those between Ethiopia and its neighbours in the Horn of Africa, between Nigeria and its neighbours in West and Central Africa, between the Democratic Republic of Congo and its neighbours in the Great Lakes region, and between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsular. For a long time after independence, border skirmishes and wars between African states were relatively rare, and governments more or less adhered to the sacrosanct nature of the boundaries inherited from colonial times as laid down in the 1963 Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). However, both indigenous and foreign efforts have constantly been put in place in the face of these African disputes. This explains why authors have multiplied interest as regards colonialism and boundary, boundary activities and disputes among African states.

Rouke⁸ assesses at length the legacy of colonialism in Africa, pointing out that the industrialisation of the North was one of the factors that caused the colonisation of the South in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He shows that Africa was largely controlled by its indigenous peoples in the 1878 but had, by 1914 become almost totally subjected and divided into colonies by the European powers. The colonial boundaries had little relationship to the territories occupied by the various indigenous peoples, grouping nations together in some cases and dividing them in others. Within seventy years, virtually all of the colonies regained their independence, but many them have been troubled by the legacy of trying to get two or more states to live peacefully in a single state. The strength of this document is the fluency with which he transmits the general trend of European colonial imposed boundaries on Africa and their consequences.

Akanmode, Kolapo, Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, and Sanusi on their part discuss the Bakassi Peninsular and the International Court of Justice. Akanmode's descriptive geographical account⁹ of the Bakassi Peninsular puts the value of the population of the area to be mostly Nigeria. He presents the Peninsular as a paradox; a community that subsists in the midst of plenty of fish and oil deposit, but is ravaged by abject poverty. Briefly recounting the clash story between Cameroon and Nigeria of 1993 and the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) of 10 October 2002, he questions the verdict of the court and influence on the future of the inhabitants of the area.

In the same light, Kolapo, Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor¹⁰ give a critical analysis of the far-reaching implications of the ICJ ruling on the Nigerian state. Their emphases are on the security implications, the social structures, economic jeopardy of the Nigerian state among

⁸ J.J. Rouke, *International Politics on the World Stage* (New York: Dushkin/McGraw Hill, 1997).

⁹ V. Akanmode, "Bakassi Peninsular: Nigeria Vs. Cameroon at last, the Judgment," *Punch*, 2002, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ As cited by A.T. Aghemelo and S. Ibhasebhor, "Colonialism as a source of Boundary Dispute and Conflict among African States: The World Court Judgement on the Bakassi Peninsula and its implications for Nigeria" *J. Soc. Sci.*, 13 (3), 2006: 2.

others and the pride of the people as a whole. Like these authors, Banansi¹¹ says that the Judgment made little or no sense. His question is “How do you cede a people with different culture, language and background to another nation whose background differs completely?” He insists that the Bakassi people are Nigerians who cannot become Cameroonians overnight. He points out the need for the Nigerian government to appeal the World Court for a review of the judgment. Banansi’s writing is too sentiments with shallow knowledge about the genesis of the disputed boundary. In fact the issue of international boundaries has created a great deal of such conflict on the African continent. Evident enough are those of Chad-Libya, Namibia-Botswana, Burkina Faso-Mali, Western Sahara-Algeria-Morocco, Gabon-Equatorial Guinea, and Ethiopia-Eritrea and so on).

Nonetheless, it is important to note that there are inevitable conditions of fluidity along most of the African boundary zones where must indigenous population of the border lines by pass these colonial boundary legacies to incline to their ethnic ones; in order to satisfy their political, economic and socio-cultural needs. This transforms such boundaries into decorative imaginary line due enough to be respected only by their respective governments and not them, the inhabitants of the border lines. It is in this light that the paper is written. It looks at the epistemology of boundary, both from the perception of the International, and indigenous African concepts, meanwhile examining how the people of the Cameroon-Nigeria border lines of Bakassi abrogates the former for the later, and at the same time looks at more complex situations on the border line, which of course challenges even the decisions of the International Court of Justice’s verdict on the disputed territory of the Bakassi peninsula.

Epistemology of boundary and its representation

In 1890, in his own words Lord Salisbury declared:

we have been engaged ... in drawing up lines upon maps where no whites’s feet have ever trode: we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, but we have only been hindered by small impediments that we never knew exactly where those mountains, rivers and lakes were.¹²

When he said these words, it was time at a time when territorial boundaries were being drawn across the world with little or no regards for natural or cultural boundaries. These boundaries were designed to reinforce and international system of absolute sovereignty of the state in which boundaries were derived from geo-military occupation of space as determined by consenting colonial powers. More than a century late many of these territorial boundaries remained as they were drawn despite the dramatic changes that have occurred to the international system and the significant challenges that have been made to the concept of

¹¹ Walter Banansi, *The World Faces Conflict, What Choice to Make*, (Cape Town: Laumba Press, 2007), pp. 67-71.

¹² Lord Salisbury, speaking in 1890, as quoted in the separate opinion of Judge Ajibola, in *Territorial Dispute (Libya v. Chad)* ICJ Report of 1994, 6, at 53.

sovereignty within précised boundaries. Yet these international boundaries and ideas that were behind them still form the foundation for the present international legal system.¹³

The primary components of the international legal system are states, and territorial boundaries are a key element in how states are defined by that system. While the boundaries determined by the international legal system are often artificially created and contested, they exist by the operation of the international legal system, which usually seeks to reinforce these boundaries and the concept of territorial sovereignty inherent in them. From the perspective of this system, the purpose of territorial boundaries is to clarify which entities are states and to separate them from each other in order to structure that system. This is because at the basis of international law, lies the notion that a state occupies a definite part of the surface of the earth, within which it normally exercises jurisdiction over persons and things to the exclusion of the jurisdiction of other states. The direct connection between territorial boundaries was made in 1910 when the Permanent Court of Arbitration held that one of the essential elements of sovereignty is that it is to be exercised within territorial limits, and that, failing prove to the contrary, the territory is co-terminous with sovereignty, consequently, ownership of territory is a concept used to determine sovereignty.¹⁴

As was held in the Island of Palmas case:

Sovereignty in the relations between state signify independence. Independence in regards in a portion of the globe is the right to exercise therein, to the exclusion of any other state, the functions of a state. The development of the national organization of states during the last few centuries and, as a corollary, the development of international law, have established this principal of the exclusive competence of the state in regards to its own territory in such a way as to make it the point of departure in settling most questions that concern international relations.¹⁵

This point of departure was reinforced by the international legal order that emerged after the Second World War. This order was built on the inviolability of national territory as a function of its central concern for international peace. The core of this legal order is the prohibition on the “use of force” against the territorial integrity or political independence of a state, which protects both the spatial and the decisional aspects of sovereignty. A corollary is the prohibition against intervention in matters belonging to the domestic jurisdiction of states, though it pertains not to space but to autonomous decision-making. Both these principals have been recognized as fundamental purposes in the Charter of the United Nations as reaffirmed in the authoritative declaration of principles of international law, adopted by the UN General Assembly.¹⁶ That declaration included “the duty to refrain from the threats or use of force to violent the existing international boundaries of any state or as a means of solving territorial disputes and problems concerning frontiers of states,” while restating the duty of non-intervention. States are perceived in international law as being the representatives of the inhabitants of the territory within each state’s sovereignty, as in order to meet the definition of being a state, there must be a “permanent population”. Thus ethnicity, religion or moral

¹³Robert McCorquodale and Raul Pangalangan, “Pushing Back the Limitations of Territorial Boundaries,” *EJIL* 2001, Vol. 12. No. 5, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

practices become largely irrelevant as living space is determined by the state's territorial boundary. As one intension of territorial boundaries is that they enhance "group cohesion by psychologically sharpening the deferent identification of community members from others across the boundary", the state is meant to be the only relevant identity for the habitants of a territory. Related to this, international law has developed intricate rules regarding the nationality of people in terms of their relationship to states, as determined by the degree of connection people have to the territory of a state. By determining who its nationals are, states also determine who non-nationals are: who is the "other". Others do not have the same rights and obligations with regard to that state. The consequence for most states that emerged from colonial administration was that the new (independent) governments sought to assert powerfully the states identity above all other identities. Many of these governments argue: against the maintenance of the traditional indigenous institutions which they consider to be dangerous and anachronistic and accused the tribalism, regionalism, and racism as being the better enemies of national-state building.¹⁷

This attempt of breaking down the influence of tribalism, regionalism and racism by the new states, was an inheritance of colonial influence, which was the separation and dissociation of these ethnic entities in the course of partitioning of the African continent for their convenience and interest. Asiwaju (1984) points out that a study of European archives supports an accidental rather than an intentional making of African boundaries. This meant that the European interests were of primary concern. The population of the frontier areas was envisaged, if at all, only as dim and inarticulate presences in the background. Therefore, in determining boundaries, the Europeans did not take African interests into consideration. An Anglo-French Commission of diplomatic and colonial experts was formed for the purpose of demarcating the boundaries, but the limits of its expertise soon became evident. As put by Lord Salisbury comments in drawing lines upon maps where no white man's feet have ever trod, they gave away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that they never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were.¹⁸ Although geographers were available to advise, Europeans' knowledge of the physical, let alone the human, geography of Africa was still rudimentary. According to Asiwaju, a famous epigram defines geography as being about maps rather than chaps, but its value is always defined by "the knowledge of the chaps who draw the maps". The notion and function of the term 'boundary' differed fundamentally in the European and African contexts. However strict the observation of these boundaries were to be, the reasoning of the inhabitants of the Cameroon-Nigerian border lines was not the same. Their geographical proximity caused the disrespect of the lines a familiar commodity.

Fanso reinforces this idea African concept of boundary. He says the notion and function of the term "boundary" differed fundamentally in the European and African contexts. In traditional Africa, the concept of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom the particular State or polity shared a territory and such a boundary

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ As cited by Christopher Molem Sama, Debora Johnson-Ross, "Reclaiming the Bakassi Kingdom: The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria Border," *Afrika Zamani*, nos. 13 & 14, 2005-2006, pp.103-122.

was conceived of in terms of a region or a narrow zone fronting the two neighbours marked off by it. In this sense, the boundary was the zone where two States were united or joined together. In other words, African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contact. European states, however, conceived of boundaries as lines or points of separation. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition of the former German colony in 1916 provided that inhabitants living in or near the border region had six months from the time that the border was delimited to express their intention to settle in a region placed under the jurisdiction of the other colonial power. A problem was thereby created. The Africans who had become frontiersmen had no immediate knowledge that their lands and kin divided by the boundary were now 'foreign'. They did not know that the new boundaries functioned differently from the traditional ones with which they were familiar. They thought the former were only important to the white men who made them and were not immediately concerned about their existence until they were checked at crossing points. It was then that they began to feel the impact on their relations with their kin and neighbours and began to create new and secret routes across the frontiers.¹⁹ Such an impact was directed reflected in the Nigeria-Cameroon border of Bakassi.

Peoples of the Bakassi Border Lines: Application of Indigenous Boundary Norms

In fact, however separated these nations seem to be, some scholars consider them as a common people. They are duly associated not by colonial effort but through ethnic affiliations. Rather, colonial state creation dishearteningly fragmented brethren. But According to the inhabitants of the bakassi border lines of Cameroon and Nigeria, the presence of the international boundaries faded away fast in their minds even before it was established. International boundaries represent nothing to them but their ethnic boundaries. They insisted never to give it up for nothing else; since giving it up was tantamount to breaking up their ancestral connectivity. In the coast, around this area, according to Mbuagbaw and R. Brain, the case of the Mamfe depression constitutes part of this circumstance. Within the division of Manyu, besides the Banyang, their northern neighbours living on the 'overside' of the Cross River, generally referred to as Anyang and the Keyaka-Ekoi people (Obang, Ekwe and Keaka) constituted an ethnic connection with those distributed in neighbouring Nigeria. Fanso²⁰ adds that the Ejagham, who straddle the Cameroon-Nigeria border, are located in the area extending from west of Nchang near Mamfe town to Ikom in Nigeria. They also extend from Agbokem on the Cross River to the Oban Hills and Calabar at the mouth of the Cross River. Kane²¹ highlights reflects the Kanem Bornu, and states that the "nearness and connectivity between these same peoples of Cameroon and Nigeria propelled them to consistently see themselves as brothers despite the international boundary influences. They depended on one another's political, economic and social contacts", and hence,

¹⁹ V.G. Fanso, "Traditional and Colonial African Boundaries: Concept and Functions in Inter-Group Relations", *Présence Africaine*, 1986, 139, 3: 58–75.

²⁰ V.G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges, Vol. 1: From Precolonial Times to the Nineteenth Century* (London, Basingstoke: Macmillan Education LTD., 1989), p. 53.

²¹ Eric Kane, *The Common African Man* (Lagos: Chuku Book, 1976), pp. 23-24.

introducing a high degree of permeability on the internationally recognized boundaries of Cameroon and Nigeria.

The permeability of the Cameroon–Nigeria border has been a concern of Margaret Niger-Thomas, Kate Meagher and Molem,²² who investigated cross-border economic activities. According to them there has been an increase in the actual quantity of cross-border flows, as well as a deepening of the penetration of cross-border operations into the heart of the national territories.” This implies that cross-border operations have undergone some structural reorganization. It also indicates that the socio-economic interactions of the respective indigenous populations are carried on with little regard for the colonial demarcation. Because the boundary is ill-defined and unimportant to them, the locals hardly confine their socio-economic activities to particular areas. Indigenous in both countries are able to evade gendarmes from Cameroon and police, customs and immigration officers from Nigeria given that they cooperate in their actions and are very familiar with the terrain. In fact, smuggling is no longer an issue for concern, but has become an accepted strategy for both survival and capital accumulation. Not only smugglers but other categories of people in both societies too benefit from this activity, including state officials themselves. In this part of Cameroon (the South West Province), which is closely aligned to Nigeria, it is clear that national borders are just political creations.

A case in point is the fuel transactions across the border line. The fuel is called *zuazua*, mostly effected by a group of youths; about 20 to 26. These youths have their customers in Cameroon to whom they bring the fuel. They boarded a large wooden canoe to cross the river. The canoes powered manually by six men using 30-foot poles, are mainly used to ferry vehicles including the four-wheeled vehicles used for carrying of fuel across the river. On particular days, a four-wheel-driven Steyr-Pouche mini jeep is also on board the wooden ferry. The vehicle carries 28 jerry-cans containing a total of 2,800 litres of petrol which is being carried over to Cameroon. The issue of border crossing paper checking is far from being an issue since the law enforcement officers are familiar with the activities and have become part of the deal. Sometimes at mid-stream, disaster strikes, caused in the main by waves. The canoe capsizes and the whole load tumbles into the river, several drums falling on the people and making them unconscious. Some often die before they could be rescued. Through this route more than 30 million litres of fuel worth more than N1.056 billion are smuggled out of Nigeria into Cameroon and other African countries yearly.²³

Among the trade transactions going on unperturbed along the border lines, are the buying and selling of household utensils from Nigeria by Cameroonians. On Mondays and Wednesdays, the market of Bakassi takes place. Here, both traders from Nigeria and

²² Margaret Niger-Thomas, “Women and the Arts of Smuggling,” *African Studies Review*, 44, 2 (2001); Meagher Kate, “Informal Integration or Economic Subversion? The Development and Organization of Parallel Trade in West Africa,” in R. Laverne, ed., *Regional Integration in West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Christopher Sama Molem, “Cross-Border Conflict between Nigeria and Her Francophone Neighbors: Implications for Cross-Border Trade,” unpublished paper presented at the Association of African Political Scientists, June 2001.

²³ Sama, pp. 23-35.

Cameroon display their trade items. During the buying and selling, both the CFA franc and the Nira are used and accepted as legal tender without problem. There is often no need to exchange one currency to another. Among the items sold are, clothes, aqua-products, jewelries, household utensils and appliances, shoes and food stuff and handicraft of the area. Essential items also include salt, kerosene, matches, bush lamps, soaps and so on. Some local craftsmen, like tailors, blacksmiths, weavers, dyers and tattooers not only offered their crafts, but also performed paid services on the markets days. In fact, such days are not only meant for commercial activities, but a forum for people to meet with friends and discuss and share intimate informations. It was very common for people to cross the borders to meet with friends and to share a drink, befriend girls, help in marriage ceremonies and other cultural rituals of their kith and kins. There existed annual festival, the *zuing*, that both peoples organize and danced together. This is performed with preparing for the next fishing season, as an appeasement strategy of the gods of the waters to give them good catch. Death ceremonies of both peoples across the border are jointly attended by them. Elango²⁴ affirms this when he says that such a dance, like the *jengu* among the Isuwu (Bimbia) and the Douala groups is a magico-religious institution which organized rituals dances, sacrifices and gift to the water spirits, and is associated with the good fishing and all kinds of luck including fecundity. Its initiation rites “often lasted several days and involved great feasting and dancing.” This ceremony served as a vital link between the border line people. It directly or indirectly strengthened the cultural contact between the two groups. It also strengthened the basis of commercial cooperation which of course served to cement their political solidarity. In fact, such activities talk much of themselves as people move from one side of the border to the next with ample ease, not even noticing the presence of an international established frontier.

Fanso²⁵ says that in the traditional setting, local markets were important not only as a place of buying and selling, but also as a meeting-place for relatives, friends and traditional authorities. The people go to there most importantly to “hear news”, “see” some relatives, dispatch a gift, meet a lover or in-law, pay a debt, settle a dispute, or pay respect to elders. Some people organise and hold their periodic thrift or mutual aid associations. In fact, traditional announcement of their chiefs or local council were also made on the market day. He posits further that, indeed, these border-line markets functions for the ethnic folk as a social club where dancing, drinking and all forms of entertainment and attractions take place. The border in the light of the international perceptive becomes inexistent. In fact, the Ardeners say that from birth to death, a person can grow and stay here without noticing the differences between being a Cameroonian and Nigerian. The word migration is not known to

²⁴ Lovette Z. Elango, “Britain and Bimbia in the Nineteenth Century 1833-1878: a Study in the Anglo-Bimbia Trade and Diplomacic Relations”, Ph.D. Dissertation in History, Boston University, 1974, pp. 26-27.

²⁵Verkijika G. Fanso, “Inter-Group Relations and Cameroon Reunification: A Prototype of Africa’s Frontier Problems,” *Annals of the Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences, Serie Science Humaines*, Volume 1, No. 2, July 1985, pp. 38-39.

the people. They considered themselves as one, thus movement across the border lines is not considered crossing the border by the people, but circulation within common ethnic spaces.²⁶

This concept of human movement has been taken advantage of by many as a means of gaining employment in Cameroon. Nigerians have greatly increased the labour force of the Cameroon plantations. The territory's economy involved the large number of workers the plantation drew from within the Cameroons as well as Nigeria. There is a growing migration of eastern Nigerians, particularly the Igbo, to the 'greener pastures' in Cameroon. Migration became instrumental in escaping from widespread land scarcity in their densely populated areas and in providing the necessary manpower and trading circuits in the underdeveloped south West region of Cameroons. Migrants started working in the various agro-industrial enterprises in the Southern Cameroons, notably the now Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Pamol, both of which had inherited the former German plantations in the area.²⁷ In the 1950s Nigerians, especially Igbo, comprised roughly 25–30 percent of the CDC labour force and 80 percent of the Pamol workforce.²⁸ Many of these workers settled in the Southern Cameroons. They acquired land for food farming and cash cropping, originally on a usufruct basis, by providing village elders with a token payment. Although the transfer of land was not intended to be permanent, Nigerians were able, with the increase in the value of land and the formalization of land tenure, to secure titles and set themselves up as landlords. A growing number of them used their earnings from plantation labour to launch small-scale trading enterprises, selling food and durable goods in the vicinity of the plantations. Gradually, Igbo have come to dominate the market trade in local foodstuffs and imported goods, as well as the transport industry and the retail and wholesale distribution of palm oil in an area centred on Kumba, Tiko and Victoria (Limbe). In these towns, large numbers of Nigerians have entered the restaurant business or became involved in photography, baking, tailoring, shoemaking, bicycle repairs and a variety of other small enterprises. In the Kumba area, they are the principal buyers of cocoa.²⁹

This feeling of one people and the desire to protect it has been made manifest by the idea of breaking from the ICJ's decision of giving Cameroon the Peninsular. The people desire to break from Nigeria and Cameroon to form their own nation. This, they made the voices heard by terrorist attitude, pirates on the sea and hostage taking (see plate 1). After several border clashes with Nigeria over Bakassi and a northern region near Lake Chad, Cameroon took the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1994 as earlier highlighted. With special reference to the Anglo-German Treaty of 1913 and colonial era diplomatic correspondence between the two imperial powers, the ICJ ruled in favor of

²⁶ E. Ardener, S. Ardener and W. A. Warmington, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons* (Oxford University Press, London, 1960); P. Konings, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon* (London: James Currey, 1993).

²⁷ Ardener *et al.*, *Plantation and Village*; Konings, *Labour Resistance*; P. Konings, *Unilever Estates in Crisis and the Power of Organizations in Cameroon* (Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 1998).

²⁸ Konings, *Labour Resistance*; Konings, *Unilever Estates in Crisis*.

²⁹ C. F. Fisiy, *Power and Privilege in the Administration of Law: Land law reforms and social differentiation in Cameroon* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 1992); G. W. Kleis, "Network and ethnicity in an Igbo migrant community," (Ph.D. Thesis, East Lansing, MI, Michigan State University, 1975); G.W. Kleis, "Confrontation and incorporation: Igbo ethnicity in Cameroon," *African Studies Review* 23, 3 (1980), pp. 89–100.

Cameroon in 2002, ordering Nigeria to transfer sovereignty over Bakassi to Cameroon, but without requiring any of the Nigerian residents in Bakassi to leave or change their citizenship. The details of the transfer of sovereignty were worked out in the Green Tree Agreement, which was assembled with the additional participation of the United States, Great Britain, France and Equatorial Guinea. Popular and political opposition to the decision within Nigeria delayed the transfer of sovereignty, though the government neither ratified nor rejected the court's verdict. In Bakassi itself, there was wide dissatisfaction with the decision, especially in the English-speaking Nigerian majority. As popular opinion on the Bakassi border lines hold:

The United Nations should realize that we have the right to decide where we want to be and the right to self-determination. We are Nigerians and here in our ancestral home. You can see some of the graves here dating back to the 19th century. How can you force a strange culture and government on us? We appreciate what the Nigerian government is doing but let it be on record that they have betrayed us and we will fight for our survival and self-determination. We expected that the government as well as the ICJ could have come to the people and called for a referendum so that the people would decide what they wanted for themselves. But we don't really know why it had to be done that way. If they do not then we and our brothers on the other side will decide to take things into our hands, and have our voices heard no matter what it takes until our desire is attend.³⁰

Taking things into their hands and having their voice had no matter what it takes was inclining to pirate actions; and taking control of what they called their own political future.

Plate 1. Sea pirates in the Bakassi Waters



Source: *Terrorism Monitor: Indepth Analysis of the War on Terror*, Vol. VIII Issue 43, 24 November 2010, p.1.

³⁰ *Terrorism Monitor: Indepth Analysis of the War on Terror*, Vol. VIII Issue 43, 24 November 2010, p.1.

In July 2006 the Bakassi Movement for Self-Determination (BMSD) joined with the Southern Cameroons Peoples Organization (SCAPO) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) to declare the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Bakassi, an unsuccessful attempt to found a new nation in the small peninsula that brought out few supporters. After the Nigerian Senate ruled the transfer of sovereignty was illegal in 2007, the three groups again declared the independence of Bakassi in July 2008, this time with BMSD declaring it would subsume all its activities under the “joint leadership” of MEND. The secessionist SCAPO movement had a different plan including Bakassi with the Southern Cameroons in a secessionist “Republic of Ambazonia.”

The pirates called themselves Africa Marine Commando (AMC). They claimed responsibility for the abduction of six sailors from a Belgian ship anchored 40 km off Douala. An AMC spokesman said the hostages were moved to a camp on Nigerian territory and demanded the release of ten Ijaw fighters in a Cameroonian prison and the immediate opening of direct talks with Cameroon president Paul Biya.³¹ The immediate opening of talks with the president was to discuss practical steps of giving up Bakassi Peninsular for the new nation to formed. The AMC, which appears to be a faction of the larger Bakassi Freedom Fighters (BFF) movement, also kidnapped seven Chinese fishermen in Cameroonian coastal waters who were later freed in exchange for an undisclosed ransom.³² These gunmen in light boats attacked two cargo ships in Douala harbor, kidnapping two Russian crewmen from one ship and looting the safe and abducting the captain of the second ship, a Lithuanian refrigerated vessel. The security of Douala’s port is a major regional concern as Douala acts as the commercial lifeline for the land-locked Central African Republic and Chad, another major petroleum producer which runs its oil through the Chad-Cameroon pipeline to the Cameroon port of Kribi.³³

Although the Cameroon government refused to acknowledge the political dimension of the violence in Bakassi by declining to identify the insurgents as anything other than “armed bandits,” the decision to hold 14 August 2009, ceremony marking the transfer of authority in the Nigerian city of Calabar rather than in Bakassi was interpreted as an acknowledgement that Bakassi was far from secure. In respond, the Cameroon’s Bataillon d’Intervention Rapide (BIR)³⁴ The BIR commandos were sent to the coast in 2007 to assist the Delta Command in dealing with a rapidly deteriorating security situation.³⁵ Nigerian residents of Bakassi were given the option of moving to a “New Bakassi” some 30 km inside

³¹ *Le Jour*, September 29.

³² Radio France Internationale, March 13.

³³ *Cameroon People*,” 13, 20 November 2007.

³⁴ The BIR was formed in 1999 as the Bataillon Léger d’Intervention (BLI), a special intervention force designed to eliminate foreign rebels, bandits and deserters (the “coupeurs de routes”) who were destroying the security of Cameroon’s northern provinces through cattle rustling, abductions, murder and highway robbery. As part of military reforms carried out in Cameroon in 2001, the unit took on its current BIR designation. BIR officers are selected from the graduates of the Ecole Militaire Interarmées in Yaoundé.

³⁵ *The Sun*, 13, 29 October 2008.

Nigeria. Many Nigerians wished to move from Bakassi but remained there after hearing reports of conditions in the new settlement.³⁶

Conclusion

This paper attempted to see how the epistemological concept of boundary differed fundamentally from the European and African applications. Even though both operate within the confines of the acceptable system of International law, with the former intuit by colonial heritage, confining inhabitants of a particular territory to the mandate of state control and ownership, the traditional African concept of boundary prevails and is applied most often than not, especially on the Bakassi frontier line of Cameroon and Nigeria. Here, the socio-economic and cultural mores by pass and/or abrogate these international notions and functions of boundary to incline to their ethnic jurisdiction. The international border faded in their minds. Their activities have been a serious challenge to the decisions the Nigerian and Cameroonian states as well as the International Court of Justice, especially as regard the decision of handing the disputed Bakassi Peninsular to Cameroon. They inhabitants of the border lines prefer to create their own nation in respect to their ethnic functions, and so do all at their capacity to have their voices heard, which include terrorist and pirate actions. But due to the efforts of both the Cameroon and Nigerian governments, these violent actions have been checked. But the spirit of unity that hovers around the border lines has not been checked yet. It will be in this light that great sanitization and education of the local population can be done to that effect. Also, the Cameroon government needs to make its presence felt there by not only deploying soldiers, but implanting realistic political, socio-economic and cultural institutions. It is only then that the people would gradually feel integrated into the statehood confines according to the international expectations.

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Fifth Annual Conference of the African Borderlands Research Network ABORNE
Crossing African Borders: Migration and Mobility

Panel 2

Title: Multiple Borders: Migrations, Land and Conflicts in Togo

The creation of the borders between Ghana and Togo and the Togolese migrations had important consequences in the Ewe political *ethno-genesis*, in the economic possibilities opened up by smuggling and in the relatively easy *exit option* available for people. At the same time, the south-western region of Togo has witnessed the massive arrival of migrants from the north of the country, mainly Kabiè, who settled down in this territory with different forms of agreement with the land owners, producing increasing tensions regarding the access to land. During the rising opposition movement against the dictatorship of Eyadema in the 90's, many land conflicts between Ewe and Kabiè were described as products of ethnic tensions, re-proposing the colonial stereotypes about the "barbaric" northern "Kabiè" (now politically dominant), against a "civilized", but actually submitted, southern "Ewe". Based on fieldwork research carried out from 2006, this paper explores the ways through which these two frontiers (an exterior and "formal" one and an internal - but no less important- economic and political one) influenced the political and social context of the region and shows how, in the local representations, both frontiers, built during the colonialism and constantly re-negotiated, reciprocally load themselves with peculiar political and economic values.

Introduction

The south-western region of Togo seems to show many of the characteristics of the concept of "frontier" elaborated by Kopytoff (1987). In fact, it has been historically populated by successive waves of migrations, the most famous of which followed the mythical "exodus from Notsé" of Ewe groups - the account of which was gathered by Spieth (1906) and popularized in the missionary schools in the early years of the twentieth century¹. Surrounded in the pre-colonial era by the Ashanti to the west, the Dahomey to the east and the Anlo to the south - political organizations involved in the slave trade, the region became a privileged place for those who tried to avoid being captured or for those looking for new land to cultivate, coming both from the west and from the east. It became the place where a plethora of political units of small dimension were formed, proud of their independence and lacking a central political power (Pauvert, 1960; Gayibor, 1992,1997). Such independence was in contrast with the expansionist aims of the Akwamu who extended their influence in the west from

¹ For a discussion about the role played by the missionaries in the elaboration and the diffusion of the "imagined tradition" about the "exodus from Notsé" and its consequences in the ewe *ethno-genesis* process, see Gayibor (1992), Nugent (2002, 2005), Greene (1996). For a more general discussion about the impact of missionaries in the region see Meyer (1999).

1730, followed by the Ashanti that attempted to conquer the region in 1870. During the colonial period, the region was subjugated firstly by German control (until 1914), then by the English (until 1920) and, following this, it was annexed to the French protectorate. This brought the establishment of a first border between German Togoland and the Gold Coast at the end of the nineteenth century and afterwards, following the division of the colony in 1920, a second frontier between Togo under French control (the Togo of today) and British Togo that merged into the modern day Ghana.

The impact that such a frontier had on the political and economic life of the country has been the subject of numerous studies as it results in being an emblematic example of the arbitrariness of colonial power in separating communities which were seen as homogeneous (see for example Amenumey, 1989, Debrunner, 1965). Other studies (Nugent, 2002, Lawrance, 2002) have challenged this essentialist interpretation demonstrating how the “ewe identity” was a product of the frontier and the colonial policies and how identities were historically re-negotiated between groups who were often in strongly competition between themselves.

However, the colonial politics did not influence the local political geography only through the institution of the “formal” frontiers, but they contributed also in the creation of “internal frontiers” inside every single State, which were reinforced by the policies of the post-colonial governments. The “informal” frontier between the south of Togo, considered “useful” by the colonial administrators and open to investment, and a “wild and un-civilized” north, considered as a reserve of men for the forced manual labour in building the infrastructures, was exploited in the post-colonial political debate and contributed to the process of ethnicization carried out by Eyadema to guarantee the totalitarian control of the country for thirty eight years.

In this paper, I would like to make a comparison between the two frontiers (the “formal” one and the “informal” one) illustrating how both have influenced, and continue to influence, the elaboration of local political discourses and what impact they have had in the reconfiguration of the economic and social scenarios of the region. If it is clear how the two frontiers may be extremely heterogeneous between themselves (the first being a frontier in the strictest sense by which it separates two differing State entities, while the second appears as a symbolic, economic and political frontier inside a State), it is as true that both have a series of characteristics in common. Both have colonial origins and have been crossed by migratory processes that have reconfigured the economic and social landscape of the region. Both have made contributions to the development of local political discourse and both have guaranteed economic opportunities for those that crossed them.

Certainly one could object to the fact that the “formal” frontier is traceable and the other not. This is without doubt true from a macro-political point of view, but nevertheless, with a deeper analysis, one realises that even the “traceability” of the “formal” frontier is extremely ambiguous and contradictory: if one excludes the “normal” check points on the main roads leading to Ghana (although these check points, as we will see, are not present only at the frontier, but represent a constant along every stretch of road in the country, at very short intervals of only a few kilometres apart), the entire frontier is composed of nothing more than small cement pylons placed at a small distance from each other which disappear into the vegetation, susceptible to easy removal by the locals even just to extend the size of a field. From this point of view, the “traceability” of the frontier is perhaps more a product of a cartographic myth, linked to the rhetoric of the State, than a reality for the local populations. The frontier was crossed relatively easily in both directions by people despite the attempts of the State to control the migration flows.

The impact of the Ghana-Togo border

The research of Nugent (2002) has demonstrated how the frontier between Ghana and Togo, demarcated in 1919-20 after the division of German Togoland between France and England and validated in 1927-28, far from being simply a colonial imposition which the population “naturally” had “resisted” or attempted to sabotage, has historically become a space which the people of the region have contributed to reinforce, forging it both as a zone that has generated economic opportunities (such as smuggling) as well as an arena for the reshaping of local and national identities. This has resulted in an extremely productive space from various points of view.

In the first place, as underlined several times (Nugent, 2002, Lawrance, 2002), the frontier has been of fundamental importance in the process of the creation of the local “ethnic” identity promoted by the pan-Ewe movement. Rather than pre-existing the institution of the border, as the work of Amenumey (1989) implicates, the “Ewe identity” (that represented in the long term more a failed political plan promoted by the local economic élite rather than a shared sense of belonging to a “community” that transcends the various local realities), was a product of the imposition of the frontier itself.

On the other hand, the strategic re-appropriation of the frontier by the local inhabitants of the region is well testified by the high number of conflicts linked to the land examined by Nugent. Given the rise in the value of the land generated by the impact of the cocoa economy, many groups denied access to the land to those who had “stayed on the other side” of the frontier. The latter in turn took possession of the

land of the former on “their” side. This has certainly contributed in undermining the base of the plan of reunification backed up by the pan-Ewe movement, reinforcing more than ever the respective rhetoric of national belonging.

However, the productivity of the frontier did not concern only the process of colonial ethno-genesis or the construction of the national identity. The frontier has generated a noteworthy economic and political opportunity thanks both to the smuggling business and to the possibility of the *exit option* that it offered in order to avoid the German and French taxation.

The borderland regions of Klouto and Agou, since the construction of the railways and the road between Lomé and Kpalimè in 1907 by the German administration (utilising for the most part forced labour from the north), became the richest area of Togo. Thanks to these infrastructures it managed to send cocoa from the Gold Coast via the port of Lomé, causing serious damage to the English who based a considerable part of their income on the customs duties. Since the German colonial period, Kpalimé, only 20 km from the frontier, progressively became one of the richest cities of the hinterland. Many European businesses established themselves there, just as groups of Hausa and Kotocoli traders of the north did. If a large part of the British Togoland cocoa passed through here, the city also supplied imported goods to regions far beyond the border. The construction of the railways and the road, besides contributing to a draining of resources towards the port of Lomé, brought to life the establishment of numerous markets along these axes.

According to historical sources relative to the German colonial period, the Kpalimé region was the one which recorded the highest number of income generated by tax collecting: 98% of the population paid the annual six Marks in order to avoid the twelve days of forced labour (Gayibor, 1997, p.31). This fact can be explained by the permeability of the border with the Gold Coast, where many Ewe relocated to work in the cocoa plantations, managing therefore to accumulate enough money to avoid forced labour and bringing cocoa farming into the country.

Cocoa had a fundamental role in reconfiguring the socio-economic landscape of the region. The impact of this cash crop contributed in a decisive measure in changing the forms of access to the land, allowing some members of the lineage to claim back exclusive rights to the portions of land where they had planted cocoa, reducing the land available for others members. This process meant an increase in social tensions and conflicts about the redistribution of resources. Moreover, cocoa gave many farmers the chance to accumulate a small amount of capital which served for the education of their children and to make them become upwardly mobile in society, forming a new *elite* which overlapped, without

coinciding, with the structure of the *chefferies*, and in many cases, allowing the extension of the property while paying labour from the north.

Cocoa, imported products, palm oil and, more recently, petrol are the most common contraband products. The frontier has therefore guaranteed a series of economic opportunities for men and women who searched for alternative ways of earning a living besides agricultural work. Certainly such opportunities were strongly conditioned by the social and economic conditions at the start: those bringing cocoa, illegally crossing the border by night, did not earn obviously as much as the buyer, who, besides becoming very wealthy, was not exposed to the dangers of the crossing. Today, alongside the smuggling of cocoa organized by individual farmers who cross the frontier looking for the best price, the illegal traffic of petrol, on a much wider scale, involves the renting of lorries and the participation of bigger groups of people to make the petrol available at agreed points on the frontier. It is fundamental today, as in the past, to bribe the frontier guards.

The State has maintained an extremely ambiguous attitude in relation to the smuggling and to the corruption this trade has generated. Contrary to what is normally thought, these two elements have been central in its setting up and in the way in which it continues to renegotiate and carry out its action of social and economic control. For example, the German administration, just as the French, severely punished cocoa smuggling in the direction of Gold Coast, while encouraged the illegal flow of goods inward-bound which would benefit Togolese revenues.

The Togolese government, just as its former colonial counterpart, has maintained an exceptionally ambiguous attitude regarding the petrol smuggling: the convictions have been severe and characterized by frequent acts of repression towards the small traders, but it is widely known that some soldiers (as well as State officials who have cars), fill their petrol tanks from the traders to cut down on travelling expenses. Very often the confiscated petrol, ordered by the State, is used to bring down the buying price rather than restore the law. Smuggling therefore generates a source of income that placates discontented and underpaid soldiers and the State administration is well aware of this.

In other words, like cocoa smuggling in the past, the more recent trade in petrol, far from being a practice that escapes the control of the State, subverting the arbitrariness of the frontiers or representing “weapons of resistance of the weakest” (making reference to famous work of Scott (1985) *Weapons of the Weak*), appears concretely linked to State interests and, at the same time, brings about a productive action in structuring, confirming and at times renegotiating the frontier itself and the power that the State has exercised on it.

Far from representing a marginal zone, the frontier emerges as a privileged arena of production and reproduction of the State itself, of its economic and political structures and of the narratives linked to it. The capital of Togo itself, Lomé, that springs up on the border with Ghana, had its roots in European businesses which wanted to escape from the taxes imposed by the British administration at the end of the nineteenth century and continued, thanks to the smuggling, to supply the internal markets (Marguerat 1992). As Brenda Chalfin (2001) argues in her study about smuggling in the border region between Ghana, Togo and Burkina: "... illicit cross-border trade contributes not only to the discursive constitution of the state but even more so, I suggest, to its practical and experiential realization.[...] Cross border trade in northern Ghana instantiates the state in new and unexpected ways, some of which reproduce official conventions of rules, some of which alter and challenge them".

The informal traffic has generated an overproduction of improvised road blocks (for example a rope tied across the middle of a road or a fallen tree trunk) with soldiers intent on extorting money from passers-by. Along one of the main points of transit between Kpalime (Togo) and Ho (Ghana), initially covered in tarmac, now reduced almost to a rough track, on the Togolese side there are more than five road blocks, two of which are permanent and the others are mobile structures which appear and disappear in an improvised manner. These check points represent a constant along the main roads of the country, following a "tradition" established by the Eyadema regime to repress and terrorize the population during the revolts during the 90's. This does not occur only on the main streets, but also on many less used tracks leading to Ghana where it is normal to encounter the soldiers, dozing along the roadside, who stop passers-by in order to carry out their "checks". To escape from this type of abuse of power depends to a great extent on having acquaintances in the army or in the administration and to be able to use these social relations when confronted by the poorly paid soldiers on duty.

This phenomenon nevertheless does not only regard the roads that lead to the frontier. As previously mentioned, the road blocks are constant along every communication route of the country. Some of these are fixed and require bribes with a sum that tends to be stabilized over time and is given directly to the police by taxi drivers. Other blocks disappear after a few weeks, only to reposition themselves at other locations, usually collecting higher amounts of money which are difficult to negotiate. These check points represent the most visible form of the repressive apparatus of the State and the places where the highest level of arbitrariness and violence is exercised on the part of the soldiers. There are many well known cases where soldiers have beaten all the passengers in a vehicle because they had protested.

The region of Kpalimé is known as the region traditionally linked to the opposition parties and the road that links it to Lomé is one of the busiest in Togo thanks to the huge amount of freight in transit. Therefore it is not surprising that the concentration of such road blocks is higher than in other regions of the country. It must also be said that, despite the enormous volume of goods being exchanged between the two frontiers (cocoa and petrol, already documented, but also dried fish from the Volta, weed killer and imported goods), it is not even comparable to that movement of trade along the main communication links, traced in colonial times, that link Kpalimé to Lomé, Lomé to Aneho or Lomé and the north of Togo. With the only exception of the customs operations on the main coastal road between Accra and Cotonou and that towards Burkina (where circulate the largest quantity of imported and exported goods between Togo and its bordering countries), the great majority of the roads that cross the frontiers are composed of dusty tracks taken by a small number of taxis, creating notable difficulties for those intending to trade over medium distances. The main markets (Adetà, Agou Gare, Avetonou to name a few), rather than springing up on the frontier, tend to concentrate their positioning along the most important communication routes in the interior.

Yet the frontier preserves the role of generator of possible sources of income as well as the ability to guarantee an “*exit option*” when faced with a political crisis in the region. During the bloody military repression in 2005, following the death of Eyadema, that had brought his son Faure Gnassingbe to power, many thousands of Togolese crossed the border, seeking refuge in Ghana. The same thing happened during the colonial period and during the political crisis of the 90’s.

At the same time “good to think about “ and “good to cross over”, the frontier has generated a term of comparison on which the local representations of the State are built. The regions which for historical reasons became part of contemporary Ghana have a sense of being richer and more secure. The old “British Togoland” represents the principal emigrant destination and the positive point of comparison for every Togolese who wants to criticise his own national regime: “Ghana the rich”, “In Ghana there is democracy”, “In Ghana the traditional authorities are respected while here they are only puppets of the RPT”, “In Ghana the streets are in good condition and there are no power failures”, “Arriving in Accra is like arriving in an European capital”, “Lomé, that was once called “*la plus belle*”, now is the “*poubelle*”, while Accra is clean and ordered”. These are some of the phrases that are most commonly heard during the comparison between Togo and its neighbouring country.

As Piot (2010) has rightly noted, Togo is the African country with the largest number of candidates for the *visa lottery*, organized by the American embassy, which allows people to try to obtain the *green card*. In Togo, the number of applications are ten times higher than that of Benin, a bordering State of

around the same size. Forty years of ferocious military dictatorship and no hope for the future have structured the *exit strategies* as the only possibilities for having guaranteed rights and to improve economic conditions. *Visa lottery* has also created an informal system of “experts” which offer, for a fee, consultancy in order to help the lottery winners pass the embassy exam.

A visible example which sustains the debate about the “underdevelopment” of Togo in respect to its neighbouring countries was given to me by an ex-petrol smuggler with whom I travelled along the frontier. Between the Togolese villages of Nyivé and Nyitoé, the frontier is represented by the river Todjet. From Nyitoé there are two roads that lead to Ghana: one of these houses Togolese and Ghanaian customs control while the other is free from custom inspection (and is often used for smuggling). This last road crosses the river thanks to two bridges positioned side by side: one built by the Togolese government made from two tree trunks, the other, recently built by Ghana, is a large iron bridge. This example is enough to sustain the well-known Togolese irony in relation to the incompetence of its own government.

The North-South Border

Unlike the boundary with Ghana, that between the north and south of Togo cannot be traced on a map and certainly does not represent a frontier in the strictest sense. Additionally, it does not represent a line separating homogeneous historical, cultural and economic entities inside it. Just like the south in the pre-colonial period had never had a united political system, but it was differentiated in groups that were extremely jealous of their independence, the north was composed of multiple groups (Kabie, Kotokoli, Naudemba, Bassar, Temba, Ntribu, Konkomba, Natsamba, Peul to name a few) of extremely diverse origins, languages and political structures and often in conflict among themselves. Nevertheless, the north-south axes emerge in the local imaginaries as one of the borders which is loaded with more symbolic values and often tends to influence local political debate.

Even if it is not a frontier in the strictest sense, this border has also a colonial origin. The north of Togo, the last area in temporal order to be subjected to the colonial conquest, is revealed to be rather problematic given the strong resistance shown by the local people during both the French and German administrations. It represented the main source of labour used by the forced labour in the building of communication routes for the country, in the plantations and in the army. Each different colonial administration contributed to the elaboration of the myth of “useful Togo”, that in fact was limited to the southern part of the country, richer in terms of agricultural production. Colonial powers invested

more resources in the integration of the people of the south in the health and education system and relegated the north to a marginal and inferior role.

The impact of the cocoa economy meant the intensification of the migratory process from the north that, unlike those who were forced to work temporarily by the colony to build the infrastructures or the seasonal workers in the plantations, allowed the migrants to settle definitively in the region by means of a plethora of agreements established with the Ewe landowners. These agreements meant that the migrants could have access to a piece of land in exchange for work on the landowner's fields.

Although the first settlements of forced labour from the north of the colony, as mentioned above, are documented already during the start of the twentieth century, when the German administration initiated the building of the railway lines and roads, during the successive period of French colonization were carried out massive projects for the transfer of people to populate scarcely populated regions in the centre and south of the country. Such policies, in fact, concealed a real need for having labour on demand for the maintenance of the main communication routes.

The region between Atakpamé and Sokode, like that between Kpalimé and Atakpamé, was forcibly repopulated between the end of the twenties and the thirties, creating Kabié and Losso settlements that supplied more than just cheap labour for the maintenance of the communication routes. They settled down in the region where they dedicated themselves to extensive farming. Such a "colonization" of lands, that had been emptied following the slave raids of neighbouring kingdoms of Dahomei and Ashanti, responded to the needs of overpopulation in the Kabié area, as said by the colonial administrations. Today, a large quantity of yam or maize that can be found at Kpalimé market is cultivated by Kabié communities that had settled in the fertile lands between Kpalimé and Atakpamé. Moreover, Kpalimé, thanks to its important economic role and the opportunities that it guaranteed, attracted a steady number of migrants from the north, not only Kabié, but a healthy number of Kotokoli that tend to manage many of the *boutiques* of imported goods. Also Hausa traders are present along with Peul breeders, which supply the market for meat, and large numbers of Bassar, Akposso and Losso groups. The Kpalimé mosque is one of the biggest in southern Togo and is a clear indication of the large number of northern migrants, a great many of whom are Muslim. The use of Kabié and Losso labour in the large German plantations in Agou² - that later passed under the French and finally under State control - meant for many a definitive installation on the most productive lands in the region that had been forcibly removed from local people by European firms.

² For an history about the German plantations in the region of Agou, see Ahadji (1983, 1996)

As has been brought to light by Piot (1999, p.161), even now the Kabiè settlements in the south maintain strong relations with the villages of origin: *“The relationship between the communities of origin and their offshoots is seen as that of “parent” to “child”, and, as with the filial relationship generally, the latter are expected to “respect” the former. Such respect is especially evident on ritual occasions, when offshoot communities are expected to defer to their “parents” in the mountains”*. As the author reminds us, the migrations resulted in being the context from which a series of Kabiè imaginaries emerged, representing the fertile lands of the south as the best place for production, the accumulation of resources and “modernity”, in contrast to the lands of origin in the north, place of rites, of “traditions” and of family ties. The north emerges, just as much in Ewe imaginaries as in those of Kabié, as a place that has preserved its own “traditional authenticity”, that has not “forgotten” the “secrets” that allows Kabié to have a privileged relationship with the spirits with which the emergence of political power of Eyadema is linked.

The political attitude of the French administration in regard to the north changed following the start of the pan-Ewe movement led by Olympio that aimed for independence. Once obtained in 1960, Olympio did not hide its real intention to create some distance from the control of Paris (Amenumey,1989). With the objective of weakening the struggle for independence of Olympio’s party (CUT,) the colonial government played on the division between north and south creating and sustaining parties that worked as promoters of the development of the north. Even after independence there was no shortage of support for the *coup d’état* that brought about the death of Olympio and Eyadema’s coming to power in 1967.

Soldier of Kabiè roots, Eyadema was paid by the French to fight in Algeria and Indochina, and after independence, along with other military companions, he tried in vain to reintegrate himself in the national army. After he had killed Olympio in ’63 and he had undermined Grunitzky in ’67, Eyadema took power and made a strong contribution to the “ethnicisation” of the country (Toulabor, 1986). Nowadays, a large part of the economic and political elite, of the officials of the RPT (the ex-single party that still governs the country) and 80% of the army is of Kabié origin of which a large part are natives of the same village of the president (Piot, 1999, 2010).

The “mobutistic” image of a great hunter, expert fighter and faithful “traditionalist” that Eyadema loved to endow upon himself, together with his poor knowledge of French and the numerous satirical tales that *radio trottoir* spread about him in a hushed voice, as well as the ferocious brutality that had managed to keep him in power for thirty-eight years, have contributed in reinforcing the ambiguous stereotypes regarding the Kabié. These portray them on one hand as physically strong, great workers of

the land, tied to “traditions”, that gives them a privileged relationship with the spirits from which political power has been taken, on the other, they paint them as violent, wild, uncultured troublemakers. Such stereotypes refer to the process of “subordinated inclusion” that the Kabié were subjected to in colonial times that tend to re-emerge in debates regarding land conflicts among descendants of Kabié installed in the south and Ewe that demand their rights over the land occupied by them, or instead when the winners of a State job selection tend to belong to a particular “ethnic” group. Finally, the political events of neighbouring countries, like the crisis in the Ivory Coast, supply elements that propose the generalizing of the reading of local political conflicts in terms of opposition between north and south. Despite this and contrary to those who feared that Togo would become a second Rwanda, the Kabié migrants settled in the south have established long lasting ties. Even in occasional conversations, these stereotypes are often counterbalanced by the widespread knowledge that even many Kabié have been opposition party militants and victims of thirty-eight years of the Eyadema dictatorship, as, on the contrary, many Ewe have exploited their own ties with the single party to earn prestigious positions.

Migrations and Conflicts

As already mentioned, the migrations led to radical transformations in the social-economic panorama of the region. The Ewe seasonal migrants returning from the Gold Coast were responsible for the introduction of cocoa and the undoing of the consequent process of privatization of land. Moreover, once they had started producing cocoa, they made agreements with the migrants from the north of Togo which were very similar to those that they themselves had had in the Gold Coast. The plethora of agreements went from a simple seasonal work contract to forms of contract which involved long term residency and which would end with permanent settlement.

An interesting example of a temporary work contract is that of an elderly Ewe landowner in Agou who possessed a sizeable piece of land (cultivating cocoa) in the nineteen sixties and seventies who paid Kabié migrants in the currency of dogs, animals which are fundamental to some Kabié initiation ceremonies (the *evalà* or *afalaa*) and for which the price tends to rise significantly in certain periods. This guaranteed the landowner labour at a low cost and the migrants a notable business interest for their villages of origin.

Another form of contract called *nana* (“donate”) allowed the migrant the right to the use of a piece of land for the cultivation of maize. In exchange he had to take care of the palms that the owner had

planted in the fields. This form of agreement did not guarantee the settling of the migrant because after two or three years the growth of the palms produced too much shade to continue the maize cultivation. Among the contracts that, instead, produced a definitive migrant settlement, we can observe those called *dεmε*, which consisted in the division of the crops between a landowner and the worker, according to a percentage that ranged from half each to two thirds to the worker or the owner depending on the region, the size of the field and the market price of the product. These represent local variants of *dibi-ma-dibi* (common in the Volta region) or of *Abumu*, typical of Akan territories in the Gold Coast. It was thanks to such agreements that many Kabié managed to settle down in the territory. Such contracts did not regulate only relations between migrants and Ewe but also among different lineages belonging to the same village. Moreover, it should be noted that such contracts of an oral nature tended to be renegotiated and they often blended into each other. Frequently, migrants, who had worked as day labourers for various seasons and who had close positive relations with the landowners, were allowed the use of a piece of land in *nana* or in *dεmε*. On the contrary, agreements of *dεmε* and *nana* could be renegotiated by the descendants of the landowner to have back the land that had gained value over time or to reconfirm such agreements, reminding the descendants of the migrants to deposit the quantity of the harvest that guaranteed them the rights to have access to the land.

The management of such agreements was delegated in a particular manner to the local *chefferies* in spite of the fact that, according to colonial law confirmed in fact by Eyadema, their role should be in theory limited only to the conciliation in civil and commercial matters (Rouveroy van Nieuwall, 1999, 2000).

In fact however, the *chefferies* managed to preserve a central role in the management of conflicts connected to the land. Even now, the majority of such issues are delegated by the Prefect of Agou to the village chiefs because “only the elders know the limits of the land”. We must also add the fact that following “formal” procedures of property transfer is extremely expensive. Only people who are in the best economic positions can exploit the “official” legislation to their favour. For the others, it is much cheaper and efficient to use the *chefferies* as guarantors of the prospective transactions.

Due to the extremely fragile and revocable nature of *nana* and *dεmε* agreements and the fact that the monopoly of the resolution of conflicts is in the hands of the Ewe *chefferies*, this contributes, to a certain extent, to the condition of increased vulnerability of the migrant descendants. Though it is true that a careful analysis of cases involving conflict tend to bring to light that the whole majority of rights of the migrants’ descendants are in some ways reconfirmed, they are not in any case all guaranteed. This is derived from the ability that many of them have in maintaining strong social relations with the

local *chefferies*, using marriage strategies, economic agreements and good personal relationships. Kabié are often recognized as active members of the local community - where they were born and raised, despite the lack of a common ancestral origin. Where a case of land access is contested, it rarely comes to the expulsion of migrant descendants. More often it is agreed that a portion of the harvest is given to the “formal” owners of the land. Certainly the political relations that some Kabiè has with the political elite and State army (via a well-placed relative, for example) have guaranteed a certain degree of security and influence over the choice of many *chefferies*, that fear repercussion in the case of overly severe sentences. This tends to reinforce in local Ewe imaginaries the perception that the Kabiè are participants in the patronage system and totalitarian power installed by Eyadema.

The tendency to read local conflicts regarding the management of land access in wider and ethnically classified political terms complicates the outline of conflict management itself and contributes in proposing the pertinent symbolic north-south border as the grammar through which the conflicts are represented again.

Such a symbolic border is, as mentioned previously, shared also by the Kabiè communities that perceive the south as a productive space in opposition to the north, zone of “traditions”, where it is necessary to fulfil rites of passage in adulthood and to reinforce family ties, although in many cases this is translated in the sending of the necessary funds to the ceremonies, without the actual physical presence of the young.

But not only. In 2009 the actual President of the Republic, Faure Gnassingbe, son of Eyadema and of an Ewe woman from Agou, have imprisoned his brother Kpatcha, accusing him of an attempted *coup d'état*. Responsible for a long time for the port of Lomè and linked to many important sectors of the army, Kpatcha best represented the interests of the Kabiè for many, compared to Faure, accused of having decided to build his latest private residence in Agou rather than in Pya, native village of his father. The position of Faure tends to be much more fragile compared to that of his father, not only because he must compete with more than a hundred brothers and sisters (Eyadema was proud of fathering many offspring), but also because he is considered by the opposition as “his father’s son” and therefore “too Kabiè”. At the same time, a large number of Kabiè criticize him, considering him “his mother’s son”, therefore at least in part Ewe. What emerges is the delicate position in which the regime finds itself and thus explains to a great extent the incorporation of parts of opposition parties inside the system of government, culminating recently with the historical drawing near of Gylchrist Olympio, son of the first Togolese president and noted opponent of the RPT regime, to Faure, son of the murderer of

his father. This has made him turn up their nose at both Ewe and Kabiè. “They have chosen to share out the cake”: was the comment that many Kabiè and Ewe agreed with.

The process of privatizing many State companies, justified by the policy of structural adjustment of the nineties, and the progressive reduction of State spending in the arenas of public health, education and infrastructure (but not in the purchase of weapons and in the expenditure on maintaining the excessive Togolese army), provoked the dismissal of many employees or the temporary employment of many who believed to be free from agriculture work once and for all. This group of the population (teachers, local officials and employees, university graduates), who felt privileged compared to those who had “stayed in the village” and believed itself to be considered as a the “middle class” of the country, founds itself dealing with its “return to the land”, having to exploit the social relations that it had managed to preserve. This meant an increase in the competition for land access and the resulting imbalance in the division of resources.

The observations of many village chiefs that I met indicated an increase in conflicts linked to the land as well as the incidences of witchcraft. It is extremely common to see houses or fields where a sign is erected saying “not for sale” or “quarrelsome land”, as a measure to avoid the frequent incidences of fraud regarding those who either sell property without having exclusive rights or sell the same property twice over. For this reason, the following statements are heard repeatedly: “Who purchases land, purchases a problem” or “Problems of land kill men”. It is no surprise that many *deme* contracts are under discussion at this time, since the land has returned to being a necessary condition that is, unfortunately, for the survival of many, never enough.

Conclusions

In this article I have tried to show the impact of an “external and formal” frontier, as well as an “internal and informal” one, in the economic and social landscape of a particular region of Togo and how together they have contributed in forging a series of political commentaries concerning the structures of local and national power. The first has been fundamental in guaranteeing economic opportunities (among which smuggling, with the support of the State apparatus that allows it), and in opening the possibility for many to escape from French and German taxation or during the repression of the Eyadema regime. The introduction of cocoa via the Ewe migrants, returning from the Gold Coast, has radically changed the local forms of management and access to the land and has created the

possibility of the settlement of migrants from the north. Moreover, this frontier has supplied a criterion of main comparison in the local representations of the Togolese situation. It has contributed to the process of colonial *ethno-genesis* of the Ewe and, at the same time, in its dissolution as a political plan. The internal frontier between the north and south of Togo, also a product of precise economic and political choices of colonial administrations, has emerged as a privileged grammar through which local political narratives are articulated, not only about the Eyadema regime, but also about the land conflicts, that emerged in the renegotiation of settlement agreements stipulated in the colonial era with the migrants of the north. Such migrations have radically modified the social and economic scenario of the region and have made room for negotiation of local identities, through the production and reproduction of stories tied to the first settlement and to the rights to the land that these legitimise.

In other words, with the aim of understanding how determined economic and social scenarios are configured and how these have produced particular discourses in the south-western region of Togo, it has emerged how fundamental it is to question the impact of migrations crossing the formal border with Ghana, as much as the migrations from the north of Togo itself.

Both “frontiers”, and the flow of goods and people they have generated, have contributed in a decisive way to the forms of management of the land, the resources and the wealth relative to the region. Focusing the attention only on the “formal” frontier would hide the fundamental social and economic contribution of the northern migrants to the region and would not explain the emergence of the ways by which we can read the country’s current political situation. At the same time, underlining only the north-south relationships would end by reproducing a discourse centred on the State-building rhetoric, that gives little attention both to the wider historical and economical contexts and to the processes of construction and imposition of the State itself, from the point of view of its “borders”.

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The border archive - Questioning meanings and hierarchies of borders in the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area

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Background

This paper emerges from a broader research on the history of nature conservation and its importance in defining and ordering spaces and borders in the region of the planned Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) or KAZA Peace Park¹. The aim of the park is to create a conservation area of the size of Sweden (~ 450'000 km²) including areas in five different nations (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).² While the main interest lays in the free movement of animals- mainly elephants- the peace park should also be an impulse for socio-economic development and should lead to a better transnational cooperation. Ideas of cross-border cooperation in nature conservation as a driving force for regional development came up in the early 20th century with the establishment of the Waterton Lakes Glacier International Peace Park between the USA and Canada.³ Although the concept has been used since then in many different forms all over the world, it became particularly prominent in post-apartheid South Africa and its neighbours. Supported and promoted by the Peace Park Foundation, a South African NGO, and financed by international donors, many peace parks emerged across the borders of most of the southern African countries.⁴

In recent years academic discourses have increasingly engaged on discussions around the various aspects of peace parks. Roughly, they can be grouped in three main categories: conservation biology, economics, and social science. Surprisingly little research has been done so far on one of the most central aspects of peace parks: its role in ordering space and borders.⁵ With this paper I

¹ In most of the promotional material, press articles and interviews conducted, the KAZA Transfrontier Conservation Area was called KAZA Peace Park. I will use this more common term in this paper. Victor Siamudaala, Head Secretary of the KAZA TFCA secretary in Kasane insists on the term *area*, as the term *park* is too easily connected with „the idea of a closed, strongly controlled and uninhabited national park“ (Interview with Victor Siamudaala, 27.07.2011). On the terminology of nature conservation areas: Salem, Ali H.: Introduction, in: Salem, Ali H. (Hg.): Peace Parks. Conservation and Conflict Resolution. Cambridge MA and London 2007. 6-7.

² The project of the KAZA TFCA was recognized by the five governments and the SADC in a memorandum of understanding in 2006. In August 2011 a legal treaty was signed, to which I have no access at this point.

³ Salem 2007. 2.

⁴ Werner Myburgh, CEO of the Peace Park Foundation admits that the only Peace Park that is „really“ working by now is the Kgalagadi Park between South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. The KAZA TFCA is seen as the most ambitious project. (Interview with Werner Myburgh, 11.07.2011)

⁵ Werner Myburgh emphasis that the vision of the PPF is the creation of „boundless spaces“. The name Transfrontier

aim at drawing attention to this aspect and use the vision of the KAZA Peace Park as an entry point into a more theoretical debate on meanings and hierarchies of borders in the region. By doing so I try to add a historical perspective to the discourses around peace parks and elaborate on methods on how to work as a historian with the complexity of borders in a region that should soon be part of a “boundless Kingdom of Animals”⁶.

The geographical focus of my research lies on the Namibian Caprivi Strip and its neighbouring regions.⁷ The viewer of a modern political map realises at first sight that national borders are omnipresent in the region. The small strip of land borders three different countries and is only a few hundred meters away from a fourth one. Having a closer look at the region allows one to see many more borders, frontiers and boundaries criss-crossing the region. Driving with a car from Rundu – west of the Caprivi – to Kasane – east of it – one passes at least one regional border, one national border, two veterinary borders, five national park borders and a time zone border, among others. During this process the car is registered many times, one has to show passports, pay fees, disinfect shoes, fill in forms and so on. There are borders one crosses without even realising, such as language borders, borders of former kingdoms, chiefdoms or other administrative entities, land-use borders, community borders and municipality borders. On top of these administrative, cultural and socio-economic borders one will cross physical borders, like rivers, fences, swamps and others. Furthermore these borders have never been static, but rather changing, shifting and contested over time.⁸

With its multidisciplinary approach the KAZA peace park itself and the borders within it can not be discussed in the framework of a commonly acknowledged theoretical basis or of a single field of study. Many different approaches each based in their own academic field have been suggested to work on national borders, but also on meanings and hierarchies of other, less visible borders.⁹ In

Conservation Area itself takes up the notion of borders and space. There are some articles by Marja Spierenburg on the role of TFCAs in claiming spaces: Spierenburg, Marja; Wells, Harry: "Securing Space". Mapping and Fencing in Transfrontier Conservation in Southern Africa, *Space and Culture*, 9. 2006. 294-312. This article provides a short history of the use of maps and fences in wildlife conservation and how it changed with upcoming of TFCAs. Much stronger researched then the KAZA park is the the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, see: Lunstrum, Elizabeth: Reconstructing history, grounding claims to space: history, memory, and displacement in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, *South African Geographical Journal*, Vol. 92, No. 2. 2010.129–143.

⁶ Webpage of the Peace Park marketing company 'Boundless Southern Africa: www.boundlessa.com

⁷ The term *Caprivi* is used for the political *Caprivi Region* as well as for the geographical entity of the *Caprivi Strip*, which includes also parts of the Kavango Region. If not stated differently I will use *Caprivi* in the later sense, as the KAZA Peace Park will include the entire Caprivi Strip.

⁸ For a overview on borders and border studies: Paasi, Anssi: Generation and the 'Development' of Border Studies, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 10, No. 4. 2005. 663-671.

⁹ A state of the art account of the newest theories and developments in border studies, particularly from a political

this paper I will elaborate on a methodological basis to examine the complexity of spatial borders in the area of the future KAZA peace park without reinforcing dominant power-structures within the hierarchies of borders.

National borders in Africa

In 1972 Saadia Touval emphasized, that presenting the national borders of the new African states as purely imposed by colonial power, misjudge the role of local inhabitants in the drawing, the acceptance and the perpetuation of borders.¹⁰ Later A.I. Asiwaju described national borders in Africa as clearly arbitrary and imposed by external powers, cutting apart “culture areas or ethnic groups”, namely in southern Africa with the “partition” of what he calls the “Tswana”, the “Ova Herero” and the “Khoisan Basarwa”. But he argues that, at a micro-sociological level: “Despite all this divisive influences partitioned Africans have nevertheless tended in their normal activities to ignore the boundaries as dividing lines and to carry on social relations across them more or less as in the days before the Partition.”¹¹ Since the 1990ies discussions shifted from the question of *whether* national borders exist in the minds and daily lives of people living in borderlands to the question of *how* they exist and *how* they are used by people. Out of these debates, the idea of borders as conduits or as economic opportunity emerged.¹² In his book on an “ethnic group” living on both sides of the Ghana-Togo frontier, Paul Nugent combines these earlier ideas and shows that African national borders have had a dividing impact, but because of the diverse interests on the border the division of the “ethnic” group was not “sufficient to override the forces conspiring towards maintenance of the border”.¹³

In recent years, with a growing globalisation and international cooperation, scholars began to question national borders at all. While some saw them being replaced by other borders, like 'cultural' borders¹⁴, others argued that all kind of borders are loosing their relevance through the high mobility of people, goods and ideas in a “globalised” world.¹⁵

geography background, provides: Wastl-Walter, Doris (ed.): The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies. Farnham and Burlington 2011.

¹⁰ See: Touval, Saadia: The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa. New York 1972. 3-17.

¹¹ Asiwaju, A. I.: Partitioned Africans. Ethnic Relations across Africa's Boundaries, 1884-1984. London 1984. 3.

¹² See e.g.: Nugent, Paul; Asiwaju, A. I. (ed.): African Boundaries. Barriers, Conduits, and Opportunities. Michigan 1996.

¹³ Nugent, Paul: Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: the lie of the borderlands since 1914. Athens OH 2002. 274.

¹⁴ See: Kolossov 2006. 611-612.

¹⁵ See: Appadurai, Arjun: Sovereignty without Territoriality. Notes for a Postnational Geography, in: Low, Setha M. and Lawrence-Zuniga, Denise (ed.): The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture. Malden 2003. 337-

To conclude: In the case of the national borders, particularly in Africa, three main points of view can be extracted: borders as constraints or barriers, borders as economic opportunities and the irrelevance of borders in a globalised world.¹⁶ In the concept of peace parks all of these approaches can be found. First, national borders are seen as a barrier, not only for animals, but also for socio-economic development in regions that are often perceived as periphery. As the name *peace park* invokes, the overcoming of national borders helps to create peace, so in other words the national borders are seen as a potential reason for conflicts. Secondly, the establishment of *cross-border* conservation areas is a chance for the local economy. Further the cross-border aspect is used by the promoters of the Peace Park as a marketing tool to attract tourists and international donors. In this sense, the national borders are seen as an economic resource. And finally with its global approach, its visions of a 'boundless' Africa and the ideas of a single tourist visa for all the involved countries the Peace Park advocates a notion of national borders as irrelevant in a globalised world.

Shifting Borders

Although the Peace Park Foundation as the most important promoter of peace parks and transfrontier conservation areas has the vision of a “boundless Africa” where “all the borders, boundaries and frontiers” are softened or abolished, it focus strongly on national borders.¹⁷ In the basic definition of peace parks, a national border is absolutely required and all of the 188 transfrontier conservation areas encompass national borders.¹⁸

If the KAZA Peace Park should be a vehicle to create a “boundless” area, it needs to abolish many more borders and boundaries than just national borders. As I already mentioned before, the region is affected by a high variety of borders. It is not the aim of this paper to give a complete overview of all these borders. I will just shortly mention some non-state borders in the region which have played a role in public, legal or academic discourses.

The internal delimitation of linguistic or 'ethnic' areas has been a strongly contested issue in the

349.

¹⁶ For a summary of attempts to (African) borders, see eg.: Feyissa, Dereje and Hoehne, Markus V.: State Borders & Borderlands as Resources. An Analytical Framework, in: Feyissa, Dereje and Hoehne, Markus V. (ed.): State Borders & Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa. Rochester 2010. 1-26.

¹⁷ Myburgh, 11.07.2011.

¹⁸ The definition of the Transboundary Protected Areas Network of the International Union of the Conservation of Nature also includes a category of peace parks in a single country, but only if a conservation area was established on one side of a national border to help protecting the area on the other side of a border. See also: Salem 2007. 7-8.

Caprivi at least over the entire last century and still today, partly.¹⁹ Closely related to this issue is also the question of the pre-colonial Lozi Kingdom's boundaries and its internal borders between core areas and areas sometimes described as tributary.²⁰ Still the relations between the 'Barotse' in Western Zambia and the Zambian central government are contested and, with it, the borders or boundaries between Zambia and what some people would like to see as an independent 'Barotseland'.²¹

It is interesting to have a look at a further non-state border, related to the KAZA project and nature conservation: the regional border between the Kavango Province and the Caprivi Province. During the South African occupation this border has become a vast and heavily controlled military zone and was partly depopulated. This situation has not changed significantly even after Namibian independence in 1990, as a growing secessionist movement in the Caprivi and the ongoing wars in Angola apparently called for a strong military presence. With the merging of the Caprivi National Park and the Mahango National Park into Bwabwata National Park in 2007, the entire Western Caprivi has become one conservation area. Today, the strongly disputed border between the Kavango and the Caprivi Region lies roughly in the middle of the Park. In the well-known Anglo-German treaty of 1890 the western border of the Caprivi Zipfel had not been fixed, as this was only an internal border within then German South West Africa. The main interest of both parties lay on Caprivi's eastern border, the Zambezi River.²² Over the years, this border shifted several times between the Kwando River and the Okavango River. Still today some people in the Caprivi Region and in the Mukwe District, which to date belongs to the Kavango region, question the line of the border.²³

Some characteristics of this border area show, that overcoming *national* borders is not enough for the creation of a "boundless" area, as it is a goal of the Peace Park Foundation. The western border of the Caprivi changed its function and its location several times over the last century often leading to disputes and contestations. Further the area is today marked by two national park boundaries,

¹⁹ In this paper I will not further discuss the appropriateness of categories like ethnical or linguistic. On the historical development of the 'ethnical' and 'linguistic' borders between the 'Subia' and the 'Few' see: Kangumu, Benett: *Contesting Caprivi. A History of Colonial Isolation and Regional Nationalism in Namibia*. Basel 2011. 172-186.

²⁰ See on this: Flint, Lawrence S.: *State-Building in Central Southern Africa. Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi*, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2. 2003. 393-428.

²¹ On the relation between Barotse and the Zambian Government see: Englebert, Pierre: *Compliance and Defiance to National Integration*, *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 40, No. 1. 2005. 29-59 or more general on post-colonial Zambia: Gewalt, Jan Bart et al. (eds.): *One Zambia, Many Histories. Towards a History of post-colonial Zambia*. Leiden and Boston 2008.

²² Kangumu 2011. 56-57.

²³ Many people see the Mukwe District as belonging 'naturally' to the Caprivi Strip and should therefore politically belong to the Caprivi Region too. In interview with Gilbert M. Mutwa, son of a 'Masubia' traditional leader, Windhoek 03.08.2011 and interview with Thaddeus Chedau, a chief of the 'Kxoe' in the Mukwe District, Divundu 25.07.2011.

both controlled by the police, a veterinary border and a regional border. There is only one road going through the area, with no larger settlements, and not even a fuel station for over 200km. The same area encompasses also “invisible” borders between languages, 'ethnicities', time zones and so on. Hence this border area can be perceived as a strong barrier. At the same time the region is also foreseen to be one of the external borders of the KAZA Peace Park. The demarcation of the Peace Park's external borders adds another division line to the already complex and contested border situation.

Wrapping up this chapter I argue that by focusing on national borders as main obstacles on the way to a “prosper and peaceful” region the concept of the peace park has the tendency to further consolidate national borders while neglecting other borders. At the same time the peace park's external borders become ‘new’ borders in the complex border structures of the region. These critical issues call for a methodological approach to grasp the meanings and relevance of borders in the region without reconsolidating the existing border hierarchies inherent in the peace park concept.

The Border Archives

Discourses on national borders have long been centred around state sovereignty and security and led the border “itself become an institution, a line to defend or cross, a demarcation in space to mark the functioning control over flows of people and cross-border trade...”²⁴. But borders and borderlands can be understood in a much broader sense. In the last decade definitions of borders were elaborated that allow to include a broader spectrum of borders than the most obvious national borders. Borders were interpreted as means and markers in the claiming of differences in space, and later, in a post-modernist way as results of *languages* of inclusion and exclusion. As Berg and van Houtum put it, “this led to the study of borders and discursive, narrative practices in social relation which there is much emphasis for social and political creating, imagining, communicating, negotiating, and identifying with meanings, norms, and values, real and imaginary lines in space and over time.” This means, that borders can be interpreted as “the communications of practices, as stories narrated by some for some and believed, identified or contested by others.”²⁵

Such a broad, multidisciplinary and multidimensional approach to borders of any kind makes it very

²⁴ Berg, Eiki; Houtum, Henk van: Prologue: a border is not a border. Writing and reading borders in space, in: Berg, Eiki; Houtum, Henk van (eds.): Routing borders between territories, discourses and practices. Adlershot 2003. 2.

²⁵ Berg / van Houtum 203.3.

difficult to do research on borders in a region as large and diverse as the KAZA region. On an empirical and practical scale this means to focus on some of the history and meanings of borders in the region which leads directly to the central question of how to decide which borders are 'important' or 'interesting', be it for the establishment of the KAZA park, for the daily life of the inhabitants or simply the as a research topic. As I already mentioned in this paper, a multitude of diverse borders can be traced in the region and even more may have existed at certain times for certain people, but can not be traced anymore.

In this sense, all the different borders, lines and boundaries in my research area should be considered as sources, like documents stored in what I call here a 'border archive'. Out of all the possible borders and boundaries that have criss-crossed the region over time some were considered at some point by some people as worth incorporating into the 'border archive'. This has been done by giving them legal power, marking them on the ground, putting up fences or just by drawing them on to maps or even using them as a research topic. By incorporating certain borders into the 'border archive' they have not only been made visible but they have also been made lasting. During this same process borders that have not been 'stored in the archive' vanished and are now difficult to trace back.

Out of this analogy some questions emerge that need to be discussed when using the 'border archive' as a methodological approach to work on the hierarchies and meanings of borders. A key question - I argue - is the question of who 'established' the archive on what purpose and who for. Or in other words it is about power structures working behind the organization of an archive, but also on the power the archive itself has on the engagement with the past.²⁶

Since many of the nowadays most visible and most intensely researched borders in the particular setting of the KAZA Peace Park were claimed, drawn and 'incorporated into the archive' during colonial time, working with the analogy of an archive leads to the same theoretical and methodological challenges as working with 'colonial archives'. In recent years, the influence of the 'colonial archive' on post-colonial historiography and knowledge production has been strongly debated.²⁷ To put it in the words of Ann Laura Stoler, "documents were not death matters once the moment of their making had passed", but "they could be requisitioned to write new histories", and

²⁶ On the colonial archive in general see: Hamilton, Carolyne et al. (eds.): *Refiguring the Archive*. Cape Town and Dordrecht 2002. Particularly on the power of the archive, see chapter one 'The Power of the Archive and its Limits'.

²⁷ See e.g.: Hamilton 2002.

“they could be reclassified for new initiatives”²⁸. Research on such documents always needs to question the notions and aims behind the archive, its classifications and ordering over time and even more try to read the gaps in the collection, and to use the 'non-existence' as a source of its own. This means that despite studying documents found in the archive, there should always be an engagement with the documents 'missing', while also looking for “alternative archives”²⁹.

The same, I argue, applies for research on the varieties of borders. The borders now presented by the KAZA Peace Park's planners as barriers for people, animals and development are the borders drawn, implemented and controlled by power-holders. The same borders have been more intensely researched. Borders that are not as clearly drawn or not as important for power-holders have been left out of the archive and have lost its relevance for a project like the KAZA Peace Park, even as obstacles or barriers. What I aim to do in my research is to include borders that 'felt out of the archive' and look for alternative 'border archives'.

For my research this means that, on the one hand, it should not build on a comparison or a hierarchy of borders, boundaries and other lines of separation which function according to certain parameters like the borders' legal or daily-life importance for people, its fluidity or its closeness. On the other hand I do not want to fall into the trap of only working with the most visible borders, like national borders, as this would mean to write history with only very limited and partial sources. By examining borders as archival material on its own I constantly need to question them, to ask for the time and the intention of their 'creation', the role they play and their interconnection with other borders in the complex ordering system of the 'border archive'.

Conclusion

The KAZA Peace Park aims at softening or abolishing national borders in the region through a intensified transnational and transfrontier cooperation. None of the project's stakeholders and planners I talked to admitted to be aware of the fact that the project potentially creates new borders and claims new orders of space in the region. The emphasis on overcoming national borders as a way to create peace and stability disregards the complexity of border structures.

²⁸ Stoler, Ann Laura: *Along the Archival Grain. Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Oxfordshire 2009. 3.

²⁹ Hamilton, Carolyn et al.: Introduction, in: Hamilton, Carolyne et al. (eds.): *Refiguring the Archive*. Cape Town and Dordrecht 2002. 16.

I argued in this paper that the strong focus on national borders may not be intended but emerges out of a better visibility and accessibility of national borders in the complex 'archive of borders'. At the same time, less visible borders - borders that can not easily be drawn in maps or marked on the ground - not only lose importance in projects like the KAZA peace park, but they also fall out of the academic discourse. Although some of the less visible borders in the region have been researched I argue that there is still a very strong focus on national borders. This intensive debate about national borders further strengthens its position in the 'border archive' and helps to perpetuate its dominance. Without neglecting the importance of researching national borders, I stress the need to question the border as a subject and see it as part of an 'archive of borders', established by particular powers with a particular intension. This in mind, the question remains, whether and how it is possible to include in my research borders that are not visible and not easily accessible and whether research on such borders have an impact on their 'importance' or 'relevance' as sources but also on the ground.

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What for is built a migration boundary ? The case of the «Barrage de Djibouti» (1966-1982)

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Abstract

This communication presents a particular boundary, the Barrage erected between 1966 and the beginning of the 1980's around the town of Djibouti. While it should restrain migrations, the population of the town tripled. While it should maintain the French sovereignty, the territory becomes independent in 1977. From a presentation of the making of this imposing boundary object, we will show its role in identity construction and what it can teach us about the use of a migration boundary.

Text

Between 1966 and the beginning of the 1980, a strange boundary object is installed in the French Territory of the Afar and Issa : the "Barrage of Djibouti" , called by some "the wall of shame" . It has been few studied because the French administrative and military archives were not available , the Djiboutian historiography is still very weak, and the barrage is maintained a few years after the independence showing the continuity in the practices . The questions to which the barrage was supposed to be an answer have contemporary political signification.

I'm pursuing my work on this object, in particular its dismantling, its impact in the daily life and imaginary of the inhabitants and the representations he generated.

I will present here this "wall" erected around the Djibouti's town in the scope to control the migrants circulation and maintain a supposed and constructed "ethnic composition" of the city, and try to make evidence of some of its *raison d'être*. To do so, I will first expose the main lines of the French colonisation in the Horn, then the Barrage itself, its making of, its evolution and its concrete situation. I will finish with more general considerations about its use, its boundary characteristic and its significance in migration control.

1. French colonisation in the Horn of Africa

The Barrage stands in the shared history of French colonisation in the Horn; "empire confetti", Djibouti is the last French territory in continental Africa from 1962 to 1977. The French installation around the Gulf of Tadjoura begins in 1884, motivated by imperial considerations : the need of a coal supply for the fleet, between Marseille, Madagascar and Indochine (1883 : first bombing of Madagascar and take over of Hanoï by Rivière), politically safer then the British handled Aden. Over this fundamental function of the colony, a relation with the inside of the Continent is build later, linked with a colonial and commercial fantasy about Ethiopia. It explains the move of the centre of the colony from Obock to the newly created Djibouti during the 1890's, then the construction of a railway between Djibouti and Addis Abeba. This project, initially private, is controlled by the colonial administration from 1902 . Out of the railway territory, South of the colony, it is not before the end of the 1920's that the interior starts to be militarily invested and managed by the colonial authorities. Except the coastal points fixed at the end of the XIXth Century, and the South-Eastern boundary defined in 1934, the territory boundaries are established between 1945 and 1955 .

The Côte française des Somalis around 1960

The main place of the colonial situation is the town of Djibouti, where stand the port and the railway terminus. Created *ex nihilo* in 1888, it grows from 4000 inhabitants in 1898, 11 903 in 1932 and around 19 000 in 1939, according approximative administrative sources. During the Second World War, the population decrease because of massive eviction of Africans and already the installation of a barrier around the town. Then, the population raises 17 000 in 1947, 40 000 at the beginning of the 1960's, 62 000 in 1967 , 118 000 in 1972 and 150 000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 1980's . Even if the reliability of those data is uneven but always doubtful, they provide a rhythm and a scale.

In the 1950's and mostly 1960's the population's growing rhythm increases noticeably. It is due mostly to the economic development of the town, in particular the port which receives important investments from the FIDES to become a supplying and transit port in deep water. The newcomers come mostly from the Horn (Ethiopia and British Somaliland) but also Yemen.

Consequently, from the middle of the 1950's, the right to stay in Djibouti becomes an important question for the administration and the inhabitants. Reacting to the influx of newcomers, evictions of foreigners from the territory become massive with the independence and union of British and Italian Somaliland to create the Somalia, based ideologically upon the claim of a unification of all "Somalis" territories, symbolised by the five parts of the its flag's star.

From one daily eviction decision ("arrêté d'expulsion") from 1947 to 1959, it grows to five in 1962 and 10 daily in 1967. To avoid a saturation of the legal mechanism, the process is then simplified: the administration executes "simples refoulements". The rejected people are simply grouped into a depot (a camp installed at "La Poudrière" in 1967, kept by Légion étrangère), carried by trucks and put down at the near Somalian boundary, or brought in Ethiopia by train. The available documentation doesn't allow to quantify the eviction so precisely after 1967, but we know that 8000 are expelled in 1971, that is twenty daily and near 10% of the town's population.

From 1956, the access to French citizenship becomes a central stake for the inhabitants and the administration. The "loi-cadre" of 1956 transforms all the "French autochthonous" from second order national to electors. With the growth of independentist movements, the independence of many African countries between 1958 and 1962 and the creation of AUO in 1963, this status change means that the control of the population becomes linked to the control of the whole territory. In 1958, 75% of the electors of CFS voted for the maintain under the French sovereignty; in 1967, yet 60% of the electors refused the independence, finally adopted in 1977 by 99,8% of the voters. The link with the population increase, if not the only explanation to this evolution, cannot be neglected. For the inhabitants, the possession of French citizenship by "attribution" (*ie* at birth) is then the easiest and safest way to obtain the right to live in the territory.

The leader of the "No" in 1958 being a Somali – Mahmoud Harbi, dead in 1960 – the administration decides to support an Afar leader – Ali Aref member of the gaullist network – in order to contain the independence movement. The objective of the population control politic becomes to sustain the presence of inhabitants considered as "Afar" instead of those viewed as "Somalis", particularly those to whom the "Issas" identity is refused. Follows an endless work of sorting and fixing the population within those criterions, which continue to be constructed during the same time, up to the independence. Two tools are mainly used for that practice: birth registries and citizenship attribution.

We have to add to those considerations the fact that the population of the "indigenous areas" leaves in miserable conditions. Philippe Oberlé entitle a chapter of the book he publish in 1971: "Tableau d'une misère: Djibouti en 1966". The politico-military pressure explains itself by the need of social control of most of the inhabitants to maintain a very unequally society. All together, the social and political tensions are very high in the middle of the 1960's, into the last French colony in continental Africa.

2. The Barrage of Djibouti

Making of the Barrage

During the 1960's, the implementation of this politic leads to an increase of the coercion exercised over the population, probably also linked with the arrival of Légion étrangère troops, leaving Algeria in 1962 and trained to political control of civilians. The Southern boundary, with Somalia, is progressively militarised. In the town, the practice of roundup ("rafles") becomes common. Accompanied with massive identity controls, they are realised by Gendarmerie (a military police force) in the autochthonous areas (the urban space being segregated). We don't have actually precise data about those roundup, but we can think that in 1955 already, every month around 8% of the autochthonous are the target of a control, that is the whole population in the year.

On August 25-26th 1966, the French Republic President, général Charles de Gaulle, stops in Djibouti on his way to Ethiopia. On this occasion, on 25th, in spite of the cautions deployed by the colonial

administration, a few nationalist militants display some banderoles requesting independence on the road followed by the official procession. Authorities's reaction is fast and violent. The "dispositif de sécurité" quickly made up causes officially 36 wounded in the order forces and 19 among the protesters. The next morning, a "dispositif de rétablissement de l'ordre" causes two deaths. On the afternoon, the Légion comes to reinforce Gendarmerie and territorial militia. They disperse a crowd evaluated to 3000 persons in 45 minutes, causing officially 1 death and 46 wounded in the order forces, 3 deaths and 238 wounded in the population.

The following days, an opponent's hunting is organised in the "indigenous town", where a curfew is established. A few thousand people are "refoulées" to Somalia. When de Gaulle passes again in Djibouti on August 28th, no opposition demonstration happens in a town covered by order forces.

But the tension level remains high. On September 5th, the High-Commissioner asks the authorisation to implement a project elaborated a few months ago by the army : the building of an "obstacle passif autour [de la] ville de Djibouti" . The authorisation is granted on 7th, and on September 14th, after new incidents, its installation is decided, linked with a new curfew after 7pm and again massive "ratissages" of indigenous areas in order to "refouler les étrangers" .

Evolution of the Barrage

From September 14th 1966, a barrage blocks the terrestrial access to the Djibouti's peninsula, conserving only three authorised accesses : Arta's road, Loyada's road and the railway. .

At the beginning of 1967, "gendarmes mobiles" (military forces specialised in the maintenance of order) are sent from France (2, then 4, squadrons of 100 men). The barrage is partially destroyed in February 1967 by a flow scattering some of the mines installed at the beginning of the installation. Several years will be necessary to clear totally all the dispersed mines.

After some very violent events in March-April 1967 (at least 12 death on Mars 20th, the day after a referendum rejecting the independence by 60% of the voters, and again a few thousands of evictions), situation becomes calmer in May. Three squadrons are sent back to France and the dismantling of the barrage is considered. But the higher level decides another way : on June 23rd 1967, during a "National Defense Council" meeting, Charles de Gaulle decides that «l'expulsion des étrangers somaliens sera poursuivie méthodiquement, le barrage autour de Djibouti sera reconstitué et renforcé» . The objective is explicitly exposed : hold the immigration, identified as Somalian, with two linked processes : barrage at the outside, control and eviction in the inside. While colonial time seems over , in Djibouti the higher French authorities chose the maintain of the colonial situation by force.

Despite the reluctance of higher militaries , the Barrage installation becomes durable and takes the look it will keep during the whole 1970's . It lies down over 14 kilometres, South and West of the Djibouti's peninsula. At first constituted by a simple barbed wire network ("ribard") and mines (then removed), progressively 24 watchtowers, a track alongside, a second barbed wire (the "pré barrage"), a continuous line of three meters high fencing wire ("gantois") and automatic illuminating devices are added to the construction.

The Barrage is permanently guarded by 130 to 150 militaries (13^e DBLE-Demi-brigade de Légion étrangère and 57^e (becoming 5^e) RIAOM-Régiment interarmée d'outre-mer) allowed to shoot during crossing attempts in accordance with rules changing according periods (on the peoples approaching, trying to cross, who succeed, who failed and went back, all the times, at night only...). The authorised passing points are controlled by Gendarmerie and local militia (300 recruits).

The maintain of the Barrage is sustained during the whole period by French (High-Commissioner and Ministry) and Djiboutian (government of Ali Aref, then Mohamed Kamil) authorities. At independence day, in June 1977, the Barrage is "suspended". But as soon as December 1977, a series of bombing in town justify its re-establishment. In the same time, a political crisis allows a redefinition of the identity criterion of "inside" and "outside". Militants near President Hassan Gouled (somali) are integrated, those sustaining the Prime Minister Ahmed Dini (afar) are rejected. The inhabitants identified as "Somalis" and specially "Issas", are integrated, those qualified as "Afar" become symbolically excluded. The Barrage is finally

dismantled only in 1982, at the beginning of the disappearance of Somalia.

3. The reality of the Barrage

The barrage can only be operated in conjunction with an intensive coercion over the “inside” population. Some Gendarmerie reports indicate impressive data, further more if we recall that according official sources there are 118 000 inhabitants in the town in 1972: in 1974, in four month, 7587 persons are hold back out of the barrage, for an astonishing 288 166 controls in town and at the Barrage ; 31 078 persons are controlled between May 25th and June 19th 1975 , and 16 520 persons are rejected at the Barrage; in January 1976, it is said that 49 982 control have been made in Djibouti . Other reports provide consistent data across the years, as show in the following figures. They are anyway the sign of a very important coercion.

In March 1967, a referendum rejecting the independence is followed by a new repressive episode which generates a new appendix to the barrage : the “centre d’hébergement pour étrangers” . After the “ratissages” , arrested people are jailed in La Poudrière, at the border of the barrage. A maximum of 5500 persons is locked in this place on March 23rd, of whom a thousand women, whilst the authorities are aware that there is no legal foundation (“fondement juridique”) to that procedure . It becomes even more problematic when, on April 6th, four persons are killed while trying to escape the camp . On April 26th, a massive and clandestine eviction is organised for 2000 people (of which 900 women). Somalia having announced that it will refuse to receive the expelled, they are brought by night, in groups of some hundreds, in desert areas beyond the boundary, to bypass the Somalian authorities decision .

About the lethality of the barrage, the Djiboutian rumour talks of thousands of deaths. At the beginning of the 1970’s, for instance, the legionnaires were telling in town that they killed at least one person every night. The administrative documentation I could access gives disparate data, but without comparison : 10 death before March 1968 , 8 deaths and 39 wounded between 1969 and 1973 , 5 deaths during the first trimester of 1974 . Even if those numbers are under-estimated, the thousands of deaths appear even more unsure. My hypothesis is that the rumour is a part of the barrage : exaggerate its dangerousness increases its efficiency.

This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that militaries have a personal interest to lower the real number of deaths. France being a state of law, mortal incidents have to be submitted to Justice. The killers being military, they are judged by a military Court. By consequences, “le Général Commandant Supérieur a régulièrement rendu, sur avis du Commissaire du Gouvernement près le Tribunal Permanent des Forces Armées de Marseille, des ‘déclaration qu’il n’y avait lieu à poursuivre’” . Another decision will have brought in front of the Court those militaries, who were acting on orders, and so possibly also their chiefs. It was unthinkable by all the actors.

However, the juridical insecurity caused by the Barrage explains the regular demands coming from military high authorities to suppress it . Indeed, out of public order trouble periods, during which authorities can adopt measures limiting the exercise of public freedom, “l’ordre rétabli, cette mesure doit cesser sous peine de constituer une ‘voie de fait’ justiciable des tribunaux” . The barrage has no legal existence, no text allows it, it doesn’t correspond to any administrative limit, neither national, its crossing cannot be considered illegal, but it is possible to die of it .

From November 1967, the DOM-TOM Minister is aware that the barrage’s “support légal et juridique est nul” . In 1970, when questioned to find «une solution juridique aux problèmes que pose l’existence dudit barrage» , the Minister of Justice confirms that it is legally impossible to sue the “smugglers”. The applicable law allows legal action against smugglers who help to get into the territory, not to circulate into it. Legally, the Barrage does not exist.

Conclusion : what for is built a migration boundary ?

The Barrage did not prevent the increase of the town’s population. It is no more outstanding to limit access to the symbolic national space, nationality, since the number of French citizen increases faster inside than outside (63% against 55% between 1967 and 1975). Finally, the territory becomes independent in spite of

its existence. This report is regularly made by the authorities : in 1973, “illegal” entries are estimated between 7000 and 20 000 a year , and the number of “clandestine” in town at around 45 000 . This observation is most often counterbalanced by the remark that it will be “worst” without the barrage. Consequently, modifications are regularly proposed to “harder” the barrage and make it “efficient“, but the ones made up only produce new failure notices.

So, why is maintained so many time, including after the independence, a so delicate and controversial work, if it is useless in its official counter-migration use ? Certainly because its real function is not the displayed one. If the Barrage is useless in forbidden the “foreigners” or “exogenous” to get into the city, it has some effects, its only existence has consequences. The most visible is, «à 500 mètres environ à l’extérieur du barrage la constitution d’un bidonville» : Balbala. Transit zone, interstitial area, this precarious city is regularly subject to the violence of control, to combing and arbitrary destruction. It marks the space “out” of the barrage, an area where all the hopes are still possible, and remains to all those who stay “in” the barrage, in the same time the precariousness of their situation and their luck to take advantage of it.

We can say that the first function of the barrage is to create and mark differences, to built heterogeneity in an homogeneous space, and so participate at the realisation of an identity or “ethnic” construction ; to arouse the desire of getting “in” and the fear to be pushed “out”. Associated with other tools, police or administrative, it allows the creation of foreigners and nationals. Those asymmetrical space and society legitimate the political control and police coercion which created them. They ensure the maintain of the authorities (colonial then national) as a necessary guaranty of the “inside” order.

The Barrage of Djibouti is a boundary: it’s a linear space that can be drawn on a map, can be travelled over and crossed; maker of discontinuity, it makes heterogeneous the homogenous space he divides. But it’s a particular international boundary, not standing on a national one and, instead of linking territories, trying to explicitly dissociate them by forbidding its crossing. These characteristics, the ones of a counter-migration wall, can be see in contemporary events. We can think of situations in Palestine, Cyprus or the Southern boundary of the USA. In a French context, we note the continuity with the situation in Mayotte (Comoros). Become a French “département” (an administrative entity) in 2011 , the island is now independent from Comoros without any cultural discontinuity, and 10% of its inhabitant are expelled a year . More and more restrictive physical devices are established officially to refrain migrations from other islands of the archipelago. One can also think about the European union, trying to build walls upon its Southern and Eastern boundaries.

All those walls, like the Barrage of Djibouti, are not useful to forbid migrations, an impossible task, but to mark different status among the populations, to legitimate the repression against those identified as foreigners and the control and coercion exercised upon all the inhabitants.

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Ethiopian Cross-Border Migration and the Making of a “Culture of the Enemy” in Eritrea¹

In 1998-2000 Eritrea and Ethiopia fought a border war that caused between 70,000 and 100,000 casualties and generated hundreds of thousands displaced people on both sides of the borders. Indeed, the border war resulted in the deportation of Eritreans from Ethiopia and vice-versa, human rights abuses and the deployment of appalling methods in separating families and expelling people from both countries.²

Far from being ‘absurd’, ‘senseless’ and ‘useless’, as often reported in the media, the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea mobilised old mechanisms, cultural patterns and issues of identity whose roots go back to historical events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: when borders were defined and new political entities in the Horn came into existence (Eritrea, Somalia) or changed their shape (Ethiopia), transforming people’s lives, their freedom to move and their relationship vis-à-vis political powers and the state.

The proposed paper aims to reconstruct some major historical trajectories of security and state building processes in Eritrea, and will use cross-border migration (Ethiopia-Eritrea) as one of the main key-readings for examining processes of identity-formation and citizenship in a context in which borders became the paradigm for the definition of all policies. It will look at the policies implemented to control the borders and create a “culture of the enemy” (for example, police and army patrolling of borderlands, activities of espionage etc); the effect of border demarcation on cross-border movement of people; the creation of new social and political hierarchies and forms of exclusion and inclusion aimed at consolidating Eritrean society; and the effects of these policies in the outbreak of

¹ The present paper is a work in progress. Please do not quote without author’s authorisation.

² Human Rights Watch, *The Horn of Africa War: Mass Expulsions and the Nationality Issue (June 1998-April2002)*, vol.3, No 3 (A) – January 2003.

political violence that affected the country in the 1940s. The historical period analysed in the paper is 1890-1950s, the period in which these policies were created and became rooted in Eritrean mentality.

The Making of the “Ideology of Borders”: The Historical Development of Borders in Eritrea

Borders in Eritrea – in this specific case I am dealing with the Eritrean-Ethiopian border – not only defined the territorial “legitimacy” of state power, in this case the Italian colonial state, but developed as primary marker of identity-making processes, and as central factor in shaping state policies, ethnic relations and social interactions among communities. They set the scene for new power relations and generated new social and cultural boundaries which became the basis of new confrontations between social and ethnic groups. Borders in Eritrea represented the ideological framework of all state policies. Their all-encompassing nature finds its roots in the peculiarity of the historical developments which took place in the area during the Italian colonial time and the British Military Administration in the 1940s.

Scholarly literature on African frontiers has for a long time interpreted the making of colonial borders during the era of the Scramble for Africa as a concerted policy imposed “from above”. Certainly the process of partition of the Continent and the conflictual interests and strategies of Europe in Africa gave to borders-definition processes a particular artificial feature. The making of colonial borders, however, had often encountered unpredicted difficulties and limits which contributed to provide varied shapes to borders in different African areas and even in the same country. Paul Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju have aptly highlighted the crucial role of African agency in the making of colonial borders and in the transformation of notions of space at borders areas. The Eritrean borders shared several similarities with other frontiers in colonial Africa: primarily, they defined a space (or a “sphere of influence”) in which European states, in this case Italy, projected their idea of political prestige, racial pride and national identity, and gave birth to a new state in Africa. But in the Eritrean case the colonial state played a primary and all-embracing role in the definition of borders, mainly the Ethiopian-Eritrean borders, leaving little room for people to mediate and shape their space.

Eritrea came into existence officially in 1890 as an Italian colony. Since then, Italy began the process of border definition with neighbouring countries: Sudan, French Somaliland and Ethiopia. The North and North-West borders with Anglo Egyptian Sudan and the South East border with French Somaliland (Djibouti) were the result of diplomatic

treatments signed up by colonial governments between the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

The South and South-West border with Ethiopia, instead, was the result of more complex dynamics. Unlike the other Eritrean borders (with Sudan and French Somaliland) which were the result of diplomatic agreements, the border with Ethiopia resulted from a war. Italy's colonial aspiration, indeed, envisaged the occupation of the ancient Ethiopian empire. Nevertheless, this plan came to an end in 1896, following the well known defeat at Adwa, which as the only defeat inflicted to a European country in the era of the Scramble for Africa, came to symbolise the limits of colonial policies in Africa and was destined to influence all aspects of economic, social, political and diplomatic relations between Italy and Ethiopia throughout the twentieth century.

The Eritrean-Ethiopian borders remained zones of warfare, and became area of permanent tension between the Ethiopian empire, whose pride was reinforced by the battle of Adwa, and Italy, that hardly adapted to the shame of the defeat. Borders were defined along the rivers Mareb-Belesa-Muna, but never properly demarcated, despite various attempts by the Ethiopian empire to have a clear demarcation of the frontiers³, with the consequential increase of military and political tensions between the two countries, and obsession for mutual political control and activities of espionage. These historical and political developments transformed borders into markers of two antithetic cultural and political entities. As Federica Guazzini pertinently emphasises, the Italian administration attributed to borders a "*valore totemico*" ("totemic value") enhanced through the implementation of political practices – chiefs of the highlands were called in Asmara to participate in solemn events to celebrate the treaty that defined the borders – aimed at creating unity in Eritrea.⁴ Borders, in this sense, were geo-political lines, cultural symbols, definers of dichotomic notions (i.e. rightness/wrongness; development/underdevelopment; traditionalism/modernity etc.) which were embraced in state policy and used by Eritrea (but also Ethiopia) to establish hegemony in the Horn of Africa.⁵

Between 1936 and 1941, following the brief Italian occupation of Ethiopia, the colonial border was removed, but then reintroduced again in 1941 after the Italian defeat in the Second World War. Eritrea was administered by the

³ See Federica Guazzini, "Storie di confine: percezioni identitarie della frontiera coloniale tra Etiopia e Eritrea (1897-1908)", *Quaderni Storici* 109/a.XXXVII, aprile 2002, pp.221-258.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.242, 243.

⁵ In this paper only the case of Eritrea will be examined.

British Military Administration (BMA) until 1952. In 1952 a UN resolution sanctioned the federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and in 1962 Ethiopia annexed Eritrea.

State Security and the Construction of a “Culture of the Enemy”

The defeat at Adwa in 1896, accompanied by the lack of borders demarcation, brought about drastic changes in Italian colonial policies. Italy struggled for survival in the Horn of Africa, and was forced to abandon its expansionist policy in Ethiopia and to prioritise the internal economic and political consolidation of Eritrea, the “*colonia primogenita*” (the “first-born colony”), in order to regain the consensus of Italian public opinion, and to maintain its reputation of colonial state in the European colonial enclave. “Diplomacy” with Ethiopia was re-established, under “severe” conditions for Italy that was forced to recognise the “absolute independence” of Ethiopia.⁶ A treaty signed on 24 June 1897 by the Ethiopian Empire and the Italian representative, Mr. Nerazzini, imposed mutual collaboration in implementing economic relations – since both Ethiopia and Eritrea were economically inter-dependent with Ethiopia requiring salt from Eritrea and Eritrea relying on Ethiopia for the provision of grain⁷ – but overall suspicion dominated the relations between the two countries that led to reciprocal control. Jim McCann, for instance, reports that Italian espionage was common in the neighbouring Tigray region. The colonial administration used to cover it with the façade of the business relations required by the aforementioned treaty. “Commercial agents”, supposedly involved in business relations with Ethiopian merchants and local authorities, were sent to Ethiopia in order to assess the local political situation and to inform the colonial administration of potential threat against Eritrea.⁸ Attention was given to the political manoeuvres of local authorities, changes in chieftaincy policy, actions of banditry in neighbouring regions, movement of people across the border, but also to the course of Ethiopian economy, which as already mentioned remained vital also for the development of the Eritrean one.

Patrolling borders also became a priority in Italian colonial policies. Special administrative locations, the *residenze* in Akkele Guzai, Mereb and Megareh, were built with the exclusive purpose of controlling security at borders

⁶ See Alberto Aquarone, *Dopo Adua. Politica e amministrazione coloniale* (Rome, Ministero per il beni culturali e ambientali, 1989), pp.44-45.

⁷ See Gian Luca Podestà, *Il mito dell'impero: economia, politica e lavoro nelle colonie italiane dell'Africa Orientale* (Turin, Giappichelli, 2004), pp.119-141.

⁸ James McCann, *From Famine to Poverty in Northeast Ethiopia: A Rural History, 1900-1935* (Philadelphia PA, 1987), p. 8.

areas.⁹ As it will be examined below, the militarization of borders areas did not prevent cross-border migration or “illicit” activities. Border patrolling had mainly been enforced in critical moments of political fragility in Eritrea, or political turmoil in Ethiopia, in order to avoid the destabilization of the first Italian colony. Suspension of the right to cross the borders, even for caravans, was often applied in given circumstances.

The years preceding the Italian attack to Ethiopia in 1935-1936 were particularly critical. Cross-borders migration was sometimes suspended following skirmishes and cases of generically defined “banditry activities” at border areas. In 1933, for instance, a case of “attempted robbery” by some Ethiopians and the killing of a *mumtaz* (lance-corporal) working for the Italian administration in the location of Tserona (N.B: the location where the 1998-2000 border conflict started¹⁰) became the catalyst of all confrontational dynamics between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and highlighted several interesting aspects concerning perceptions of borders and problems related to their patrolling and the lack of their demarcation. According to the Italian court, three Ethiopians, Behre Gebriet, Asmellasc Negusse and Chiros Ailemariam, tried to rob a caravan crossing the border from Eritrea to Ethiopia, but were stopped by the intervention of some *askaris* (local soldiers enrolled in the colonial army). The three Ethiopians and the *askaris* engaged in an armed action until the latter ended up in a zone contested by both countries. Competing claim over territorial legitimacy became the real issue of the entire episode. The Ethiopian “attackers” mobilised groups of local people, while the *askaris* slowly retreated from the area. The killing of one of them during the retreat triggered off another wave of violence which ended with the injury of Behre Gebriet, the only one out of the three Ethiopians who was captured and arrested.¹¹ Before the court, the defendant provided a different version of the events. Behre Gebriet reported to the local police station and to the court that he and his comrades were collecting taxes in the name of *Dejac Leben*, representative of *Ras Sejum*, ruler of the Tigray and that were attacked by the *askaris* “in their own territory”.¹²

It is not relevant in this context to assess the reliability of the defendant’s statement or to search for the truth about the murder of the *muntaz*. Instead, the most striking aspect of the whole episode is the importance played by the

⁹ Unlike the *commissariati*, which were administrative posts ruled exclusively by civil administrators, the *residenze* were located at border areas and maintained a military presence. See Alberto Aquarone, *Dopo Adua*, pp.163-254; and National Archive, (hereafter NA), War Office (hereafter WO), 32/10235, British Military Administration, *Half Yearly Report on Eritrea*, 1941.

¹⁰ Tserona was one of the hottest areas during the last war with Ethiopia. It was evacuated in 1998 following the advance of Ethiopian troops and occupied by the Ethiopian army in 2000.

¹¹ Archive of the High Court of Asmara (from now on AHC), Asmara, Case Behre Gebriet et al., box Procura di Asmara, 1939 32-50. Names have been reported as found in the archival material. They were all sentenced to 10 years of prison (Asmellasc Negusse and Chiros Ailemariam *in contumacia*) and the payment of a fine of 3,000 lire each and the payment of the court’s bills.

¹² The sentence in *italics* is my own emphasis.

border issue in the development of the events and the mobilisation of different layers of power and institutions in attempting to impose territorial legitimacy. The Italian administration militarised the area, forbade all kind of cross-border migration and ordered soldiers to send “across the border” all the “aggressors”. In Tigray, *dejac* Liben convened a meeting of local chiefs to discuss the changing relations with the Italian government across the border.¹³ On their own initiative, some of the chiefs of *Ras* Sejum confronted the Italian administration by demarcating with stones the area where they thought the *askaris* illegally crossed the border, claiming in this way that the area belonged to the Ethiopian empire. The episode also contributed to mobilise old colonial stereotypes and labels – the president of the court did not hesitate to attribute the motive of the murder to the “*mentalità primitiva dei giudicabili ed il loro spirito aggressivo e barbaro*” (“defendants’ primitive mentality and aggressive and barbarian character”) – justifying in this sense also the militarization of the border area against the “hundreds” of “bandits” preparing to attack “our territory”.

Italian colonial authorities, however, knew that the area was (and remained) a contested area between the Ethiopia and Eritrea. A document sent by the colonial government to the court, with the aim of clarifying the question of the border for court’s purposes, stated that the event took place in a place which diplomatic treaties attributed to colonial Eritrea. Therefore, they were recognised as Italian territory *de jure*, but the government itself acknowledged that up to 1936 they were *de facto* possession of the Ethiopia Empire. That the territory belonged *de facto* to Ethiopia was also acknowledged by the *askaris* of the Residenza of Adi Caieh who had a wider and deeper knowledge of the territory and used to patrol the border area.

Activities of espionage and border patrolling were only a few anti-Ethiopian measures adopted by the Italian administration to defend its presence in the Horn of Africa until the 1950s. Ethiopia continued to be the biggest threat for the colonial government (and later on the BMA) in Eritrea. Ethiopia was perceived as a dangerous enemy and an incumbent presence whose action the Italian administration sought to limit through the creation of a “culture of the enemy”, a culture that was based on the ideologisation of the border and aimed at forging all aspects of internal policies in Eritrea. Cross-border migration was the first process affected by these policies and a repressive set of measures was applied against Ethiopian migrants living in Eritrea, permanently or temporarily. In this sense, it can be

¹³ NA, Case Behre Gebriet et al., box Procura di Asmara, 1939 32-50, Governo dell’Eritrea, Regia Residenza dell’Acchele Guzai, N.162 Ris. al Regio Commissariato Regionale del Confine Meridionale, ADI AGRI. OGGETTO: Scontro presso Tserona. Addi Caieh, 7 aprile 1933. Firmato: il Regio Residente, Dott. Riccardo Jannuzzi.

said that the “ideology of borders” was reproduced internally through the construction of social and cultural boundaries which aimed at demarcating antagonistic cultures.

Crossing the Border and Becoming an Enemy: Anti-Ethiopianism, Migration and Colonial Exclusionary Policies

Border patrolling policies did not prevent or limit migration from the “*oltre confine*” (from “across the border”), which remained a regular phenomenon throughout the Italian and British presence in Eritrea. Ethiopian migrants, especially from the neighbouring region of Tigray, used to cross the borders to escape local unrest, poverty and unemployment, to find better economic opportunities or simply to change their lifestyle. Environmental factors and political instability in Ethiopia heavily contributed to prompt migration. Warfare, famine and pestilence, for instance, affected the Tigray area at the end of the nineteenth century – and famines occurred also at the beginning of the twentieth century – forcing “crowds” of refugees to leave Ethiopia.¹⁴ The post-Adwa policy of consolidation and economic “development” implemented by the Italian government also triggered migration from “across the border”. The economy of Eritrea, however, remained always dependant on the Italian financial support whose unsteadiness generated frequent phases of instability. Both political reasons linked to the post-Adwa fear of the “enemy” and economic fragility led to the implementation of exclusionary policies towards Ethiopian migrants.

The economic and social programmes implemented by the Italians clearly favoured specific sectors of Eritrean society – obviously within the limits of the racial ideological framework imposed by the colonial authorities – and carried an evident anti-Ethiopian imprint. Migrants from the *oltre confine* were employed in the building and construction sector, in the urban service sector and in the farms, where they were mainly given low and temporary tasks: they were chiefly unskilled and casual labourers.¹⁵ Enrolment in the army, which constituted the main source of economic security for Africans throughout the Italian colonial presence in the area, regarded primarily Eritreans. Because of its remunerative nature, however, it also attracted numerous people from “across the border”, whom the colonial authorities preferred to transfer abroad, i.e. in Somalia and Libya, in order to guarantee security in the colony. In crucial areas, such as the

¹⁴ See James McCann, *From Famine to Poverty in Northeast Ethiopia: A Rural History, 1900-1935* (Philadelphia PA, 1987).

¹⁵ See Francesca Locatelli, “‘*Oziosi, vagabondi e pregiudicati*’: Labour, Law and Crime in Colonial Asmara, 1890-1941,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 40, 2 (2007): 225-250.

urban centres, concerted exclusionary social policies limited access to resources and space to Ethiopian migrants.¹⁶ These policies were accompanied by the stigmatisation of all aspects of Ethiopian culture, especially in areas with high concentration of migrants from the *oltre confine*, such as the urban centres of the Eritrean highlands which counted approximately 13,000 Ethiopians, the majority of which was living in the capital city, Asmara.¹⁷ Ethiopian migrants' lifestyle was often labelled as "backward", "poor", "primitive". Migrants themselves were considered "bloodsuckers", "criminals" and "dangerous". Whereas the labels "primitive" and "backward" were extensively used to indicate all Africans, as in other colonial contexts, "poor", "bloodsuckers" and "criminals" specifically referred to people from the *oltre confine* considered carriers of the "enemy's" culture. Geographical areas of Ethiopia, which were the basin of migration, also became labels which were used to stigmatise migrants. *Agame*, for instance, came to indicate a "poor" and a "greedy" person from Agame, an area in the Tigray region particularly affected by poverty. The geographical connotation was particularly strategic in emphasising the alterity of Ethiopian culture. Interestingly enough it was widely used in the recent war propaganda, in 1998-2000, to emphasise the "backwardness" of the "enemy across the border".

Prejudices against Ethiopian migrants continued during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1935-1936. During the five years of Italian occupation, the Eritrean-Ethiopian border was transformed into an administrative-regional border and the fascist regime prioritised racial policies over social and ethnic stratification, with the attempt of homogenising Eritreans and Ethiopians into one group only: "natives". The challenges posed by the Ethiopian resistance, however, contributed to perpetuate and consolidate old stigma and hatred against Ethiopians, with the consequential effect of reinforcing a sense of "Ethiopianness" among the Ethiopian communities living in Eritrea, which grew in number following the "opening" of the borders in 1936 and became increasingly more politicised.

Migration from Ethiopia to Eritrea remained a regular phenomenon during the period of British administration as well. In 1941, Eritrea became part of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA), which was transformed into a British Military Administration (BMA) in 1942. The administration was temporary in nature and in charge of the "decolonization" of the area until decisions regarding the future of the ex Italian colonies were to be taken. Until the

¹⁶ See Francesca Locatelli, *Order, Disorder and Urban Identities: Asmara, 1890-1952* (forthcoming).

¹⁷ Ibid. Data provided in Bodleian Library, TP, MSS. Brit. Emp. S 367 Box 2(A) Item 1-2, Four Power Commission of Investigation for the former Italian Colonies, vol. 1 *Report on Eritrea*, 1947, 6.

end of the Second World War, Eritrea mainly functioned as a base for the Allied military purposes in the Middle East, and its artificial war economy prompted further migration from Ethiopia. This was also eased by the weakness of border patrolling. Borders and borderlands often escaped the control of the British administration, therefore becoming zones of violence, social and political dynamics and even military actions, whose effects were tangible at national level. In the borders areas with the Sudan, generically defined “inter-tribal” violence escalated, mainly between the Beni Amer and the Hadendowa, but it was the Southern frontiers that primarily concerned the new administration. In his annual reports and documents to the War Office Brigadier Longrigg, Chief Administrator of Eritrea until 1944 often emphasised the danger of the Ethiopian-Eritrean borders for the stability and political development of the whole country. As he stated:

Along the Southern boundary, raids by bandit groups from Ethiopia are frequent...The districts of Ethiopia across the River Setit Mareb are wild and uncontrolled, the inhabitants savage and hungry. Their incursions into Eritrean territory are often joined by element inside, and they offer easy refuge in Ethiopia for Eritrean wrong-doers, whether individuals or in bands. The country is extremely difficult, passable tracks are few, and it is true that almost no imaginable Police or Military forces stationed along the frontier could physically prevent the entry of Shifta bands. The latter are well armed – probably better than the Eritrean villagers or tribe whom they attack and rob, usually with loss of life, only too frequently. The mobilisation of Police or Military forces in time to protect the villagers or to intercept the culprits is almost impossible, and has in fact rarely been achieved.¹⁸

In different annual reports, the Chief Administrator highlighted how “friendly tribesmen” (see annual report 1944) in the border areas of Barentu and villagers in the areas of Akkele Guzai and Seraye were armed by the administration in order to defend themselves from bandits’ attacks. During the 1940s open borders constituted a major concern for the British administration because of the instability they generated at border areas and the political threat they caused in the country as a whole. The fluidity of borders facilitated the development of a more consistent cross-border migration of people searching for job, the smuggling of arms and eased banditry activities which extended from

¹⁸ NA, WO/32/10235, *Half Yearly Report by military administration 1942-1944*.

borders areas to central regions, the Hamasien and the zone of Asmara in particular. The Ethiopian government exploited the fluidity of borders in order to destabilise the internal situation in Eritrea and exercise more pressure on the decision making process regarding the future of what was perceived by the Emperor as a mutilated Ethiopian region. The BMA attempted to solve the problem of internal instability through the application of policies dictated by a remarkable continuity with the colonial past: expulsion of undesirables and vagrants coming from “across the borders”, control over the activities of an increasing politicised Ethiopian diaspora that played a major role in the political development of “post”-colonial Eritrea.

The Ethiopian Diaspora and the Politicisation of Violence

The Ethiopian diaspora that developed in Eritrea during the period of Italian and British administrations display several features of modern diasporas. It was formed by people who relocated in another country, relied on migrant social networks for survival in the host-state, they maintained economic and cultural links with their country of origin, and became political active. In the case of the Ethiopian diaspora in Eritrea, the presence of a repressive colonial state played a major role in its development: it generated solidarity among migrants, reinforced social networking activities within the host-state, and the cultural and political links with the country of origin. On top of that, in the 1940s Ethiopia became directly involved in the shaping of the diaspora’s political consciousness, since it was functional to the destabilisation of Eritrea and to the legitimation of the Ethiopian claims over the country during an historical phase in which capital decisions regarding the future of Eritrea and all Italian ex-colonies were to be taken by international and local forces.

The Ethiopian diaspora was quite substantial and mainly concentrated in the capital city, Asmara. It was composed of different waves of migrants: the first wave of Ethiopians who settled at the very early stage of the Italian presence in Eritrea and were mainly traders and *askaris*; a second wave formed primarily by labour migrants, attracted by the relative economic stability of Eritrea in the post-Adwa period; another wave “crossing the borders” in the 1930s following the “economic boom” due to the preparation for the Ethiopian war and the massive infrastructural

development of the country undertaken by the fascist regime in the region. We have also mentioned, however, that Ethiopians who migrated in the post-Adwa period were also victims of a concerted policy of marginalisation which aimed at relegating them at the bottom of the social hierarchy imposed by the colonial authorities in the *colonia primogenita*. The majority remained casual labourers throughout the Italian colonial presence in Eritrea. Frequent unemployment also forced them to survive through illicit activities, petty crime in urban centres, cattle stealing, robbery etc., for which they were labelled by colonial authorities as “undesirables” and expelled across the border. Notwithstanding their marginalisation in Eritrea, Ethiopian migrants managed to create their own forms of support.

Ethiopian migrants could rely on informal networks of support, especially in urban areas, where they benefited from the help of their female fellows working as beer-sellers or prostitutes. From them they used to receive what Louise White, referring to the context of colonial Kenya, defined a “comfort” and a “home”.¹⁹ They kept family ties through the system of remittances, when that was possible; they used to get updated about the political situation of Ethiopia through temporary migrants, travellers and Ethiopian traders; they attended the same leisure places and socialised during cultural and religious festivities (in the case of religious festivities, these were also attended by wide sectors of the Eritrean Orthodox society); the majority of them shared the same social conditions in a country that left them little space for social mobility. Social discrimination contributed to unify them around common values and to reinforce their identity.

As previously mentioned, in the 1940s the Ethiopian diaspora became highly politicised. This is mainly due to the situation of uncertainty that Eritrea experienced soon after the end of Italian colonialism. The country was contested by different international actors. The Ethiopian interest in (re)-obtaining power over Eritrea led to an extensive and direct involvement of the Ethiopian empire in the political events and internal affairs of Eritrea. This involvement was made possible by the presence of already existent structures and local networks with the capability and the interest in supporting Ethiopian claims. The Ethiopian state found this in the Ethiopian communities of Eritrea. The diaspora, for instance, became politically instrumentalised for the purposes of the Unionist Party, that was founded in 1946, sponsored and financially supported by Ethiopia, and asserted union of Eritrea with the “motherland”.

¹⁹ See Louise White, *The Comforts of Home. Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University Press, 1990).

Events related to Ethiopian culture became highly politicised in the 1940s, but their success also depended on the involvement of the Ethiopian state in their organisation, sponsoring, and funding. Religious festivities, particularly the *Meskel*, were highly attended.²⁰ Celebrations of Ethiopian historical events, such as the Emperor's coronation day, the anniversary of the return of Haile Sellassie to Addis Ababa, also became an opportunity for Ethiopian migrants and pro-Ethiopian people to reinforce their sense of belonging and reaffirm their connection with Ethiopian politics. But most importantly, they used these celebration as vehicles through which they could channel their dissent and anger toward British policies and Italian settlers. Attendance in all demonstration took the form of "gatherings in public squares with speeches and patriotic songs".²¹ Patriotism was also nurtured by the memory of the massacres committed by the Italians during the five years of occupation of Ethiopia. "Film of Italian atrocities on Abyssinian War [that] greatly embittered local population" in the "native quarters" of Asmara.²² But it was not certainly the view of a film to embitter the Ethiopian communities living in Eritrea.

The end of the Second World War in 1945 forced the temporary British administration to convert the war economy into a civil economy. The artificial "development" which Eritrea experienced during both the Italian period and the early phase of British administration came therefore to an end with serious repercussions on the economic and social situation of the country. For instance, the majority of the businesses which were vital for the Allied war interests were forced to shut down with the consequential rise in unemployment especially among labourers, mainly of Christian origin, and many of them Ethiopians. Economic and social unrest was accompanied by the intensification of international pressure from the countries interested in extending their control over Eritrea: Britain that aimed at the partition of the country between Sudan and Ethiopia; Italy that hoped to obtain the mandate over Eritrea; and Ethiopia that claimed Eritrea "back". The latter was supported by the Unionists and strongly opposed by the Independentists (Eritreans who claimed Eritrean independence). The combination of these two factors prompted a wave of political mobilisation in the country – but also different forms of violence – which saw primarily the active participation (and manipulation) of the Unionist Party and the Ethiopian diaspora of Eritrea, and the direct involvement of the Ethiopian state. As Markakis remarks, Eritrean political mobilisation in the 1940s presented features which were unique in comparison with other

²⁰ *Meskel* was the Festivity of the Cross, celebrated in September.

²¹ See WO 230/242. cipher message of the BEMA Eritrea to CivAffairs Mideast.

²² WO 230/243 Cipher message from War Office to BEMA Eritrea, info MELF for CIVAFFAIRS, SECRET, n.206790A2 (B), 1 November 1948.

countries in Northeast Africa during the same time (Sudan and Somalia, for instance), in terms of both massive participation and variety of political ideas.²³

Demonstrations, rallies and meetings were held in the main urban centres of the country, particularly in Asmara, which became the political arena of the Unionists. Riots, defined by the British administration “incidents” broke out in Asmara in July and August 1946, the first one followed the arrest of four “ringleaders” during an unauthorised procession organised by the Unionists and the second one was triggered by an argument between some Christian “Abyssinians” and the Sudanese troops who were celebrating the end of the Ramadan. Both riots displayed similar features despite the apparent motives behind were different: they experienced massive participation and showed a high degree of politicisation. They had long-lasting effects on the relationship between the temporary British administration and the local population. Both of them ended with the killing of participants and expulsion of “undesirable” Ethiopians.²⁴

The parties involved in these events, the Unionists and the British administration, were both interested in manipulating the events for their own purposes: the Unionists to destabilise Eritrea and justify its annexation, the British administration to find a goat-escape for its incapability to find a solution to the unrest of the country. Both parties mobilised old policies and discourses to achieve their aims: the Unionists claiming that all the majority of the population was fighting for union with the ancient “motherland”; British administrators adopting the same policies of the Italian colonial predecessor, namely criminalisation and expulsion of the “undesirables” from the “across the border”. Both of them contributed to the intensification of violence and the reinforcement of the “ideology of border” and the “culture of the enemy”, especially in the late 1940s with the increase of the direct involvement of Ethiopia in the internal affairs of Eritrea through the political activities of the Unionist party and the Ethiopian diaspora.

In 1949, Abdulkadir Kebire, leader of the Muslim League and supporter of Eritrea’s independence, was shot in Asmara. Attempts to kill him occurred already in previous times. Threats to his life pushed British authorities to raid premises of Unionist organisations, particularly Andinet, the Unionist Youth Organisation, where suspect documents

²³ See John Markakis, *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: University Press, 1987), pp.57-58.

²⁴ See G.K.N.Trevaskis, *Eritrea: a Colony in Transition: 1941-52* (London, New York: Oxford University Press), pp.67-68. In the July riot, four people were killed; in the August riot 46 were killed and more than 60 were wounded. For further details about the riots in Asmara, see Locatelli, *Order, Disorder and Urban Identities: Asmara, 1890-1952* (forthcoming).

implying the link with the murder of Abdulkadir Kebire were found.²⁵ Mr (Brigadier) Drew, Chief Administrator of Eritrea, was very drastic in accusing the Ethiopian organisation, following the discovery of subversive documents in the cell of Andinet, considered as the “storm troop of the Unionist Party with special duty of carrying out terrorist activities against Italian and other opponents of the union”.²⁶ He also mentioned that a letter was found addressed to unknown person asking for authority to kill Ibrahim Sultan and Abdulkadir Kebire, alongside several Italians. The letter was dated March 24, two days before Abdulkadir Kebire was shot and later on died. Another document found by the British authorities reported a list of “reliable” Eritrean police officials who would have supported the Unionists in case of disorder. According to Mr Drew, evidence was also found about the possible implication of Tedla Bairu, Secretary-General of the Unionist Party, of Colonel Negga (Ethiopian representative in Asmara) and of Tecola Ghebremedhin, his assistant, in the assassination of Abdulkadir Kabire. Brigadier Drew therefore issued an order to dissolve Andinet and to declare it illegal.

In the late 1940s, Unionist organisations clearly radicalised their aims and structure. There was a need to reinforce the branches in all the Eritrean territories, to assist financially all political activities, to provide assistance to Unionists who were arrested for political reasons, “to reward or pay every now and then deserving persons, such as those who carry out necessary deeds against the enemy”, to “possibly [...] eliminate the chiefs and Italian political guiders of the Pro-Italian party” and to “steal documents of the enemy, paying the servants working there, or in other ways”, to create a network of informants and clearly to get “whitemen’s arms” to “perform the necessary deeds”.²⁷

Violence also took the form of banditry, which mainly affected rural areas. Allegations that there was a connection between the radicalisation of Unionists’ policies and banditry activities were not completely unfounded. The outburst of armed violence and banditry during the 1940s arose several concerns among British authorities in Eritrea, the Foreign Office, the United Nations, involved in the process of definition of the ex-Italian colonies’ future, the Italian community still present in Asmara and sectors of the local Eritrean society. There has been an oversimplification on the

²⁵ NA, London Foreign Office (from now on FO) 371/10111, Telegram from Asmara to Foreign Office, n.25, 30th March, 1949, IMPORTANT, SECRET.

²⁶ NA, FO371/10111, Telegram n.32, Mr Drew, from Asmara to Foreign Office, Repeated to Addis Ababa, Rome, B.M.E.O. Cairo and UK delegation in New York, 2nd April 1949

²⁷ NA, FO371/10111, Annexure A. Translation of the carbon copy of a typewritten document in Italian found among the papers of the Andinet Party in their office in Asmara, when it was searched by the police on 28/3/49. Asmara 24/10/48. The Pro-Italia Party was mainly formed by Italian settlers and ex *askaris* and supported the Italian mandate over Eritrea.

analysis of its features and development. Banditry was interpreted as either outlaw actions at borders areas between rival groups fighting over local resources, or as isolated episodes of armed violence committed by Ethiopian agents, sponsored and financed by the Ethiopian empire. Banditry activities spread all over the Eritrean regions and especially at borders areas. It took different forms, although there was an attempt by authorities to uniform the phenomenon under one denomination: Ethiopian terrorism.

Unquestionably, some types of banditry were linked to the Ethiopian claims for the (re)-unification of Eritrea with the “motherland”, they were inspired by anti-Italian feelings, and driven by the hatred for the Italians and sense of retaliation for the massacres which occurred in Ethiopia during the Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941. What has been underestimated in contemporary interpretations and present-day historical accounts on banditry (which by the way deal very little with the phenomenon), is rather the link between banditry and the wider societal distress, and especially the connection between banditry and migrants from the “oltre confine”: mainly the social dimension of banditry and the link with the processes of cross-border migration and Ethiopian migrant communities in Eritrea. The analysis of some cases of “Ethiopian” banditry may help in clarifying this point.²⁸

In June 1950, different groups of bandits (approximately 170) convened in the Hamasien Province, but their meeting was interrupted by the Police that opened fire and engaged in a battle that lasted for hours, wounding some of them.²⁹ An Ethiopian bandit, Ibrahim Mohamed, was arrested and provided details regarding the composition of the groups. The groups were hierarchically structured with “well-known leaders” (whose names often recurred in British sources) well armed and highly politicised, and the followers coming from the ranks of the urban underclass, unemployed, jobless peasants, primarily of Ethiopian origin. Ibrahim Mohamed, for instance, was a very young Ethiopian (around 18-year-old) living in Eritrea, unemployed and looking for new opportunities in the country. He found his “employment” among the group of bandits headed by Aberra Megesha, for which he was sentenced to death.

Same punishment was reserved to other young *shiftas*, Chindia Redda, Doggu Tesfau and Gheresghier Immesghen.³⁰ They were three young unemployed Ethiopians, previous offenders for petty crimes, one living in Asmara

²⁸ An analysis of the nature of banditry in Eritrea can be found in Timothy Fernyhough, “Social mobility and dissident elites in northern Ethiopia: the role of banditry” in Donald Crummey, ed., *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa* (London: James Currey, 1986).

²⁹ Archive of the High Court (hereafter AHC), Asmara, Asmara General British Court, Case Ibrahim Mohamed, 18 June 1951. All names are reported as found in the court records.

³⁰ AHC, Special Court, Case of Chindia Redda, Doggu Tesfau and Gherenghier, 9 August 1951.

and the other two “homeless”. They became followers of Beiene Hagos (N.B another recurrent names in British files), a well-known leader, and were ordered to “cut the ears and tongue” to an ex *shifita* who surrendered to British authorities. Theirs was an action of retaliation against ex bandits who gave up their fight for reunification.

Even the most famous bandits active all over Eritrea, the Mozasghi brothers, paladins of the Union with Ethiopia, heavily relied on local Ethiopians (and Eritreans). They left traces all over the country, recruiting different people for each action, locally and “across the border”, where they often took refuge and refuelled their energy. Their success consisted in their ability to exploit already established networks of people with deep knowledge of the territory and a high degree of hatred towards the Italian colonial structures left almost untouched by the new British administration.

As well as being the result of the uncertainties regarding the future geo-political set-up of Eritrea, the political violence of the 1940s, in its diversified forms and development, was rooted in the long-lasting effects generated by the exclusionary policies implemented by the Italian colonial governments and perpetuated by the British administration. That European colonial administrations applied exclusionary policies in Africa – the “divide and rule” ideology – is certainly not surprising. The history of colonial Africa thrives with examples of ethnic and religious divisions generated by colonial administration. But what is peculiar in the case of Eritrea is the centrality that international borders played in the shaping of these policies, following the Italian defeat at Adwa in 1896. The “ideology of border” – and the “culture of the enemy” that it contributed to generate – became the core of all social and cultural policies, affecting primarily migrants from the *oltre confine* and the Ethiopian diaspora, and the marker of identity-making processes in colonial and post-colonial Eritrea. It gradually permeated Eritrean popular culture as well, with devastating long-lasting effects in the relationship between the two countries. Indeed, it suddenly resurfaced in the propaganda of the recent 1998-2000 war, which labelled the “enemy” as “*agame*” and “backward”.

COLLOQUE ABORNE

« FISCALITÉ ET DYNAMIQUE DES MIGRATIONS TRANSFRONTALIÈRES ENTRE LE CAMEROUN, LE TCHAD ET LE NIGERIA SOUS LA PÉRIODE COLONIALE ET POSTCOLONIALE.

PAR PAHIMI PATRICE, PH.D, ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE, UNIVERSITÉ DE MAROUA (CAMEROUN).

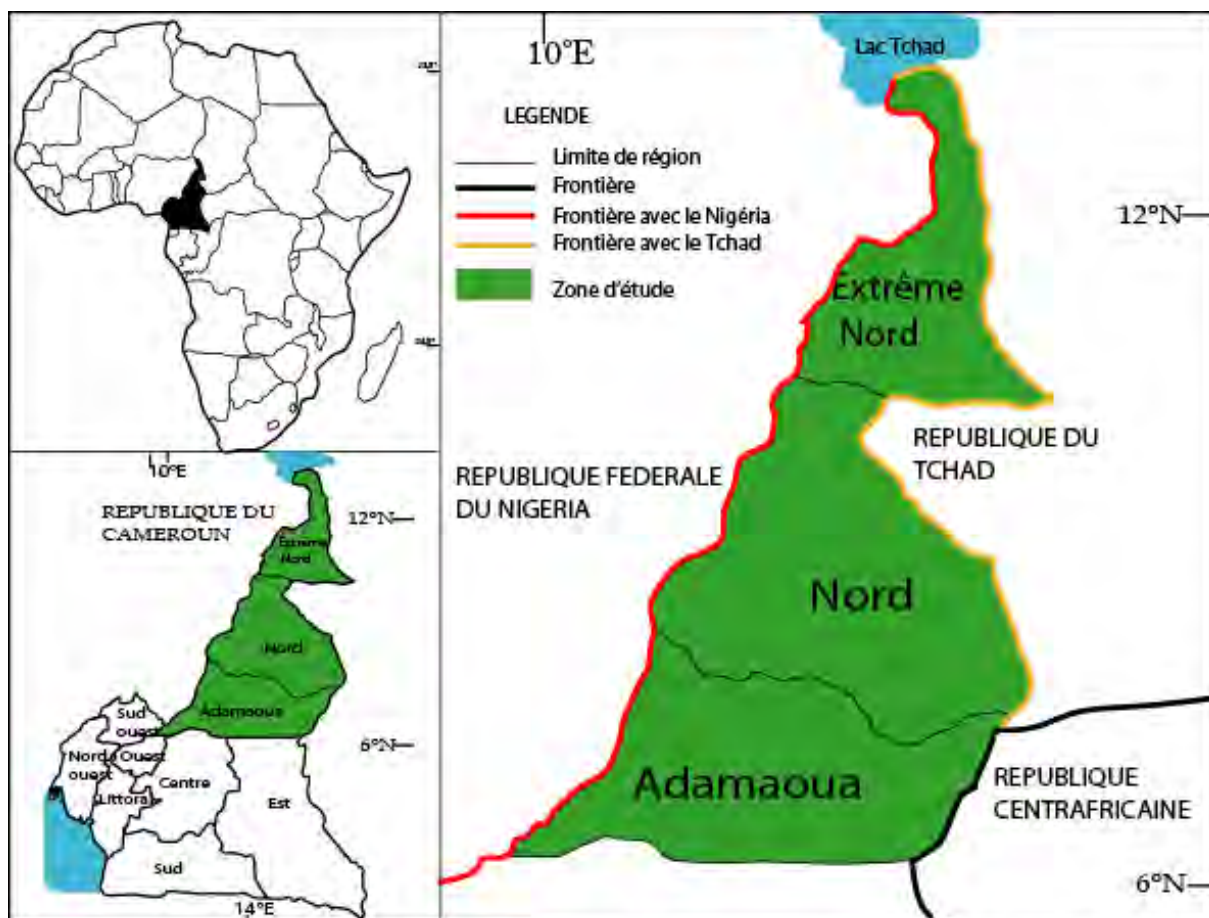
INTRODUCTION

LA QUESTION DES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES EST DE NOS JOURS UN VÉRITABLE CASSE-TÊTE POUR LES GOUVERNEMENTS. ELLE SE STRUCTURE EN TERMES DE DÉFI D'INTÉGRATION NATIONALE ET DE GLOBALITÉ HUMAINE À L'ÉCHELLE MONDIALE. SI PAR LE PASSÉ LES MIGRATIONS OU LES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES ÉTAIENT DAVANTAGE LIÉES AUX FACTEURS ALÉATOIRES TELS QUE LES CRISES ALIMENTAIRES RELEVANT DE LA SÉCHERESSE OU AUTRES INTEMPÉRIES, DE NOS JOURS, ELLES SONT DAVANTAGE DÉTERMINÉES PAR LES CONFLITS ARMÉS (GUERRES CIVILES, DIFFÉRENDS FRONTALIERS OU CRISES INTERETHNIQUES, ETC.) ET AUTRES FACTEURS ÉCOLOGIQUES. AINSI, ON NE SAURAIT AU REGARD DU CONTEXTE ACTUEL PARLER ESSENTIELLEMENT DES MIGRATIONS DE LA FAIM, CE D'AUTANT PLUS QU'ELLES ÉMANENT DE FACTEURS PLURIELS. DANS L'HISTOIRE DE L'AFRIQUE PAR EXEMPLE, LES MIGRATIONS DU TRAVAIL ONT LONGTEMPS ÉTÉ UN PHÉNOMÈNE À LA MODE SOUS LA COLONISATION ET MÊME AU DELÀ. ELLES ONT DANS CETTE MESURE FAVORISÉ DES VAGUES DE DÉPLACEMENTS MASSIFS DE TRAVAILLEURS À LA FOIS VOLONTAIRES ET INVOLONTAIRES. LES TRAVAILLEURS INVOLONTAIRES RENTRENT EN EFFET DANS LA CATÉGORIE DE POPULATIONS RÉQUISITIONNÉES POUR LES BESOINS DE LA MAIN-D'ŒUVRE DANS LES CHANTIERS ET LES EXPLOITATIONS AGRICOLES. DANS CETTE PERSPECTIVE, IL SERAIT INDIQUÉ DE DISTINGUER LES PERSONNES DÉPLACÉES DE CELLES VÉRITABLEMENT MIGRANTES AU NOM DES FACTEURS DIVERS. C'EST DANS CETTE MESURE QUE LES POPULATIONS DES MONTS MANDARA FURENT CONTRAINTES DE QUITTER LEURS SITES REFUGES À LA FAVEUR DES PLAINES. POUR L'ADMINISTRATION COLONIALE ET POSTCOLONIALE, IL ÉTAIT QUESTION DE DÉCONGESTIONNER LES MONTAGNES SURPEUPLÉES DU MANDARA EN VUE DE LEUR ÉPANOUISSEMENT AGRICOLE EN PLAINES. DE NOMBREUSES POPULATIONS DES MONTS

ET DES PLAINES SERONT PAR AILLEURS DÉPLACÉES PAR LE POUVOIR D'AHIDJO DANS LA PERSPECTIVE DE LA MISE EN VALEUR DE LA VALLÉE DE LA BÉNOUÉ.

DE FAÇON GÉNÉRALE, IL EXISTE UNE IMPORTANTE LITTÉRATURE SUR LES MIGRATIONS DE TRAVAIL. CEPENDANT, LES MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT DONT LES EXEMPLES SONT LÉGIONS DANS LES DOCUMENTS D'ARCHIVES SONT MALHEUREUSEMENT MINIMISÉES VOIRE OUBLIÉES. ET POURTANT, À EN APPRÉCIER LES EFFETS DÉSTRUCTURANTS DANS LES SOCIÉTÉS AFRICAINES EN GÉNÉRAL ET CAMEROUNAISES EN PARTICULIER, CES DERNIÈRES ONT ÉTÉ À LA BASE DES DÉPLACEMENTS MASSIFS DE POPULATIONS ANIMÉES PAR L'IDÉE DE TROUVER UN CERTAIN ELDORADO OU PARADIS FISCAL. TEL FUT LE CAS DANS LES RÉGIONS FRONTALIÈRES ENTRE LE CAMEROUN ET LE NIGERIA D'UNE PART, ET LE CAMEROUN ET LE TCHAD D'AUTRE PART. CONSCIENTE DE LA SAIGNÉE DÉMOGRAPHIQUE QUE CELA ENTRAÎNAIT AINSI QUE DE SON INCIDENCE SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE LA POLITIQUE COLONIALE D'EXPLOITATION AGRICOLE OU DE MISE EN VALEUR DES TERRES, L'ADMINISTRATION FRANÇAISE SURTOUT PRENAIT LES MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT TRÈS AU SÉRIEUX. DES MESURES FURENT SOUVENT PRISES, QUESTION DE LIMITER VOIRE CONTENIR CE PHÉNOMÈNE. SEULEMENT, QUEL PEUT ÊTRE LE DEGRÉ DE FIABILITÉ DE CES MESURES QUAND ON SAIT QU'ON RENCONTRE AU CAMEROUN DES PEUPLES TRAIT-D'UNION ET DONT LA PROXIMITÉ CONSTITUE UN IMPORTANT FACTEUR DE MOBILITÉS HUMAINES TRANSFRONTALIÈRES ? ET QUE DIRE DES PEUPLES PASTEURS DONT LA VOCATION EST D'ÊTRE EN CONSTANTS DÉPLACEMENTS À LA RECHERCHE DU PÂTURAGE ? COMMENT RÉGULER DE FAÇON EFFICACE LES MIGRATIONS ? LES FRONTIÈRES TELLES QUE DESSINÉES PAR LES PUISSANCES EUROPÉENNES À L'ISSUE DE LA CONFÉRENCE DE BERLIN ET AVEC LA COLONISATION NE PORTENT-ELLES PAS EN ELLES MÊMES LES GERMES D'UNE INCITATION À BRAVER L'INTERDIT, SURTOUT DANS UN CONTEXTE AUTREFOIS MARQUÉ PAR LA LIBRE MOBILITÉ HUMAINE ? COMMENT NE PAS TRANSCENDER CES FRONTIÈRES SURTOUT SI ON NE JUGE PAS CES DÉCOUPAGES COUTUMIÈREMENT VALIDES ? NOTRE AMBITION DANS CETTE ÉTUDE EST DONC DE MONTRER LE CARACTÈRE ESSENTIELLEMENT POREUX DES FRONTIÈRES CAMEROUNO-NIGÉRIANE ET TCHADO-CAMEROUNAISE, ET LES DÉFIS QU'ELLES POSENT EN TERMES DE MAÎTRISE DES FLUX HUMAINS. NOUS METTONS UN ACCENT PARTICULIER SUR LES MESURES ET LES POLITIQUES FISCALES COMME BASES INDÉNIABLES DE CONSTANTES MIGRATIONS SAISONNIÈRES ET DÉFINITIVES DES PEUPLES TRAIT-D'UNION.

LOCALISATION DE LA ZONE D'ETUDE



Source fond de carte: Atlas de la province Extrême-Nord Cameroun, 2000

Réalisation: Félix WATANG ZIEBA

I-THÉORIES DES MIGRATIONS, DES FRONTIÈRES ET JUSTIFICATIONS IDÉOLOGIQUES

LES MIGRATIONS SONT UN PHÉNOMÈNE À DIMENSION UNIVERSELLE, TANT ELLES SONT À LA BASE DE LA DISSOLUTION ET DE LA RESTRUCTURATION SOCIALES DANS NOMBRE DE PAYS. LEUR RAPPORT À L'ESPACE ET AU TERRITOIRE SONT ASSEZ ÉLABORÉS AU POINT QU'ON NE SAURAIT PARLER DE MIGRATION OU DE MOBILITÉ HUMAINE SANS RÉFÉRENCE AUX ZONES DE DÉPART ET AUX ZONES D'ACCUEIL.

LES MIGRATIONS SONT DONC À DÉFINIR EN RAPPORT AVEC LA FRONTIÈRE ET LES BOULEVERSEMENTS Y AFFÉRENTS. PLUSIEURS FACTEURS SONT DONC EXPLICATIFS DES DIFFÉRENTES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES, SURTOUT DANS UN CONTEXTE SOCIOPOLITIQUE ET ÉCONOMIQUE ESSENTIELLEMENT MARQUÉ PAR L'INSTABILITÉ, LA PRÉCARITÉ ET DIVERSES CRISES. LES THÉORICIENS DES MIGRATIONS ONT DANS CETTE PERSPECTIVE CONSACRÉ DE NOMBREUSES ÉTUDES AUX QUESTIONS TELLES QUE ÉDUCATION ET MIGRATION, SEXE ET MIGRATION, DISTANCE ET MIGRATION, TRAVAIL ET MIGRATION COMME DES FONDAMENTAUX DANS LA COMPRÉHENSION DES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES¹. D'AUTRES TRAVAUX CEPENDANT S'INTÉRESSENT AUX ZONES D'ORIGINE ET DE DESTINATION DES MIGRANTS, AUX OBSTACLES ÉVENTUELS AYANT SERVI DE MOTIF OU DE PRÉTEXTE DE DÉPLACEMENT, ET DANS UNE MOINDRE PROPORTION AUX FACTEURS PERSONNELS. QUOIQU'IL EN SOIT, LA QUESTION DES MIGRATIONS DÉPASSE LES FRONTIÈRES DES SEULS FACTEURS NATURELS OU PERSONNELS. ELLE PÉNÈTRE SES RACINES DANS LES MÉANDRES SINUEUSES DES FACTEURS CULTURELS, COMME POUR DIRE QU'IL YA DES PEUPLES QUI SE DÉFINISSENT PAR LEUR PROPENSION CONSTANTE AUX MIGRATIONS. CE SERAIT LE CAS DES PASTEURS NOMADES DONT L'INSTABILITÉ EST LIÉE À LA RECHERCHE DES PÂTURAGES POUR LEURS BÉTAILS. DANS CETTE MESURE, ILS POSENT UN ÉNORME DÉFI AUX ETATS EN TERMES DE TRANSFRONTALITÉ, DE SÉCURITÉ ET DE MAÎTRISE DE LA DÉMOGRAPHIE. DANS CETTE MESURE, ON ASSISTE D'AILLEURS À LA FORMATION DE RÉSEAUX DE MIGRATIONS ESSENTIELLEMENT DÉFINIES PAR UNE RÉELLE CONNECTIVITÉ CULTURELLE ET UNE

¹ S. Lee Everett., 1966, "A Theory of Migration", in *Demography*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 48.

SOLIDARITÉ. CAR IL EST CLAIR QUE LES RELATIONS INTRA-ETHNIQUES ET UNE CERTAINE ORGANISATION SOCIOPOLITIQUE FONT FI DES FRONTIÈRES².

AU REGARD DE SON AMPLEUR, LA QUESTION DES MIGRATIONS A FINI PAR MOBILISER DES COMPÉTENCES, QUESTION DE MIEUX LA CERNER ET NOTAMMENT D'EN LIMITER SES EFFETS PLUS OU MOINS PERVERS. DANS CETTE PERSPECTIVE, PLUSIEURS THÉORIES ONT ÉTÉ ÉLABORÉES. CERTAINES TENTENT D'EXPLIQUER LE PHÉNOMÈNE DES MIGRATIONS À TRAVERS SES FACTEURS. AUSSI INVOQUE T-ON LE DIFFÉRENTIEL DE REVENUS ENTRE LE PAYS D'ORIGINE ET LE PAYS D'ACCUEIL, LE MARCHÉ DU TRAVAIL, LA PROXIMITÉ CULTURELLE ET LINGUISTIQUE³. ON PARLE ÉGALEMENT DE LA CRISE ÉCONOMIQUE COMME FACTEUR AMPLIFICATEUR DES MOUVEMENTS DE POPULATION, LA PROSPÉRITÉ ÉTANT ALORS PERÇUE COMME UN ÉLÉMENT DE STABILISATION HUMAINE⁴.

PAR AILLEURS, UNE AUTRE CONSIDÉRATION DES MIGRATIONS REPOSE SUR LA THÉORIE ÉCONOMIQUE NÉOCLASSIQUE. SELON CETTE THÉORIE EN EFFET, LES MIGRATIONS INTERNATIONALES, COMME LES MIGRATIONS INTERNES, SONT PROVOQUÉES PAR DES DIFFÉRENCES GÉOGRAPHIQUES ENTRE L'OFFRE ET LA DEMANDE DE TRAVAIL.⁵ CEPENDANT, ON LUI REPROCHE DE NE PAS PRENDRE EN COMPTE L'ENVIRONNEMENT POLITIQUE ET ÉCONOMIQUE INTERNATIONAL, TOUT COMME LES EFFETS ÉCONOMIQUES AU NIVEAU NATIONAL ET LES DÉCISIONS POLITIQUES QUI INFLUENCENT LES DÉCISIONS INDIVIDUELLES DE MIGRER OU PAS. CONTRAIREMENT À CETTE VISION DES CHOSSES, D'AUTRES ESTIMENT PLUTÔT QUE LA QUESTION DES MIGRATIONS EST DAVANTAGE LIÉE AUX CAUSES STRUCTURELLES AGISSANT AU NIVEAU MONDIAL ET PLUS PARTICULIÈREMENT DANS LES PAYS DE PROVENANCE: LA PAUVRETÉ, LE MANQUE DE TRAVAIL OU LA TRÈS FAIBLE RÉMUNÉRATION DES EMPLOIS, LA SURPOPULATION DES PAYS DU TIERS-MONDE, LES GUERRES, LES FAMINES, LES CATASTROPHES ÉCOLOGIQUES, LES RÉGIMES DICTATORIAUX, LES PERSÉCUTIONS DES MINORITÉS, POUSSENT UN NOMBRE CROISSANT D'INDIVIDUS À ÉMIGRER VERS

² D.Mokam., 2000, « Les peuples trait d'union et l'intégration régionale en Afrique centrale : le cas des Gbaya et des Moundang », in Ngaoundéré Anthropos, vol 5, Université de Ngaoundéré-Université de Tromso, p.15.

³ M.Lerch et E.Piguet., 2005, « Théories, méthodes et résultats des projections de la migration en provenance des nouveaux pays membres de l'UE », *Swiss Forum for migration and population Studies*, pp5-6.

⁴ D.Nganawara.,2009, « Crise économique et migration : Cas de l'Afrique. Une relation discutée », IFORD, Yaoundé.

⁵ Théories développées par W.A Lewis ., 1954. « Economic development with unlimited supplies of labor », *The Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, 22, pp.139-191. Et J.R Harris and M.P Todaro., 1970. « Migration, unemployment and development: a two sector analysis », *American Economic Review*, 60, pp. 126-142.

L'OCCIDENT. CET ARGUMENT EST DÉVELOPPÉ PAR AMBROSINI⁶. DANS CETTE MESURE, IL EST ÉTABLI QUE SEULS LES FACTEURS SOCIO-HISTORIQUES DE GRANDE AMPLEUR SONT SUSCEPTIBLES DE PROVOQUER DES COURANTS MIGRATOIRES DE GRANDE AMPLEUR, ET NON DES MICRO-DÉCISIONS INDIVIDUELLES OU D'ENTREPRISES PARTICULIÈRES SELON WALLERSTEIN ET CASTELLS⁷.

DANS L'ENSEMBLE, CES THÉORIES SUPPOSENT LE RÔLE PLUS OU MOINS DÉTERMINANT DES OBSTACLES OU DES FACTEURS ALÉATOIRES DANS L'AMPLIFICATION DES PHÉNOMÈNES MIGRATOIRES. DANS CETTE PERSPECTIVE, ON NE SAURAIT PARLER DE VAGABONDAGES OU DE MIGRATIONS INTEMPESTIVES COMME C'EST SOUVENT LE CAS DANS LES DISCOURS D'HOMMES POLITIQUES DOMINÉS PAR L'INSTINCT DE PRÉSERVATION CONTRE CE QU'IL EST CONVENU D'APPELER EN CE SIÈCLE DE SYNDROME DES MIGRATIONS. TOUT CECI EST CEPENDANT LOIN DE JUSTIFIER LES MIGRATIONS FORCÉES QUI S'EXPLIQUENT GÉNÉRALEMENT PAR DES MOTIFS DE TRAVAIL ET DES EFFETS INDUS TELS QUE L'EXTENSION URBAINE OU RURALE. LES QUESTIONS DE MIGRATIONS INTERNATIONALES OU D'IMMIGRATION SONT EN PASSE DE DEVENIR UN CAUCHEMAR POUR LES ÉTATS, DANS LA MESURE OU ELLES SEMBLENT METTRE EN PÉRIL LES ÉQUILIBRES NATIONAUX, NOTAMMENT DANS LE SENS DE LA DISTRIBUTION DES REVENUS, LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES INFRASTRUCTURES SOCIO-ÉDUCATIVES ET SANITAIRES, ETC. DE MÊME, ON ASSISTE DE PLUS EN PLUS À LA CONSTITUTION DES SENTIMENTS D'AVERSION POUR CERTAINS PEUPLES AUX PULSIONS MIGRATOIRES «ABUSIVES ».

EN RAISON DE LA PEUR DES CHIFFRES QUE LE PHÉNOMÈNE SUSCITE, ON EN EST VENU À QUALIFIER LES MIGRANTS DE « NOUVEAUX BARBARES » (J-C RUFFIN), DE « HORDES DE DÉMUNIES » (ABDOU DIOUF). GISCARD D'ESTAING EST ALLÉ JUSQU'À ASSIMILER LES MIGRATIONS AUX INVASIONS⁸. AINSI, LES ÉTATS REDOUTENT LES MIGRATIONS NON PAR SIMPLE PHOBIE, MAIS SURTOUT PAR PEUR DES CHIFFRES ET DES EFFETS INDUS SUR LA VIE NATIONALE. MAIS ON A BIEN L'IMPRESSION D'ASSISTER À UNE FORME DE DISCRIMINATION DITE POSITIVE DANS LA MESURE OÙ ON ACCEPTE

⁶ M.Ambrosini, cité par E.Ambrosetti et G.Tattolo, « Le rôle des facteurs culturels dans les théories des migrations », in <http://www.Erudit.org/livre/aidelf/2008/01490co.pdf>

⁷ I. Wallerstein., 1974. *The Modern World-System I. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, Academic Press, New York, et M.Castells., 1989, *The informational city. Information technology, Economic restructuring and the Urban Regional Process*, Oxford, Blackwell.

⁸ A.Nonjon et als, (s.dir.), 2007, *De l'internationalisation à la globalisation. Les mutations de l'économie mondiale de 1880 à nos jours*, Paris, Ellipses, p.465.

VOLONTIERS LES « MIGRANTS UTILES », TANDIS QUE LA « HORDE DE DÉMUNIES » EST REPOUSSÉE AUX FRONTIÈRES OU RÉDUITE À VIVRE DANS LA CLANDESTINITÉ. C'EST CE QUI SANS DOUTE JUSTIFIERAIT LE CONCEPT D'IMMIGRATION CHOISIE, DE QUOTAS D'ADMISSION, COMME POUR DIRE QUE L'OCCIDENT N'A PAS BESOIN DE LA RACAILLE, DES RÉSIDUS DU MONDE, OU QU'IL EST LOIN D'ÊTRE LE DÉPOTOIR DES « ORDURES DU MONDE ». AUSSI PRIVILÉGIE T-ON DEPUIS CES DERNIÈRES DÉCENNIES LE *BRAIN DRAIN*, UNE SORTE DE MIGRATION DES COMPÉTENCES, DES INTELLIGENCES DANS LE CONTEXTE D'UN MONDE GLOBAL. AU TOTAL, FORCE EST DE RECONNAÎTRE QUE LES MIGRATIONS ÉVOLUENT AU RYTHME DE LA DÉSTABILISATION DES SOCIÉTÉS ET DES RESTRUCTURATIONS. TOUTEFOIS, AU REGARD DE LA DIVERSITÉ DES FLUX MIGRATOIRES ET DU PROFIL DES MIGRANTS, ON NE SAURAIT ADHÉRER À L'IDÉE RÉPANDUE QUI VOUDRAIT QUE LES MIGRANTS SOIENT PRESQUE EXCLUSIVEMENT DES DÉMUNIS, DES RÉSIDUS DES SOCIÉTÉS RÉPUTÉES NOMADES. CAR LES IMMIGRÉS NE SONT PAS TOUTE LA MISÈRE DU MONDE.

COMME MENTIONNÉ PLUS HAUT, PLUSIEURS FACTEURS SONT EXPLICATIFS DE LA DYNAMIQUE MIGRATOIRE INTERNATIONALE, ET QUI PLUS EST QUE CE PHÉNOMÈNE N'EST PAS LE PROPRE D'UN PEUPLE DÉFINI. CAR, IL EST ÉTABLI QUE DANS TOUTES SOCIÉTÉS, LA PEUR, LA PAUVRETÉ OU LA PRÉCARITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE, SOCIALE, AINSI QUE L'INSTABILITÉ ET L'INSÉCURITÉ, DÉTERMINENT FONDAMENTALEMENT LES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES. AINSI, DES GENS QUITTENT LEURS PATRIES POUR DES MOBILES VITAUX (LA RECHERCHE DU BIEN-ÊTRE DE LA PROSPÉRITÉ, RECHERCHER LA PAIX SOCIALE, DE MEILLEURES CONDITIONS DE TRAVAIL OU DES PERSPECTIVES PROFESSIONNELLES (CAS DU *BRAIN DRAIN*). S'IL EST VRAI QUE JUSQU'ICI ON A D'AVANTAGE CONNU LES MIGRATIONS DE LA FAIM OU LES MIGRATIONS DU TRAVAIL, À L'AVENIR CEPENDANT, SELON LES PERSPECTIVES DES EXPERTS, LES BOULEVERSEMENTS CLIMATIQUES SERONT UNE CAUSE MAJEURE DES MIGRATIONS HUMAINES ET ANIMALES⁹. APRÈS UN TOUR D'HORIZON DE CES DIFFÉRENTES CONSIDÉRATIONS, NOUS POUVONS À PRÉSENT NOUS ATTARDER SUR LE CONCEPT MÊME DE MIGRATION. À CE NIVEAU ENCORE, PLUSIEURS APPROCHES COMPLÉMENTAIRES SONT À PRENDRE EN COMPTE.

POUR S. LEE EVERETT ¹⁰, «*MIGRATION IS DEFINED BROADLY AS A PERMANENT OR SEMI PERMANENT CHANGE OF RESIDENCE. NO RESTRICTION IS PLACED UPON THE*

⁹ J. Christophe Victor, « Les migrations internationales », in *Les Dessous des cartes*, ARTE France, 24 mars 2009.

¹⁰ S. Lee Everett., 1966, p.49.

DISTANCE OF THE MOVE OR UPON THE VOLUNTARY OR INVOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE ACT, AND NO DISTINCTION IS MADE BETWEEN EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL MIGRATION.». R. LUCAS EN REVANCHE LA DÉFINIT PAR RAPPORT À SON AMPLEUR EN CES TERMES: «*MIGRATION IS COMPARABLE TO A FLOW OF WATER OR ELECTRICITY - AN ADJUSTMENT FLOW RESPONDING TO PRESSURE DIFFERENTIALS AT OPPOSITE ENDS OF A PIPELINE. THIS VIEW SUGGESTS THAT IT IS NEITHER THE ABSOLUTE LEVEL OF PUSH NOR PULL FACTORS WHICH MATTERS, BUT THE EXISTING DIFFERENCE IN RELATIVE ATTRACTION ELEMENTS*»¹¹. AINSI, LES MIGRATIONS SONT À PERCEVOIR COMME UNE SORTE DE MOBILITÉS HUMAINES À GRANDE OU À PETITE ÉCHELLE, ET CECI SUR LA BASE DE FACTEURS GÉNÉRALEMENT ALÉATOIRES. L'ASPECT VOLUTIF N'EST PAS À ÉLUDER, CAR QUELLES QUE SOIENT LES RAISONS INVOQUÉES, IL YA SOIT UNE DISPOSITION À QUITTER OU À RESTER, MIEUX À S'ASSUMER EN AFFRONTANT STOÏQUEMENT LES DÉFIS. CEPENDANT, IL NE FAUT PAS PERDRE DE VUE QUE CERTAINES FORMES DE MIGRATIONS SONT FORCÉES. CE FUT PAR EXEMPLE LE CAS DES MIGRATIONS DU TRAVAIL SOUS LA PÉRIODE COLONIALE, OU DE CE QUE MOTAZÉ AKAM QUALIFIE DE FORMES MIGRATOIRES D'INCERTITUDE¹².

EN EFFET, IL ÉTAIT QUESTION POUR LES ADMINISTRATEURS FRANÇAIS POUR CE QUI EST DU NORD-CAMEROUN, D'INCITER LES POPULATIONS DES MONTAGNES À DESCENDRE EN PLAINE EN VUE D'UNE MISE EN VALEUR AGRICOLE. CETTE POLITIQUE EST POURSUIVIE AU LENDEMAIN DE L'INDÉPENDANCE. CETTE FOIS, CE SONT DIVERSES POPULATIONS DITES KIRDI DES MONTAGNES ET PLAINES DE L'EXTRÊME-NORD DU CAMEROUN QUI SONT QUASIMENT DÉPLACÉES VERS LA VALLÉE DE LA BÉNOUÉ, TOUJOURS POUR DES MOTIFS AGRICOLES¹³. IL FAUT INDIQUER QU'IL S'AGISSAIT DANS UNE LARGE MESURE DE MIGRATIONS FORCÉES, MIEUX UNE FORME DE RÉQUISITIONS DE MAIN-D'ŒUVRE EN VUE DES CHANTIERS AGRICOLES OU DE CONSTRUCTION D'INFRASTRUCTURES DIVERSES.

DE NOS JOURS AU CAMEROUN, CE SONT LES MIGRATIONS SAISONNIÈRES QUI SONT LE PLUS RÉPANDUES. ELLES SONT DE LOIN DIFFÉRENTES DE L'EXODE RURAL. C'EST LE CAS DES MAFA ET DES MOFU (POPULATIONS MONTAGNARDES DU NORD-

¹¹ R. Lucas., 1981, "International Migration: Economic Causes, Consequences and Evaluation", in M. Kritz, C. Keely, S. Tomasai, (eds)., *Global Trends in Migration*, Center for Migration Studies, New York, p.85.

¹² M. Motazé Akam, 1998, « Migrations et reproduction des rapports sociaux dans le système lamidal du Nord-Cameroun : esquisse sur les formes migratoires d'incertitude », in *Annales de la Faculté des Arts, Lettres et Sciences humaines de l'université de Ngaoundéré*, vol III.

¹³ Ibid, pp 48-49.

CAMEROUN) QUI, EN RAISON DE MILIEUX DIFFICILES, CONTRAIGNANTS ET SATURÉS, SONT CONTRAINTES DE DESCENDRE SAISONNIÈREMENT DANS LES CITÉS DE LA PLAINE CHERCHER DU TRAVAIL RÉMUNÉRÉ¹⁴. LES MIGRATIONS TELLES QU'ELLES SE PRÉSENTENT, SE VEULENT ASSEZ COMPLEXES DE PAR LEURS FACTEURS, LEURS ACTEURS. DE MÊME, ELLES PARTICIPENT DU PROCESSUS GLOBAL DE MONDIALISATION PAR LA MISE EN RELATION DES SOCIÉTÉS¹⁵. EN OUTRE, SUR LA BASE DE TOUTES CES COMPLEXITÉS, D. NGANAWARA ESTIME QU'ON PEUT ASSIMILER LES MIGRATIONS À « UN MÉCANISME GÉNÉRATEUR DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ET RÉDUCTEUR DE TENSIONS EN PÉRIODE DE CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE », OU UNE « PORTEUSE DE CRISPATIONS SOCIALES ET DE DYSFONCTIONNEMENTS ÉCONOMIQUES EN PÉRIODE DE CRISE »¹⁶. CETTE CONSIDÉRATION SE JUSTIFIE À PLUS D'UN TITRE, SURTOUT DANS UN CONTEXTE DE PRÉCARITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE.

DANS LE CADRE DE CETTE ÉTUDE, ON NE SAURAIT MIEUX APPRÉHENDER LE PHÉNOMÈNE DE MIGRATION QU'EN RAPPORT AVEC LES PROBLÉMATIQUES LIÉES À LA FRONTIÈRE. ET DANS CETTE PERSPECTIVE, LES POINTS DE VUE DIVERGENT. AINSI, DOIT-ON CONSIDÉRER LES FRONTIÈRES COMME DES BARRIÈRES ÉTANCHES, DES LIGNES DE DÉMARCATIION OU DES LIENS? OU FAUT-IL LES CONSIDÉRER COMME DES SOURCES DE CONFLITS, DES ENJEUX GÉOSTRATÉGIQUES ? IL FAUT MENTIONNER ICI QUE LA PERCEPTION MÊME DES FRONTIÈRES A ÉVOLUÉ AVEC LE TEMPS. POUR CERTAINS, LE MOT FRONTIÈRE EN FRANÇAIS COMME EN ANGLAIS, TRADUIT L'IDÉE DE FRONT, DONC DE CONFRONTATION, SINON D'AFFRONTMENT. OR, LES VILLES ET/OU RÉGIONS-FRONTIÈRES SONT AVANT TOUT DES LIEUX D'AFFRONTMENT. PAR CONSÉQUENT IL DOIT ÊTRE COMPRIS EN TERMES DE ZONE-FRONTIÈRE ET NON PAS DE LIGNE DE SÉPARATION ET CE, SELON LA TERMINOLOGIE ANGLAISE QUI DISTINGUE FRONTIER ET BOUNDARY. EN FRANÇAIS, CELA SE TRADUIT PAR RÉGION-FRONTIÈRE (FRONTIER) ET LIGNE-FRONTIÈRE (BOUNDARY)¹⁷.

DANS LE CONTEXTE AFRICAIN CEPENDANT, LA PERCEPTION DES FRONTIÈRES SEMBLE AVOIR ÉTÉ BOULEVERSÉE, MIEUX BAFOUÉE AU NON DES CONSIDÉRATIONS HÉGÉMONIQUES DE DIVERS ORDRES. AINSI QUE LE RAPPORTE C. COQUERY-

¹⁴ Lire à cet effet les travaux de O. Iyébi-Mandjek., 1993, « Les migrations saisonnières chez les Mafas, montagnards du Nord-Cameroun : une solution au surpeuplement et un frein à l'émigration définitive », in *Cahiers des Sciences humaines*, n° 29 (2-3).

¹⁵ V.Baby-Collin, G. Cortes et als., 2009, *Migrants des Suds*, IRD-PUM, p.16.

¹⁶ D. Nganawara., « Crise économique et migration : Cas de l'Afrique. Une relation discutée », Communication, IFORD-Yaoundé, 19 Juin 2009.

¹⁷ J.Kotek (S.dir)., 2009, S.dir, *L'Europe et ses villes-frontières*, Bruxelles, CERIS- CEESAG, pp17, 22-23.

VIDROVITCH, « AU XIXE SIÈCLE SURTOUT, LA FRONTIÈRE PRIT LE SENS D'UNE ZONE D'EXPANSION OU DE RÉGRESSION CULTURELLE. C'EST UN SIÈCLE OÙ LES MOUVEMENTS DE POPULATIONS, OÙ QUE L'ON SE TROUVE, PRENNENT UNE AMPLEUR PROBABLEMENT INÉGALÉE JUSQU'ALORS »¹⁸. L'IDÉE DE FRONTIÈRE ÉTANCHE SÉPARANT LES PEUPLES BIEN QUE NON ACQUISE SOUS LA PÉRIODE PRÉCOLONIALE, S'IMPOSE EN AFRIQUE À LA FAVEUR DE LA COLONISATION, ET CECI AUX GRANDS DAMS DES POPULATIONS ALORS INTÉGRÉES. IL S'EN SUIVIT ALORS QUE :

« LES FRONTIÈRES INTERNATIONALES DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE SONT (DÉSORMAIS) LE REFLET D'UNE GRILLE SPATIALE HÉRITÉE DES COMPÉTITIONS COLONIALES ; ELLES ENVELOPPENT DES ENTITÉS ÉTATIQUES QUI ONT ÉTÉ INVENTÉES, CRÉÉES DE TOUTES PIÈCES PAR DES PUISSANCES EUROPÉENNES IL Y A DE CELA UN SIÈCLE, LORSQUE LE CONTINENT FUT PARTAGÉ PAR DES TRAITÉS PROMPTEMENT SIGNÉS SUR LA BASE DE CARTES INCERTAINES. L'INTRODUCTION DE FRONTIÈRES COLONIALES À LA FIN DU XIXE SIÈCLE EN AFRIQUE A EU POUR COROLLAIRE L'INSTAURATION BRUTALE ET ARBITRAIRE D'UN MODÈLE EUROPÉEN D'ÉTAT ET L'IMPORTATION « D'UN ORDRE TERRITORIAL ET D'UN AMÉNAGEMENT DE L'ESPACE, TOUT DROIT SORTIS D'UN MODÈLE WESTPHALIEN ABUSIVEMENT UNIVERSALISÉ¹⁹ ».

MÊME SI CE POINT DE VUE SEMBLE ASSEZ VIF, IL TRADUIT SANS DOUTE LES RESENTIMENTS DE POPULATIONS QUI D'AILLEURS N'ONT FAIT L'OBJET D'AUCUNE CONSULTATION PRÉALABLE. LE DIKTAT COLONIAL AURA EU RAISON D'ELLES, SURTOUT QU'IL ÉTAIT QUESTION DE MARQUER LES TERRITOIRES, MIEUX LES ZONES D'INFLUENCE COMME GAGE DE SOUVERAINETÉ ET D'EXPRESSION D'UNE VÉRITABLE HÉGÉMONIE POLITIQUE ET ÉCONOMIQUE.

EN CLAIR, S'IL EST VRAI QUE LA BALKANISATION DE L'AFRIQUE EST RÉCENTE DU FAIT DES FRONTIÈRES HÉRITÉES DE LA COLONISATION, IL RESTE NÉANMOINS PLAUSIBLE QUE L'AFRIQUE PRÉCOLONIALE N'ÉTAIT PAS À L'ABRI DES PRÉVARICATIONS DIVERSES. EN EFFET, LES RIVALITÉS COMMERCIALES ET LES PROBLÈMES LIÉS AUX CONQUÊTES TERRITORIALES OU AUTRES LUTTES HÉGÉMONIQUES MATÉRIALISENT À SOUHAIT LA TRÈS CONTROVERSANTE QUESTION DES DISPUTES AU SUJET DE L'ESPACE OU DE LA ZONE D'INFLUENCE. COMMENT EN EFFET SE MÉPRENDRE QUANT AU CARACTÈRE ESSENTIELLEMENT CONFLICTUEL DES RAPPORTS DES POPULATIONS À L'ESPACE, À LA TERRE OU TOUT SIMPLEMENT AU FONCIER ? NOTRE PERSPECTIVE D'ÉTUDE CEPENDANT NE CHERCHE PAS À ARPENTER CES SINUEUX LABYRINTHES DES

¹⁸ C. Coquery-Vidrovitch (France), << Histoire et perception des frontières en Afrique du XIIe au XXe siècle >>, in *Des frontières en Afrique du XIIe au XXe siècle*, Bamako, 1999, UNESCO, CISH (comité international des sciences historiques), p.43.

¹⁹ K. Bennafla.,1999, « La fin des territoires nationaux ? État et commerce frontalier en Afrique centrale », in *Politique africaine* n° 73, p.27.

CRISES FONCIÈRES SOUVENT CAUSES DE CONFLITS SOCIOPOLITIQUES. AINSI, SELON QUE L’AFFIRME ACHILLE MBEMBÉ, « LOIN D’ÊTRE LE SIMPLE PRODUIT DE LA COLONISATION, LES FRONTIÈRES ACTUELLES (AFRICAINES) TRADUISENT LES RÉALITÉS COMMERCIALES, RELIGIEUSES ET MILITAIRES, LES RIVALITÉS, LES RAPPORTS DE FORCE ET LES ALLIANCES QUI PRÉVALAIENT ENTRE LES DIFFÉRENTES PUISSANCES IMPÉRIALES, PUIS ENTRE ELLES ET LES AFRICAINS AU LONG DES SIÈCLES QUI PRÉCÉDÈRENT LA COLONISATION PROPREMENT DITE»²⁰. QUOIQU’IL EN SOIT, ON VENAIT À LA FAVEUR DE LA COLONISATION DE L’ESPACE AFRICAIN, D’ENTRER DANS UNE PHASE DÉTERMINANTE QUI ALLAIT NON SEULEMENT PARTICIPER À LA RESTRUCTURATION, MAIS SURTOUT À LA DÉSTRUCTURATION DES ENTITÉS POLITIQUES ET SOCIOÉCONOMIQUES AFRICAINES.

CEPENDANT, LES CONSIDÉRATIONS DE CONTRÔLE AUX FRONTIÈRES, DE VISAS VOIRE DE QUOTAS D’ENTRÉE CONTINUERONT PENDANT LONGTEMPS ENCORE À N’AVOIR AUCUN SENS EN AFRIQUE, SURTOUT À CETTE ÈRE DE MONDIALISATION À OUTRANCE. EN EFFET, QUE REPRÉSENTERAIT UNE LIGNE ARBITRAIRE ET COUTUMIÈREMENT INVALIDE POUR DES ETHNIES TRANSFRONTALIÈRES POUR QUI LA FRONTIÈRE EST LOIN D’ÊTRE UNE DÉMARCATIION, UNE BARRIÈRE ? CETTE RÉALITÉ SEMBLE SIMPLEMENT ENGAGER LES POLITIQUES CONTRAINTS DE SE PLIER AU JEU DES HÉGÉMONIES POLITIQUES. ET MÊME IL FAUT INDICER QUE LE CARACTÈRE ESSENTIELLEMENT POREUX DES FRONTIÈRES ENTRE LE CAMEROUN ET LE NIGÉRIA ET LE CAMEROUN ET LE TCHAD RENFORCE D’AVANTAGE CETTE PERCEPTION DE LA FRONTIÈRE COMME UNE SIMPLE LIGNE DE CONTINUITÉ. CES FRONTIÈRES DEMEURENT EN EFFET DE VÉRITABLES PASSOIRS TANT POUR LES PEUPLES NOMADES QUE POUR LES HORDES DE BANDITS TRANSFRONTALIERS²¹.

DE TOUTE ÉVIDENCE, SI POUR LES UNS ON PEUT PARLER DE VIOLATION DE FRONTIÈRE DU FAIT DES DÉPLACEMENTS SOUVENT INTEMPESTIFS ET INCONTRÔLÉS, POUR LES PEUPLES TRAIT-D’UNION²² CEPENDANT, LES MOBILITÉS ICI REVÊTENT LE SENS DE REGROUPEMENT. COMME L’INDIQUE D. MOKAM²³, « LES RELATIONS INTRA-ETHNIQUES ET UNE CERTAINE ORGANISATION SOCIO-POLITIQUE FONT FI DES FRONTIÈRES. MALGRÉ LA DIVISION COLONIALE, LES MOUNDANG, TOUT COMME LES

²⁰ A. Mbembé, *A la lisière du monde : frontières, territorialité et souveraineté en Afrique* (version française adaptée du titre original, *At the edge of the world boundaries, territoriality and sovereignty in Africa*, Public culture, (12) : p.47

²¹ Lire à cet effet Saïbou Issa ., 2010, *Les coupeurs de route*, Paris, l’Harmattan.

²² Par peuple trait d’union, nous entendons l’ensemble des peuples situés à cheval sur des territoires frontaliers. Cas des Moundang du Tchad et du Cameroun.

²³ D. Mokam., 2000, p.15.

GBAYA ALLAIENT CONTINUER À PASSER D'UN POINT À L'AUTRE DE LEUR TERRITOIRE ET POURSUIVRE CERTAINES PRATIQUES QUI AVAIENT COURS DANS LEURS SOCIÉTÉS (...) ». C'EST TOUT SIMPLEMENT DIRE QUE DANS CE CADRE COMPLEXIFIÉ CRÉÉ PAR LA COLONISATION, POUR LES PEUPLES TRAITÉS D'UNION, LES LIENS CULTURELS, FAMILIAUX ET COMMUNAUTAIRES L'EMPORTENT SUR LA FRONTIÈRE. CES LIENS SONT D'AILLEURS AMPLIFIÉS ET RELAYÉS PAR DES ÉCHANGES ÉCONOMIQUES ET SOCIAUX PLUS VASTES, PLUS OU MOINS INFORMELS ET ÉTABLIS DE PLUS OU MOINS LONGUE DATE²⁴. CECI VAUT AUSSI BIEN POUR LES PEUPLES MOUNDANG, TOUPOURI ET MASSA DES PLAINES QUE POUR DE NOMBREUX PEUPLES DU MANDARA. EN EFFET, LA CHAÎNE MONTAGNEUSE SÉPARANT LE CAMEROUN DU NIGÉRIA SE PRÉSENTE EN TOUS POINTS COMME UN TREMPLIN POUR LES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES TRANSFRONTALIÈRES. IL NE S'AGIT DONC PAS DE MÛR NATUREL INFRANCHISSABLE, SURTOUT QUAND ON SAIT QU'AUCUN POSTE DE CONTRÔLE N'EST ÉTABLI SUR CES FLANCS DE MONTAGNE. S. NDEMBOU LE RELÈVE FORT OPPORTUNÉMENT EN CES TERMES :

...LA DORSALE OUEST CAMEROUNAISE ALLANT DU MONT CAMEROUN AU SUD JUSQU'AUX MONTS MANDARA AU NORD NE CONSTITUE PAS UNE BARRIÈRE INFRANCHISSABLE POUR L'ACCÈS AU CAMEROUN PAR LES NIGÉRIENS. LA GRANDE PORTE DE CET ÉCRAN MONTAGNEUX EST MARQUÉE PAR LE COURS DE LA BÉNOUÉ DONT LA VALLÉE S'OUVRE SUR YOLA EN TERRITOIRE NIGÉRIEN SUR UNE LARGEUR DE PLUSIEURS KILOMÈTRES. LES VALLÉES DE CE FLEUVE ET DE SES AFFLUENTS, DE MÊME QUE LA PLAINE DU DIAMARÉ DONNENT ACCÈS AUX VASTES PLAINES DU LOGONE ET DU TCHAD EN DIRECTION DE L'EST ET DU NORD, CONSTITUENT AUTANT DE COULOIRS ET DE BOULEVARDS FAVORISANT LE DÉPLACEMENT DES HOMMES ET DES BIENS (...) »²⁵.

LA GÉOGRAPHIE CONSTITUE DANS CETTE MESURE UN IMPORTANT ATOUT POUR DE PERPÉTUELLES MIGRATIONS OU LES MOBILITÉS TRANSFRONTALIÈRES. MALHEUREUSEMENT, ELLE ENTRETIENT ÉGALEMENT LES RÉSEAUX DE LA CONTREBANDE COMMERCIALE TOUT EN FAISANT DE CES TERRITOIRES FRONTALIERS DE VÉRITABLES NIDS D'INSÉCURITÉ. COMME NOUS LE VERRONS PLUS LOIN, LES PEUPLES TRAITÉS D'UNION CAPITALISERONT CES DIFFÉRENTS ATOUTS POUR ÉCHAPPER À LA SURENCHÈRE FISCALE DE PAR ET D'AUTRES DES FRONTIÈRES CAMEROUNO-NIGÉRIENNE ET CAMEROUNO-TCHADIENNE. NOTRE ANALYSE DE L'AMPLEUR DES ÉVASIONS FISCALES ET DE LEUR RAPPORT À LA PROBLÉMATIQUE DE LA MAÎTRISE DE LA DÉMOGRAPHIE ET DES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES SERA DAVANTAGE BASÉE SUR UN EXAMEN MINUTIEUX DES ARCHIVES COLONIALES ET POSTCOLONIALES.

²⁴ D. Bangoura, 2001, « Frontières et espaces frontaliers en Afrique centrale », in *Enjeux*, n°6, p.7

²⁵ S. Ndembou., 2001, « La question de souveraineté nationale dans la partie septentrionale du Cameroun », in *Enjeux*, n°6, p.8.

II-EVASION FISCALE ET MOBILITÉS HUMAINES TRANSFRONTALIÈRES

L'ÉVASION FISCALE DÉSIGNE LA FUITE DEVANT L'IMPÔT. L'IMPOSABLE OU CONTRIBUABLE²⁶ CHERCHE INDÉFINIMENT À ÉVITER LE PRÉLÈVEMENT QUE LE FISC PRÉTEND OPÉRER SUR SON REVENU, OU DU MOINS À EN RÉDUIRE L'AMPLEUR²⁷. LE PHÉNOMÈNE D'ÉVASION FISCALE TRADUIT À PLUS D'UN TITRE L'IDÉE DE DÉSOBÉISSANCE, ET SURTOUT L'INSTINCT DE PRÉSERVATION DE REVENUS JUGÉS MAIGRES.

SELON LES FISCALISTES, L'ÉVASION EST SOUVENT LE RÉSULTAT DE LA FRAUDE FISCALE. EN EFFET, PAR LE BIAIS DES NON-DÉCLARATIONS OU DES FAUSSES DÉCLARATIONS, UNE IMPORTANTE MATIÈRE FISCALE ÉCHAPPE À L'IMPOSITION ET PAR CONSÉQUENT CONSTITUE UN MANQUE À GAGNER POUR LE FISC²⁸. LE PHÉNOMÈNE D'ÉVASION OU DE FRAUDE FISCALE N'EST PAS L'APANAGE DES SOCIÉTÉS MODERNES, MAIS SON AMPLEUR S'Y EST CONSIDÉRABLEMENT ACCRUE. EN EFFET DANS L'EUROPE FÉODALE DÉJÀ, LES ROYAUMES BRITANNIQUES PASSAIENT AUX YEUX D'UN ESPAGNOL POUR UN PARADIS FISCALE, ÉTANT DONNÉ QUE LE FARDEAU BRUT PAR TÊTE Y ÉTAIT TROIS FOIS MOINS LOURD QUE CHEZ LUI²⁹. DE MÊME, LES EXONÉRATIONS ACCORDÉES AUX SEIGNEURS FÉODAUX ET AUX DOMAINES ECCLÉSIASTIQUES RÉVOLTAIENT BIEN LE PETIT PEUPLE QUI Y VOYAIT UNE FORME D'INJUSTICE FISCALE. CE QUI NE MANQUAIT DE CRISTALLISER EN EUX LA PROPENSION À L'ÉVASION, AUX MIGRATIONS. MAIS CETTE ALTERNATIVE N'EST PAS NÉCESSAIREMENT UNE PANACÉE AU PHÉNOMÈNE DES AVANTAGES FISCAUX QUI SEMBLENT AVOIR TOUJOURS EXISTÉ. DANS L'EXTRÊME-NORD DU CAMEROUN, LES ARABES CHOA VICTIMES DES MULTIPLES EXACTIONS DES SULTANATS KOTOKO, DÉVELOPPÈRENT AINSI L'ART DE SE SOUSTRAIRE. ILS MIRENT EN VALEUR LEUR SEULE ARME DE MOBILITÉ, MAIS FINIRENT PAR SUBIR LA POUSSÉE D'AUTRES NOMADES À L'INSTAR DES TOUBOU³⁰.

DE NOMBREUSES INVESTIGATIONS QUE NOUS AVONS MENÉES DANS LA PLAINE DU DIAMARÉ ET DANS LES MONTS MANDARA DE 2003 À 2010 INDIQUENT CEPENDANT QUE LES ÉVASIONS FISCALES ÉTAIENT ASSEZ NÉGLIGEABLES AVANT LA PÉRIODE

²⁶ Nous préférons l'appellation imposable à celle de contribuable. Cette dernière exprime l'idée d'une action volontaire et concertée ; ce qui à notre sens est contraire à la notion même d'impôt.

²⁷ P-M Gaudemet et J.Molinier., 1997, p.226.

²⁸ Voir J.Brémont et A.Gedelan., 1981, p.190.

²⁹ P.Léon., 1978, p.154.

³⁰ F.Hagenbucher., 1973, *Les Arabes dits suwa du Nord-Cameroun*, Paris, ORSTOM, p.6.

COLONIALE³¹. CE FAIT SE JUSTIFIE NOTAMMENT PAR L'INSÉCURITÉ AMBIANTE QUI FAISAIT REDOUTER TOUTE VOLONTÉ PERSONNELLE OU INDIVIDUELLE À QUITTER LE VILLAGE. LE CONTEXTE ÉTAIT JUSTEMENT AUX GUERRES INTERTRIBALES ET AUX RAZZIAS D'ESCLAVES. AVEC LA COLONISATION CEPENDANT, LA SITUATION CHANGE. LA PACIFICATION DES ZONES RÉPUTÉES RÉFRACTAIRES, AINSI QUE LE DÉPLOIEMENT DES MILICIENS ARMÉS RENDIT LA MOBILITÉ PLUS FLUIDE. LA SÉCURITÉ TOUTEFOIS EST RESTÉE ASSEZ PRÉCAIRE. LE CONTEXTE COLONIAL SEMBLE DONC AVOIR CRÉÉ DES CONDITIONS FAVORABLES À LA LOGIQUE DES DÉROBES. COMMENT JUSTIFIER UN TEL REVIREMENT QUAND ON SAIT QUE LA PRATIQUE FISCALE N'EST PAS UNE NOUVEAUTÉ CHEZ CES PEUPLES DES MONTS ET PLAINES DU NORD-CAMEROUN ?

TOUT PART EN EFFET DE LA PERCEPTION SOCIO-POLITIQUE DE L'IMPÔT. L'IMPÔT EST DANS CES SOCIÉTÉS UNE MARQUE DE RECONNAISSANCE MAIS AUSSI D'ALLÉGEANCE À UNE AUTORITÉ COUTUMIÈREMENT LÉGITIME. TOUTEFOIS, L'INTRODUCTION DU SYSTÈME FISCAL COLONIAL IMPLIQUAIT POUR LES AFRICAINS LE RENONCEMENT AU DEVOIR FISCAL TRADITIONNEL. DE LA SORTE, REFUSER L'IMPÔT COMME SYMBOLE DU POUVOIR COLONIAL TRADUISAIT, POUR L'AFRICAIN, L'ATTACHEMENT À L'ORDRE TRADITIONNEL REÇU DES ANCÊTRES DONT LE REPRÉSENTANT ÉTAIT LE CHEF.³² LA SITUATION FUT PLUS RADICALE ENCORE AU NORD-CAMEROUN, SURTOUT DANS UN CONTEXTE MARQUÉ PAR DES RAPPORTS DE FORCE ASSEZ TENDUS ENTRE LES POPULATIONS DITES KIRDIS ET LES POTENTATS OU FÉODaux MANDARA ET PEUL. IL FAUT INDICER QUE CES RAPPORTS CONFLICTUELS SE SONT BÂTIS AUTOUR DE L'ÉPINEUSE QUESTION DE L'EXERCICE DE L'AUTORITÉ ET D'AFFIRMATION DE LA SOUVERAINETÉ. IL S'AGIT D'UNE SAGA À CYCLE INFERNAL QUI, JUSQUE-LÀ, SEMBLE CONSTITUER UN TERREAU QUI ALIMENTE ENCORE LES TIRAILLEMENTS ENTRE LES DEUX GROUPES³³. LES MANDARA ET LES PEULS EXERÇAIENT EN EFFET UNE AUTORITÉ ASSEZ RÉPUGNÉE SUR LES POPULATIONS KIRDIS. ILS PERPÉTRAIENT DE NOMBREUSES EXACTIONS CONTRE ELLES, ET CECI DOUBLÉE D'UNE ADMINISTRATION INTRANSIGEANTE. TOUT CECI N'A FAIT QU'ENVENIMER LEURS RELATIONS ET RENFORCER L'INSÉCURITÉ ET L'INSTABILITÉ

³¹ Nous ne suggérons pas que la mobilité était impossible sous la période précoloniale. Car les marchés déjà actifs, étaient le cadre de rencontre ou de brassage des populations d'origine diverses. Indiquons toutefois que les dispositions sécuritaires étaient préalablement prises. Le système de convoyage des marchandises serait sans doute répandu. Pour des études approfondies, lire les récits des voyageurs européens en Afrique, à l'instar de Barth, 1965.

³² J-B Fotsing., 1995, *Le pouvoir fiscal en Afrique : essai sur la légitimité fiscale dans les Etats d'Afrique noire francophone*, Paris, LGDJ, p.135.

³³ P. Pahimi, 2010, « La fiscalité dans l'Extrême-Nord du Cameroun : dynamique et enjeux de 1916 à 1995 », Thèse de Doctorat Ph.D en Histoire, Université de Ngaoundéré, p.71.

DANS LA RÉGION. CAR À CES EXACTIONS, LES KIRDIS RÉPONDAIENT PAR DE NOMBREUX ACTES DE BRIGANDAGES, DES VOLS³⁴. CES TENSIONS JUSTIFIENT L'IDÉE SELON LAQUELLE LA FISCALITÉ POSE LE PROBLÈME DE LÉGITIMITÉ AUSSI BIEN DE L'ÉTAT QUE DE SES DIRIGEANTS POLITIQUES³⁵. AUSSI POUVONS-NOUS ASSIMILER LE REFUS DE L'IMPÔT AU REFUS DE FIDÉLITÉ ET D'ALLÉGEANCE AU GOUVERNEMENT, À UN REJET DE SON AUTORITÉ³⁶. AVEC LA COLONISATION, LA SYMBOLIQUE DE L'IMPÔT S'ENRICHIT DE NOUVELLES CONSIDÉRATIONS. L'OBSERVATION SUIVANTE DU CHEF DE CIRCONSCRIPTION DE MAROUA INDIQUE À SOUHAIT L'OPTION DE POLITIQUE INDIGÈNE DE LA FRANCE :

LE CONSENTEMENT À VERSER L'IMPÔT EST LE SIGNE LE PLUS MANIFESTE DU RALLIEMENT ET LE SEUL GAGE DE LOYALISME QUE NOUS PUISSIONS RECEVOIR D'INDIGÈNES TROP FRUSTRES POUR SAVOIR TOUS LES ASPECTS DE NOTRE MANSUËTUDE. EN CONSÉQUENCE, TOUT REFUS DE S'ACQUITTER D'UN IMPÔT DE PRINCIPE, TOUTE MANIFESTATION D'HOSTILITÉ, ALORS QU'UNE PRÉPARATION POLITIQUE A ÉTÉ SOIGNEUSEMENT RÉALISÉE, SONT LES CARACTÉRISTIQUES D'UN ÉTAT D'ESPRIT QUE NOUS DEVONS ÉVITER DE LAISSER CRISTALLISER³⁷

CETTE OPTION S'EST MATÉRIALISÉE PAR LES OPÉRATIONS DE PACIFICATION PUIS D'APPRIVOISEMENT QUI, POUR LES POPULATIONS, AVAIENT DAVANTAGE UNE CONNOTATION DE TERREUR ET D'EXPROPRIATION, DE SPOLIATION DE LEURS MAIGRES BIENS. DÉCIDÉS À NE PAS SUBIR UNE DOUBLE IMPOSITION DU FAIT DE LA JUXTAPOSITION DES FISCALITÉS COUTUMIÈRE ET MODERNE, CERTAINS ÉLÉMENTS SOCIAUX FINIRENT PAR OPTER POUR LA DÉROBADE. CETTE DERNIÈRE EST UNE PARFAITE ILLUSTRATION DE L'ILLÉGITIMITÉ DE LA FISCALITÉ COLONIALE DITE MODERNE DANS UN CONTEXTE COUTUMIER. IL ÉTAIT QUESTION POUR CES POPULATIONS IMPOSABLES D'ÉCHAPPER À L'INJUSTICE, AUX MALVERSATIONS DIVERSES PERPÉTRÉES TANT PAR LES AGENTS COLONIAUX QUE LEURS PROPRES CHEFS DÉSORMAIS CONVERTIS EN INSTRUMENTS DU COLONISATEUR. C'EST DANS CETTE MESURE QU'IL PEUT ÊTRE ÉTABLI QUE L'INTRANSIGEANCE, LES TRAVAUX FORCÉS OU RÉQUISITIONS DE LA MAIN-D'ŒUVRE, LES PRATIQUES FISCALES SUR FOND DE RAZZIAS, LES HARCÈLEMENTS ET MAUVAISES CONDITIONS DE TRAVAIL ONT CONCOURU AU SOULÈVEMENT DES POPULATIONS ET À LEUR DISPERSION.

AINSI COMME NOUS POUVONS NOUS EN APERCEVOIR, L'ÉVASION DICTÉE PAR

³⁴ Lire Saïbou Issa et Hamadou Adama., 2002 « Vols et relations entre les Peuls et Guiziga dans la plaine du Diamaré (Nord-Cameroun) », in *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, 166, XLII-2.

³⁵ Mangu Mbata., 2007, « La légitimité de l'Etat et le développement des capacités des dirigeants en Afrique », 7^e Forum Africain sur la Gouvernance, Ouagadougou, UNDP, p. 3

³⁶ H-D Thoreau., « La désobéissance civile », in <http://www.non-violence-mp.org/publications/thoreau.htm>, consulté le 21 mai 2008.

³⁷ ANY APA 12033, Lettre du chef de Circonscription de Maroua à M. le Commissaire de la République (17 janvier 1926).

UNE FISCALITÉ JUGÉE LOURDE, A DANS LA PLUPART DES CAS ÉTÉ À LA BASE DES MIGRATIONS TEMPORAIRES OU DÉFINITIVES DES POPULATIONS, ET SURTOUT CELLES DES ZONES FRONTALIÈRES. EN EFFET, HABITER UNE ZONE FRONTALIÈRE OFFRAIT DES AVANTAGES RÉELS À CEUX QUI, PAR INDIGENCE OU PAR INCIVISME, VOULAIENT ÉCHAPPER À L'IMPOSITION. BEAUCOUP EN EFFET SONT ATTIRÉS PAR LES PAYS VOISINS QUI PRATIQUENT DES TAUX D'IMPOSITION RELATIVEMENT BAS ; D'OÙ L'IDÉE DE LA RECHERCHE DE PARADIS FISCAL. LE SULTAN DIAGARA DE GOULFEÏ S'EN PLAIGNIT, CAR DE NOMBREUX ARABES RELEVANT DE SON COMMANDEMENT S'ENFUYAIENT VERS LE NIGERIA ET LE TCHAD, EMPORTANT LEURS BIENS. CES DERNIERS PROTESTAIENT À LEUR MANIÈRE CONTRE LE TAUX D'IMPOSITION PORTÉ À 10 FRANCS, TANDIS QU'IL ÉTAIT DE 5 FRANCS AU TCHAD³⁸. DANS LA MÊME LANCÉE, LE LAMIDAT DE DOUMROU CONNUT DE RÉELLES DIFFICULTÉS DE RECOUVREMENT FISCAL. SA PROXIMITÉ DE BINDER ÉTAIT EXPLOITÉE PAR LES IMPOSABLES. CES DERNIERS AU NOM DE LEURS ATTACHES FAMILIALES PAR EXEMPLE, ONT TENDANCE À S'Y RÉFUGIER DÈS QU'ON LEUR DEMANDE L'IMPÔT OU DES PRESTATIONS COLLECTIVES³⁹.

IL FAUT RELEVER QUE DE NOMBREUX IMPOSABLES SE FAISAIENT NORMALEMENT RECENSER, MAIS PRENAIENT NÉANMOINS L'HABITUDE DE FUIR TOUT PAIEMENT D'IMPÔT. D'AUTRES PAR CONTRE ÉCHAPPAIENT AUX DEUX. LE CHEF DE LA CIRCONSCRIPTION DE GAROUA RELÈVE À CET EFFET QUE LES INDIGÈNES SONT ASSEZ NOMBREUX À PASSER VERS LE NIGERIA, LES UNS POUR NE PAS PAYER LEUR IMPÔT, LES AUTRES PARCE QU'AYANT COMMIS QUELQUES MÉFAITS ET SUR LE COUP DE RECHERCHES DE LA JUSTICE⁴⁰. CES INDICATIONS TRADUISENT LA PRÉOCCUPATION QU'EN FAISAIENT LES ADMINISTRATEURS COLONIAUX QUI RÉPUGNAIENT À COUP SÛR L'AMENUISEMENT DÉMOGRAPHIQUE DE LEUR TERRITOIRE. DANS CES VAGUES DE « MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT », L'ÉLÉMENT KIRDI EST LE PLUS IMPORTANT⁴¹. LES EXODES QUE NOUS ASSIMILONS ICI AUX MIGRATIONS TEMPORAIRES OU DÉFINITIVES SE PRODUISENT SURTOUT AU MOMENT DE LA PERCEPTION DE L'IMPÔT, CAR PASSÉE CETTE PÉRIODE, ILS SE REPRODUISENT MAIS EN SENS INVERSE. COMMENT ALORS MINIMISER CE PHÉNOMÈNE DONT L'AMPLEUR N'ÉCHAPPAIT D'AILLEURS PAS AUX ADMINISTRATEURS COLONIAUX DANS LEURS TRADITIONNELLES TOURNÉES ADMINISTRATIVES OU TOURNÉES D'ANIMATION ÉCONOMIQUE ? APRÈS CONSTAT DES

³⁸ ANY, APA 12033, Rapport de tournée dans le Sultanat du Logone (18 décembre 1920 au 06 janvier 1921).

³⁹ ANY, APA 11854/A, Compte-rendu de tournée, Circonscription de Maroua, p.14.

⁴⁰ ANY, Vt 38/17, Rapport du chef de Bataillon (Langlois) commandant le Région Nord à M. le Commissaire de la République.

p.1.

⁴¹ Ibid.

DISPARITÉS DES TAUX D'IMPOSITION ENTRE LE TCHAD ET LE CAMEROUN POURTANT TOUS DEUX ADMINISTRÉS PAR LA FRANCE, LE GOUVERNEUR DU TCHAD FIT LES OBSERVATIONS SUIVANTES :

LES INDIGÈNES DU CAMEROUN HABITENT DES RÉGIONS IDENTIQUES AUX RÉGIONS CORRESPONDANTES AU TCHAD ; ILS SONT DE MÊME RACE, LEURS RESSOURCES SONT IDENTIQUES ET LES ÉCHANGES COMMERCIAUX D'UNE RIVE À L'AUTRE, SOIT DU LOGONE, SOIT DU CHARI, SONT TRÈS ACTIFS. DÈS LORS POURQUOI CES DIFFÉRENCES ? SANS DOUTE PARCE QUE LA PUISSANTE COLONIE DU CAMEROUN EST RICHE ET QUE LE TCHAD, MOINS FORTUNÉ, GREVÉ D'UNE FOULE DE SERVITUDES AU PROFIT DES COLONIES VOISINES OU DU GOUVERNEMENT GÉNÉRAL DE L'AEF, DOIT SUIVRE UNE POLITIQUE DE HAUT RENDEMENT FISCAL⁴².

AINSI, LES FLUX DE POPULATIONS FRONTALIÈRES DU CAMEROUN EN DIRECTION DU TCHAD POUR DES RAISONS FISCALES ÉTAIENT UNE CONSTANTE PRÉOCCUPATION POUR L'ADMINISTRATION.

LES AUTORITÉS FRANÇAISES QUOIQUE PRÉSENTES DES DEUX CÔTÉS DU TCHAD ET DU CAMEROUN N'ÉTAIENT CEPENDANT PAS INSENSIBLES AUX MOUVEMENTS INCONTRÔLÉS DES POPULATIONS DE PART ET D'AUTRE DE LA FRONTIÈRE. L'ENJEU ÉTANT À LA FOIS DÉMOGRAPHIQUE ET ÉCONOMIQUE, ELLES DURENT PARFOIS PRENDRE DES MESURES MAIS SANS VÉRITABLEMENT RÉUSSIR À CONTENIR LE PHÉNOMÈNE DE FAÇON CONCLUANTE. AUSSI LES MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT CONTINUÈRENT-ELLES À SERVIR D'INDICATEUR DE LOURDEUR FISCALE ET SURTOUT D'INJUSTICE, DE DISCRIMINATION POUR LES POPULATIONS. LES CIRCONSCRIPTIONS DE MAROUA, MOKOLO ET GAROUA DONT LES TERRITOIRES SONT FRONTALIERS DU TCHAD D'UNE PART ET DU NIGERIA D'AUTRE PART NE PURENT, EN DÉPIT DE LA VOLONTÉ ADMINISTRATIVE, PARVENIR À UNE POLITIQUE CONCERTÉE DE NIVELLEMENT DES TAUX D'IMPOSITION. CECI N'ÉTAIT D'AILLEURS PAS POSSIBLE AU REGARD DES RÉALITÉS GÉOGRAPHIQUES, DES CAPACITÉS CONTRIBUTIVES DES POPULATIONS.

CEPENDANT IL ÉTAIT CLAIR POUR LES ADMINISTRATEURS FRANÇAIS DU CAMEROUN QUE LES MIGRATIONS TRANSFRONTALIÈRES DE POPULATIONS REPRÉSENTAIENT UNE MENACE POUR LA STABILITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET DÉMOGRAPHIQUE DU TERRITOIRE, ET QU'IL IMPORTAIT NOTAMMENT DE SUIVRE DE PRÈS CE PHÉNOMÈNE. CETTE CRAINTE TRANSPARAÎT D'AILLEURS D'UNE NOTE DE L'INSPECTION GÉNÉRALE DU TRAVAIL DATÉE DE 1946 : « UNE ÉMIGRATION PROLONGÉE EST SUSCEPTIBLE D'AFPECTER GRAVEMENT L'EFFECTIF TOTAL DE MAIN-D'ŒUVRE DU TERRITOIRE »⁴³. IL FAUT INDIQUER QUE LA CRAINTE DES ADMINISTRATEURS ÉTAIT D'AUTANT JUSTIFIÉE

⁴² ANY, APA 10904/B, Lettre du Gouverneur du Tchad au Commissaire de la République française au Cameroun, 17 mars 1931.

⁴³ ANY, APA 10779, Note sur les migrations de population au Cameroun Français, p.4.

QUE LES POPULATIONS SE DÉPLACENT SANS SOLLICITER LEUR AVIS. ON NE PEUT COMPRENDRE CETTE ATTITUDE QU'AU REGARD DE LA CONSIDÉRATION MÊME DE LA FRONTIÈRE, LAQUELLE N'ÉTAIT AUX YEUX DES POPULATIONS LOCALES QUE D'ORDRE POLITIQUE ET NON ETHNIQUE. AUSSI LE PASSAGE DE LA FRONTIÈRE ÉTAIT-IL UN EXERCICE FRÉQUENT.

SI LES MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT (DONC ÉVASION ET RECHERCHE D'UN PARADIS FISCAL ILLUSOIRE) FONT REDOUTER LES ADMINISTRATEURS COLONIAUX, LES CAS DE NOMADISME NE LE SONT PAS MOINS. EN EFFET, LES PEUPLES NOMADES (BOROROS EN L'OCCURRENCE POUR NOTRE CAS) DE PAR LEUR CONSTANTE MOBILITÉ, FONT ÉCHAPPER LEUR BÉTAIL AU RECENSEMENT FISCAL ET DONC À L'IMPOSITION. TEL FUT LE CAS DES ARABES CHOA DES RIVES DU LOGONE. FACE AUX APPÉTITS DES SULTANS KOTOKO VOULANT À LA FOIS TIRER PROFIT D'UNE LOURDE TAXE DE PACAGE ET DE NOMBREUX AUTRES TRIBUTS ET TAXES EN GUISE DE RECONNAISSANCE DE LEUR SOUVERAINETÉ, LES ARABES CHOA EXASPÉRÉS SONT CONTRAINTS À L'EXODE. ILS TRAVERSENT AINSI SELON UNE FRÉQUENCE ANNUELLE LA FRONTIÈRE TCHADIENNE, FUYANT L'IMPÔT ET ÉMIGRANT TEMPORAIREMENT AVEC LEUR BÉTAIL, OBJET DES APPÉTITS ET AVANTAGES FISCAUX DES CHEFS KOTOKO⁴⁴. POUR D'AUTRES CEPENDANT, LEUR ATTITUDE TÉMOIGNE DE LEUR MESQUINERIE. C'EST LE CAS DES PEULS INSTALLÉS DANS LES PAYS MOUNDANG, GUIZIGA ET TOUPOURI QUI NON SEULEMENT ÉCHAPPENT AUX PRESTATIONS, AUX RÉQUISITIONS DE PORTEURS, ET PAIENT UNE FAIBLE TAXE DE 1 FRANC. COMME LE PRÉCISE LE CHEF DE LA CIRCONSCRIPTION DE MAROUA EN 1938, ON EN TROUVE ENVIRON UNE CINQUANTAINES DANS CHAQUE CANTON. ILS AVANCENT L'ARGUMENT SELON LEQUEL ILS NE FONT QUE TRAVERSER LE PAYS AVEC LEURS TROUPEAUX⁴⁵.

PAR AILLEURS, DANS UN CADRE STRICTEMENT TRADITIONNEL OU RELIGIEUX, C. DURAND RELÈVE QUE L'ÉLEVEUR PAIE MOINS FACILEMENT SA ZAKKAT QUE LE CULTIVATEUR ET CHERCHE ASSEZ SYSTÉMATIQUEMENT À S'Y SOUSTRAIRE. CETTE FÂCHEUSE TENDANCE SE PERPÉTUE AVEC LA CRÉATION PAR L'AUTORITÉ COLONIALE FRANÇAISE DE LA TAXE SUR LE BÉTAIL⁴⁶. DANS LES ANNÉES 1930, AU FORT DE LA CRISE ÉCONOMIQUE, LA TENDANCE DES ÉLEVEURS À SE RAVIR À LA CAPITATION ET À

⁴⁴ Pour plus de détails à ce sujet, lire Saïbou Issa, 2001, « Conflits et problèmes de sécurité aux abords sud du lac Tchad. Dimension historique (XVIe – XXe siècle) », Thèse de Doctorat Ph.D, Université de Yaoundé I, pp.182-185.

⁴⁵ APM, C. 1938- III, 1.1, Lettre du Chef de Circonscription de Maroua à M. le Commissaire de la République (25 février 1932), p.4.

⁴⁶ C. Durand., 1995, *Fiscalité et politique : les redevances coutumières au Tchad. 1900-1956*, Paris, L'Harmattan, p.12.

LA TAXE DE PACAGE OU TAXE BÉTAIL S'AMPLIFIE⁴⁷.

UNE ANALYSE PLUS SÉRIEUSE DES FAITS LIÉS À LA SOUSTRACTION DU BÉTAIL À L'IMPOSITION LAISSE APPARAÎTRE UNE STRATÉGIE DE DISSIMULATION DÉVELOPPÉE PAR LES ÉLEVEURS NOMADES. IL S'AGIT NOTAMMENT DU SÉJOUR PROLONGÉ AU PÂTURAGE AFIN D'ÉCHAPPER À LA PÉRIODE DE RECENSEMENT. CE QUI SE TRADUIT PAR DES STATISTIQUES APPROXIMATIVES DE BÉTAIL TENUES PAR LES SERVICES D'ÉLEVAGE. DANS UNE ÉTUDE MENÉE PAR FRÉCHOU, IL EST CLAIREMENT RÉVÉLÉ QUE LES EFFECTIFS BOVINS, EN DÉPIT D'UNE NETTE AUGMENTATION ENTRE 1930 ET 1948 DU FAIT DES SUCCÈS DE LA LUTTE CONTRE LA PESTE BOVINE, CONNAISSENT NÉANMOINS PAR LA SUITE DES OSCILLATIONS REMARQUABLES. CETTE SITUATION S'EXPLIQUE PAR DES MIGRATIONS SAISONNIÈRES EFFECTUÉES PAR LES ARABES CHOA EN DIRECTION DU TCHAD ET DU NIGERIA. DE 1942 À 1944 ET DE 1952 À 1954, LES EXODES DE BÉTAIL SONT LIÉS À L'AUGMENTATION DU TARIF DES IMPÔTS. IL FAUT EN EFFET SOULIGNER AVEC FRÉCHOU QUE LE FACTEUR IMPÔT OU TAXE SUR LE BÉTAIL SERT DE MESURE D'INTENSITÉ DE CES EXODES. UNE FORTE AUGMENTATION DES TARIFS DE LA TAXE SUR LE BÉTAIL DANS UN PAYS (TCHAD, CAMEROUN OU NIGERIA) PROVOQUE SANS CONTESTE UNE ÉMIGRATION D'ÉLEVEURS⁴⁸.

DANS SA LECTURE DU PHÉNOMÈNE D'EXODE QUI PRENAIT DES ALLURES INQUIÉTANTES, LANGLOIS, COMMANDANT LA RÉGION NORD DU CAMEROUN SOULIGNE DANS UN RAPPORT:

JE N'AI CONSTATÉ DE MOUVEMENT DE QUELQUE IMPORTANCE VERS LE NIGERIA QU'EN CAS DE MAUVAISE ADMINISTRATION INDIGÈNE, QUAND LE SULTAN ET LES CHEFS DE CANTON COMMETTENT DES EXACTIONS. ET GÉNÉRALEMENT LES INDIGÈNES REVENAIENT DÈS QUE LE CHEF COUPABLE ÉTAIT REMPLACÉ. [...] QUOIQUE LA PARTIE DU CAMEROUN RATTACHÉE À LA NIGERIA SOIT DÉGREVÉE PAR RAPPORT AU RESTE DE LA NIGERIA, NOS TAXES DE CAPITATION ET SUR LE BÉTAIL NE SONT PAS DE NATURE À PROVOQUER LE DÉPART DE NOS INDIGÈNES. TOUT AU CONTRAIRE, LES POPULATIONS KIRDIS ET LE BÉTAIL SONT MOINS IMPOSÉS⁴⁹.

CES PROPOS BIEN QU'EMPREINTES DE VÉRITÉ, SEMBLENT MALHEUREUSEMENT MINIMISER CE QUE REPRÉSENTE POUR L'IMPOSABLE LE MOINDRE DÉGRÈVEMENT DES TAUX D'IMPOSITION. OUTRE LES EXACTIONS PERPÉTRÉES PAR LES CHEFS LOCAUX ET LEURS AGENTS, L'ARGUMENT DU POIDS ÉCONOMIQUE DE L'IMPÔT DEMEURE. AUTREMENT, L'ATTRACTION QU'EXERCENT LES RÉGIONS FRONTALIÈRES NE SERAIT PAS

⁴⁷Voir ANY, APA, Compte-rendu de tournée du chef de Circonscription de Maroua. (juin 1934), p.11.

⁴⁸ H.Fréchou., 1963, *L'élevage et le commerce du bétail dans le Nord-Cameroun*, Yaoundé, IRCAM, pp 17-18.

⁴⁹ ANY, Vt 38/17, Rapport du chef de Bataillon (Langlois) commandant le Région Nord à M. le Commissaire de la République. p.1.

LE PLUS SOUVENT LIÉE AUX PÉRIODES DE RECOUVREMENT FISCAL.

SUITE AUX MULTIPLES RAPPORTS FAISANT ÉTAT DES EXODES MASSIFS DES POPULATIONS, LE MINISTRE FRANÇAIS DES COLONIES FIT UNE LECTURE FROIDE ET SANS COMPLAISANCE. POUR LUI EN EFFET, LES DÉPARTS DE POPULATIONS PEUVENT AVOIR DES CAUSES AUTRES QUE CELLES DUES À DES MÉTHODES DÉFECTUEUSES : FAUTES DE COMMANDEMENT LOCAL, EXIGENCES EXCESSIVES DANS LE RECRUTEMENT DE LA MAIN-D'ŒUVRE, FISCALITÉ HORS DE PROPORTION AVEC LES FACULTÉS CONTRIBUTIVES DE LA POPULATION⁵⁰.

C'EST EN ÉTANT CONSCIENTS DE CE QUE LA QUESTION FISCALE REPRÉSENTE UNE POTENTIELLE BOMBE VOIRE UN MOTEUR DES RÉVOLTES SOCIOPOLITIQUES, QUE L'AUTORITÉ MÉTROPOLITAINE DUT RECOMMANDER LA MISE SUR PIED D'UNE FISCALITÉ VOULUE ÉQUITABLE ET L'INSTAURATION D'UNE POLITIQUE DITE D'ATTRACTION.

IV- MESURES FISCALES ET MAÎTRISE DES MIGRATIONS TRANSFRONTALIÈRES

DANS SA PERSPECTIVE DE FAIRE BONNE FIGURE ET AINSI JUGULER LE PHÉNOMÈNE DE MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT DE PLUS EN PLUS CRIARDES AUX FRONTIÈRES AVEC LE NIGÉRIA ET LE TCHAD, L'ADMINISTRATION ENTAME UNE SÉRIE DE CONSULTATIONS. CES DERNIÈRES SONT EN EFFET MENÉES EN DIRECTION DE CEUX QU'ON QUALIFIAIT LES HOMMES DE TERRAIN, OU LES VÉRITABLES MAÎTRES DE L'EMPIRE FRANÇAIS AU CAMEROUN, À SAVOIR LES CHEFS DE SUBDIVISIONS, LES CHEFS DE CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ET LES CHEFS DE RÉGIONS. LA CAMPAGNE OU PROPAGANDE ENTREPRISE À CET EFFET AVAIT POUR AMBITION DE PRÉSENTER LA FRANCE COMME SEULE GARANTE DES INTÉRÊTS DES PEUPLES COLONISÉS. IL S'AVÉRAIT CAPITAL D'ENTREPRENDRE DES MESURES URGENTES, CE D'AUTANT PLUS QUE L'ÉQUILIBRE POLITIQUE DES RÉGIONS FRONTIÈRES PASSAIT PAR LA PRATIQUE D'UNE ADMINISTRATION PRUDENTE, ATTENTIVE AUX RÉACTIONS DE POPULATIONS SOUVENT ÉMOTIVES, PRESQUE TOUJOURS INCOMPLÈTEMENT FIXÉES AU SOL, ET QUI N'HÉSITENT PAS À PASSER D'UN TERRITOIRE DANS L'AUTRE QUAND ELLES PENSENT À Y AVOIR UN QUELCONQUE INTÉRÊT⁵¹.

LA PRÉOCCUPATION MAJEURE ICI SEMBLE ÊTRE DE SOIGNER LA QUALITÉ DU COMMANDEMENT FRANÇAIS, MAIS À Y VOIR DE PLUS PRÈS, ELLE TRADUIT DAVANTAGE

⁵⁰ ANY, APA 10895/A, Lettre du Ministre des Colonies à M. les Gouverneurs généraux de l'AOF et de l'AEF et à M. les Commissaires de la République au Cameroun et au Togo. (25 juin 1935), p.1.

⁵¹ ANY, APA 10952 /A, Rapport politique du Chef de la Circonscription de Ngaoundéré, 24 mars 1934

LA CRAINTE QUASI-PERMANENTE DE L'ADMINISTRATION FRANÇAISE DE VOIR DIMINUER SON AUTORITÉ, LAQUELLE PASSE NOTAMMENT PAR LE CONTRÔLE D'UNE POPULATION NUMÉRIQUEMENT IMPORTANTE. L'UNE DES MESURES QUI S'OFFRAIT À ELLE ET QUI FUT PROPOSÉE PAR LES TÉMOINS DE CES MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT PORTAIENT NOTAMMENT SUR LE NIVELLEMENT DES TAUX D'IMPOSITION, SOIT EN TERME DE RELÈVEMENT OU DE DÉGRÈVEMENT, QUESTION DE LES RENDRE UNIFORMES DE PART ET D'AUTRE DES FRONTIÈRES. L'ADMINISTRATION FRANÇAISE DUT TOUTEFOIS OPTER POUR LA PRUDENCE EN CETTE MATIÈRE. LA CRAINTE ÉTANT QU'UNE MESURE IRRÉFLÉCHIE PARCE QUE PRISE À LA HÂTE POUR RÉSOUDRE UN PROBLÈME D'EXODE NE VIENNE CONFORTER LA PROPENSION À DÉFIER LE CONTRÔLE ADMINISTRATIF PAR DES MOBILITÉS INTEMPESTIVES ET SOUVENT CAPRICIEUSES. C'EST D'AILLEURS CE QUI TRANSPARAÎT DE LA CORRESPONDANCE SUIVANTE:

IL N'EST POINT ENTRÉ DANS MES INTENTIONS D'USER DES PROCÉDÉS TELS QUE CELUI DE FIXER LES CONTRIBUTIONS DES TARIFS INFÉRIEURS À CEUX DES PAYS VOISINS POUR ATTIRER LES POPULATIONS. VOUS ÊTES D'AILLEURS PLUS À RECONNAÎTRE QUE CETTE SITUATION N'A PAS D'INFLUENCE SUR LE MOUVEMENT MIGRATEUR DES INDIGÈNES DU TCHAD VERS LE CAMEROUN⁵².

DANS UN CONTEXTE MARQUÉ PAR LA VOLONTÉ DE S'AFFIRMER TANT PAR L'IMMENSITÉ TERRITORIALE QUE LE DYNAMISME DÉMOGRAPHIQUE, IL ÉTAIT DE BONNE GUERRE QUE CHAQUE ADMINISTRATION TENDE D'AMADOUER LES POPULATIONS, LESQUELLES SONT LE GAGE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT OU DE LA RÉUSSITE DE L'ENTREPRISE ÉCONOMIQUE COLONIALE. LA STRATÉGIE ÉTAIT AINSI D'APPLIQUER UNE POLITIQUE DITE D'ATTRACTION QUI D'AILLEURS NE TENAIT PAS COMPTE DES INTÉRÊTS DES PAYS VOISINS⁵³. C'EST SANS DOUTE DANS UN ÉLAN D'APPEL À LA PRUDENCE QUE LE MINISTRE FRANÇAIS DES COLONIES DUT INTERPELLER LES DIFFÉRENTS PROTAGONISTES EN CES TERMES :

EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA POLITIQUE D'ATTRACTION VERS LES TERRITOIRES QUE J'AI RECOMMANDÉ DE PRATIQUER, VOUS FAITES REMARQUER QUE DES PAYS VOISINS ACCORDENT, PENDANT PLUSIEURS ANNÉES, DES EXEMPTIONS D'IMPÔT AUX INDIGÈNES QUI, VENANT D'UNE COLONIE ÉTRANGÈRE, SE FIXENT CHEZ EUX. VOUS PENSEZ QUE QU'UNE MESURE SEMBLABLE, PRISE AU CAMEROUN, SERAIT SUSCEPTIBLE D'ENTRAÎNER DES RÉSULTATS DANS PLUSIEURS RÉGIONS, EN PARTICULIER CELLE DU LOGONE, OÙ CERTAINS CHEFS DE FAMILLE PEUL OU BORORO, FUYANT LES EXACTIONS DES SULTANS DU BORNOU, CHERCHENT À S'INSTALLER DANS LE DIAMARÉ. ON NE SAURAIT DANS UN PAYS SOUS-MANDAT, INSCRIRE DANS LA RÉGLEMENTATION UN ARTICLE PORTANT QUE LES INDIGÈNES ÉTRANGERS SERAIENT, PENDANT PLUSIEURS ANNÉES, EXEMPTÉES D'IMPÔT, LAISSANT AUX SEULS HABITANTS ORIGINAIRES DU TERRITOIRE, LA CHARGE DES DÉPENSES PUBLIQUES QUI PROFITENT À TOUS. MAIS RIEN N'EMPÊCHERAIT, DANS LA PRATIQUE, L'ADMINISTRATION LOCALE D'ATTENDRE, AVANT DE

⁵² ANY, APA 10904/B, Lettre du Gouverneur du Tchad au Commissaire de la République française au Cameroun, 17 mars 1931.

⁵³ L'objectif visé était souvent d'attirer des populations au mépris des normes frontalières, juste par besoin de main-d'œuvre dynamique.

PORTER UN ÉTRANGER SUR LES RÔLES DE RECOUVREMENT DES CONTRIBUABLES, QU'IL AIT RÉSIDÉ AU CAMEROUN UN MINIMUM DE TEMPS DONT –IL VOUS APPARTIENDRAIT, DANS CHAQUE CAS, DE FIXER⁵⁴.

LES MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT CONSTITUÈRENT AINSI UN CASSE-TÊTE TANT POUR LES AUTORITÉS FRANÇAISES QUE CELLES DU CAMEROUN INDÉPENDANT. EN PLUS DE LA PRÉCARITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET DES TAUX ÉLEVÉS D'IMPÔT, CES MIGRATIONS ÉTAIENT IMPULSÉES PAR UNE SORTE DE DÉSOBÉISSANCE CIVIQUE QUI FAISAIT QUE LE PETIT PRODUCTEUR INCAPABLE DE S'ACQUITTER DE SON IMPÔT DE CAPITATION QUITTE MOMENTANÉMENT SON VILLAGE POUR ALLER S'INSTALLER, GRÂCE À SES RÉSEAUX MULTIPLES, AU NIGERIA POUR REVENIR AU MOMENT OÙ LA PRESSION POUR PAYER L'IMPÔT A BAISSÉ.⁵⁵ IL FAUT INDiquer QUE CERTAINS OPTAIENT POUR UNE MIGRATION DÉFINITIVE, COMME POUR RECHERCHER UN *ELDORADO* FISCAL.

CEPENDANT, À DÉFAUT DE CONTENIR DE FAÇON EFFICACE ET PERMANENTE LES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES TRANSFRONTALIÈRES, L'ADMINISTRATION FRANÇAISE FAVORISA NÉANMOINS LE PEUPLEMENT DES PLAINES AU NOM DE LA POLITIQUE DE DÉCONGESTIONNEMENT DES MONTAGNES SURPEUPLÉES DU MANDARA. CETTE POLITIQUE SERA POURSUIVIE PAR L'ADMINISTRATION DU CAMEROUN INDÉPENDANT, ET CECI TOUJOURS DANS LA PERSPECTIVE D'UN DÉCONGESTIONNEMENT ET D'UNE MISE EN VALEUR DES PLAINES ET VALLÉES DU NORD-CAMEROUN⁵⁶.

P ARALLÈLEMENT À CES OPÉRATIONS, LE NORD-CAMEROUN CONNUT D'IMPORTANTES MOBILITÉS INTERNES DE POPULATIONS EN PROVENANCE SURTOUT DES ZONES MONTAGNEUSES DE MOKOLO-KOZA OU MÉRI (DOUVANGAR, OUAZZAN, DOUROOM). IL FAUT INDiquer QUE CES EXODES DES MONTAGNARDS VERS LA PLAINE ÉTAIENT DÉJÀ INTENSES SOUS LA PÉRIODE FRANÇAISE, MAIS L'ADMINISTRATION NE VIT PAS LA NÉCESSITÉ DE LES ENTRAVER. LA RAISON INVOQUÉE EST QU'ILS PARTICIPAIENT DE LA POLITIQUE DE MISE EN VALEUR DES SOLS PRODUCTIFS DE LA PLAINE⁵⁷.

POUR TOUT DIRE, LA STRICTE APPLICATION DU PACTE COLONIAL A EN PARTIE ÉTÉ À LA BASE DES MIGRATIONS DES POPULATIONS SE SENTANT ABUSÉES, EXPLOITÉES, SPOLIÉES. LA MIGRATION APPARAÎT DÈS LORS COMME UN REFUS DE

⁵⁴ ANY, APA10985/A, Lettre du Ministre des colonies à M le Commissaire de la République française au Cameroun, 21 décembre 1935.

⁵⁵ M. Motazé Akam., 1998, p.44

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp.46-47.

⁵⁷ ANY, APA 10036, Lettre du chef de circonscription de Mokolo à M. le Commissaire de la République (11 mai 1932), p.1.

SOUSSION À UN SYSTÈME D'EXPLOITATION ENTIÈREMENT PROFITABLE À LA MÉTROPOLE. A CELA S'AJOUTENT NOTAMMENT DE NOMBREUX CAS D'EXACTIONS, DE MAUVAIS COMMANDEMENT QUI ONT FINI PAR EXACERBER LES POPULATIONS ET FORGER PLUS OU MOINS UN ESPRIT D'ÉVASION SUR FOND D'INCIVISME OU DE DÉLINQUANCE FISCALE.

CONCLUSION

LES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES SONT DE NOS JOURS UN SÉRIEUX ENJEU DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES. ELLES ONT IMPOSÉ UNE RELECTURE DES QUESTIONS TELLES QUE LA TRANSNATIONALITÉ ET BOUSCULÉ LES CONSIDÉRATIONS DE FRONTIÈRES, DE LIGNES DE DÉMARCATIION. EN DÉPIT DES EFFORTS CONSENTIS POUR LES CONTENIR, LES MIGRATIONS SONT EN PASSE DE DEVENIR UN ÉPIPHÉNOMÈNE. ELLES TRADUISENT EN GÉNÉRAL UN MALAISE SOCIAL, ÉCONOMIQUE, VOIRE CULTUREL. DANS CETTE ÉTUDE, NOUS AVONS MIS EN EXERGUE LE CARACTÈRE POREUX DES FRONTIÈRES CAMEROUNO-NIGERIANE ET TCHADO-CAMEROUNAISE, AINSI QUE LE RÔLE DES PEUPLES TRAIT D'UNION DANS L'AMPLIFICATION DU PHÉNOMÈNE DE MIGRATION TEMPORAIRE OU DÉFINITIVE DES POPULATIONS. LA COMMUNAUTÉ FAMILIALE, LINGUISTIQUE OU CULTURELLE DE FAÇON GLOBALE, CONTINUENT AINSI DE SERVIR DE TREMPLIN À CES MOBILITÉS HUMAINES GÉNÉRALEMENT INCONTRÔLÉES VOIRE INTEMPESTIVES. S'IL EST VRAI QUE POUR PLUSIEURS LES IMMIGRÉS SONT LA MISÈRE DU MONDE, UNE SORTE DE PESTE DONT ON CRAINT L'EFFET DE CONTAGION, IL EST NÉANMOINS AVÉRÉ QUE LES MIGRATIONS SONT UN FAIT DE SOCIÉTÉ PERMANENT. C'EST LE LIEU D'INDIQUER QUE CE PHÉNOMÈNE N'EST PAS CIRCONSCRIT À UNE AIRE GÉOGRAPHIQUE QUELCONQUE. AU CAMEROUN, ON A CONNU AUSSI BIEN DES MIGRATIONS DE LA FAIM QUE DES MIGRATIONS D'IMPÔT. DE PART ET D'AUTRE, IL S'AGIT DE LA RECHERCHE D'UNE SÉCURITÉ SOCIALE OU ÉCONOMIQUE, MAIS AUSSI D'UNE RÉACTION À UN TYPE D'ADMINISTRATION POLITIQUE QU'ON RÉPUGNE. POUR DE NOMBREUSES POPULATIONS DU NORD-CAMEROUN SITUÉES EN BORDURE DES FRONTIÈRES NATIONALES, LA MIGRATION EST UNE STRATÉGIE SURTOUT POUR ÉCHAPPER AUX EXACTIONS DIVERSES, AINSI QU'AUX PRATIQUES FISCALES JUGÉES RIGOUREUSES ET INJUSTES. CETTE STRATÉGIE EST AINSI DEVENUE LE SPORT FAVORI DE CES POPULATIONS QUI BRAVENT PRESQUE CONTINUELLEMENT LES FRONTIÈRES DITES INTANGIBLES, AU MÉPRIS DES PROCÉDURES. LE FAIT EST QUE POUR ELLES, LA FRONTIÈRE ENGAGE CEUX QUI Y CROIENT. ELLE EST LOIN DE SIGNIFIER UNE BARRIÈRE ÉTANCHE, CAR DE PART ET D'AUTRE DE LA FRONTIÈRE, ON RETROUVE LES

MÊMES FAMILLES LINGUISTIQUES ET CULTURELLES, ET MÊME UNE FILIATION DIRECTE. AUSSI POUVONS-NOUS DIRE QUE LES FRONTIÈRES CAMEROUNO-NIGÉRIANE ET TCHADO-CAMEROUNAISE SONT DE VÉRITABLES PASSOIRES QUI ONT PROFITÉ À CEUX QUE LES ETATS DÉNOMMENT LES DÉLINQUANTS FISCAUX, MAIS AUSSI AUX MALFRATS DE TOUTES SORTES. CE QUI POSE L'ÉTERNEL PROBLÈME DE LA SÉCURITÉ TRANSFRONTALIÈRE.

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Colonial migration from French Equatorial Africa to Darfur, c. 1916-1956

The large scale migration of refugees from Chad's post-colonial conflicts into Darfur, has been seen as one of the factors behind the violence of recent years of Darfur, placing pressure on scarce land resources. Yet such migration is not a completely new phenomenon, and nor is the violence associated with it.

In 1924 the *ma'mur* (a Sudanese subordinate official) of Zalingei, described the scene at a *wadi* (dry river bed) on the border of Darfur and Tchad:

many human bones about – one complete corpse lying in the *wadi* which had not been touched by vultures or hyena, several places where corpses had hurriedly been covered over but only a few bones remained in these places (chiefly skull bones) owing to the depredations of hyenas.¹

The victims of this massacre were Salamat Arabs who had tried to cross the border from Tchad to Darfur. There had been two hundred members of the party in total: this was rather a large-scale movement. They had tried to bring four and a half thousand cattle with them. But as they reached the border between Sudan and FEA, they were attacked by Sultan Bakhit of Dar Senyar, in southern Tchad, and his men. Thirty of the Salamat were killed: fifteen hundred of their cattle were taken by the Sultan. The survivors could never gain any restitution for their losses.² A few months later Bakhit was observed tracing migrants near the Wadi Kaja border area, this time with the active co-operation of the French Commandant of Goz Beida and French troops.³ The French administration defended the pursuit of migrants by their chiefs by stating this was a 'well-established custom among the natives living along the frontier'.⁴

Such violence on the Darfur-Tchad border is suggestive of a long history of the state devolving violence to its local allies in this remote border region, a strategy which has persisted to the present day.⁵ This paper will demonstrate the limited extent to which the British and the French exercised direct control over the boundary they had delineated by 1924, a boundary that remained largely undemarcated, with a particular emphasis on the often unregulated flow of people across the boundary. Bureaucratic procedures of control were often a veneer over uncontrolled movement. the colonial administration's capacity for enforcing regular border controls was rather limited. Territorial state sovereignty, with each regime exercising control over a clearly bounded territory and their borders, was never fully achieved here. At times state agents themselves contravened the border in pursuit of criminals or raiders.⁶ Chiefs, sometimes co-opted as border 'policemen' by the state, at other times facilitated 'illegal' migration which allowed them to increase the size of their individual following. British colonial officials turned a blind eye to these breaches of migration control, forced into tacit participation in the African political logic of competition for

¹ Statement of M.A. Effendi Abdel Radi, 8 Mar. 1924, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/7.

² Sudan Intelligence Report 354, Jan. 1924, WO 33/999; Bence-Pembroke, Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 15 Dec. 1925, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/7.

³ Pollen, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 29 Apr. 1924, NRO Darfur 3/1/5

⁴ Commandant, Goz Beida to Governor Darfur 12 Dec. 1929, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/1/2.

⁵ For more examples see Governor Darfur to Resident Dar Masalit, 31 Dec. 1925, NRO Darfur 3/1/5; Dupuis, Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 1 Apr. 1931, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/8.

⁶ For instance, see Lewis, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 20 Jan 1950, FO 867/24.

people, rather than European conceptions of sovereign, controlled territorial boundaries. Nonetheless, regular and predictable appeals by migrants, attempting to gain the protection of the British state against the violence of the French state or its chiefs, demonstrated that state power, even on its margins, could still be a resource to which to appeal.

Official figures kept by the British administration suggest a long-term trend in higher net migration eastwards from FEA to Sudan rather than westwards from Sudan to FEA. Many migrants went east to work on the Gezira cotton scheme in eastern Sudan, in order to earn cash. From 1936, with the decline in cotton prices, increasing numbers also went to work in Ethiopia, often for Italian construction firms.⁷ Many of those moving across the boundary were classed as pilgrims, although they often became difficult to distinguish from economic migrants, as they took work in the areas they moved through, and sometimes settled in these areas. But as well as being pulled east by economic and religious incentives, migrants also told British administrators that they had left Tchad in order to evade the predatory demands of the French colonial state and its chiefs, for labour, cattle and women. Many migrants were Arab pastoralists, not always just temporarily moving across an inconvenient boundary in search of good grazing, but also complaining of their subjection to non-Arab chiefs from outside their own communities.⁸ Migrants re-told similar stories to British officials time after time: as early as 1925 the Governor of Darfur referred to the 'usual grievances' which incoming Arab migrants put to British officials.⁹

These repetitive descriptions became regularized conventions of engagement with the British state by migrants, as well as deeply felt narratives of marginalization and victimhood. In particular, these narratives often draw sharp contrasts between French and British styles of rule. One man said memorably to Pollen, a British Resident in Dar Masalit in 1924 that 'in the *Dar* of the English the poor man can live and the weak are protected'.¹⁰ British officials, rather than demonstrating solidarity with their colonial counterparts across the border, were rather easily persuaded to accept the flattery of migrants, as well as their narratives of victimhood, and often preferred to align themselves with these new potential subjects against the predatory French colonial state. Pollen asserted that NCOs in the French military were to blame for the problems leading to migrations of their subjects: they were 'men of low class', generally stationed in a particular locality longer than their superior officers, and were 'addicted to drink, women, and, I fear, there is no doubt, unnatural vices. The use of children of both sexes and all ages for such purposes is what drives the people to leave the country more than the oppression of the local Sultans.'¹¹ Such a lurid description of the iniquity of French rule was unique, but British officials generally believed, particularly before the late 1930s, that Tchad was the worst governed colony

⁷ M.J. Azevedo, 'Sara Demographic Instability as a Consequence of French Colonial Policy in Chad 1890-1940', Phd thesis, (Duke University, 1975), pp. 229, 233-4.

⁸ For examples see Dupuis, Deputy Governor Darfur to Governor Darfur, 18 Feb. 1925, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/7; Broadbent, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 16 Oct. 1931, NRO Darfur 3/1/5; Thesiger 'Report on Camel Journey through Wadai, Ennedi, Borku and Tibesti', 1938, NRO 2.Darfur Dar Masalit 46/1/3.

⁹ Dupuis, Deputy Governor Darfur to Governor Darfur, 18 Feb. 1925, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/7

¹⁰ Quoted in Pollen, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 23 July 1924, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/1/2.

¹¹ Ibid.

of French Equatorial Africa, and Wadai the worst province within it.¹² Migrants seem to have often been able to exploit the very obvious fractures between these two colonial states, and play off one state against the other, even (or especially) in the midst of great suffering.

Yet not all officials were sympathetic to such narratives: some eagerly assisted the French in repatriating 'unauthorised' migrants. 'Unauthorised' migrants were potentially uncontrolled, untaxed and unknown: at times officials felt that the continuous flow of inward migration was 'an obstacle to successful administration'.¹³ This was particularly the case in the early 1930s when economic depression meant there was almost no demand for casual labour, and immigrants were seen simply as an 'embarrassment to Native Administrations'.¹⁴ Moreover, specific requests from the French for the return of listed, named migrants were not easy to ignore.¹⁵ In particular, Arab pastoralists from FEA were at some times seen to present specific challenges for the British administration: the Resident of Dar Masalit remarked in 1930 that

they are continually paying off old scores by slipping back over the frontier to steal cattle; the Sultan cannot arrest them because they have no family obligations and are not known, as are the Masalit; and they bring us our sporadic outbreaks of smallpox.¹⁶

Here the colonial prejudice against pastoralists as disease spreading, uncontrollable peoples is clear; equally from a pastoralist perspective an international boundary was an artificial and alien restriction on economically crucial patterns of movement. But in practice, pastoralist migration, be it temporary seasonal circulation, or more permanent resettlement, was very difficult to control. The Governor of Darfur noted that Arab movements across the border in 1930 and 1931 were

on a very considerable scale; the refugees are exceedingly mobile, and if the same methods are employed against them as against the Dagu and Senyar, considerable armed forces are necessary to prevent their scattering to join kindred tribal organisations in other parts of Darfur.¹⁷

Armed force was not something the Sudan Government could afford to use as a matter of course.¹⁸ Even when groups of migrants were rounded up successfully, they often came back across the frontier soon after their return.¹⁹ And Broadbent noted the limits of the utility of French lists of names in assisting the return of Arabs: 'Their ingenuity in inventing names, tribes and sheikhs is amazing.'²⁰ The complex kin relationships that existed across the international boundary provided one means by which Arab migrants might simply melt into Darfur, and defy colonial attempts at

¹² Governor Darfur note on Pollen correspondence, 8 Sept. 1924, *ibid.*

¹³ Dupuis, Governor Darfur to Commandant Wadai, 29 June 1931, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

¹⁴ Broadbent, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 20 Aug. 1931, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Evans, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor, 22 Sept. 1928, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Broadbent, Acting Resident Dar Masalit to Governor, 25 Oct. 1929, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

¹⁷ Dupuis, Governor Darfur to Commandant Wadai, 29 Jun. 1931, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

¹⁸ Although there are examples of mounted infantry troops being used to repatriate migrants: see Dupuis, Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 1 Apr. 1931, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/8.

¹⁹ Grigg, Resident Zalingei to Governor Darfur, 16 Mar. 1930, 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/8.

²⁰ Broadbent, Resident to Governor Darfur, 16 Oct. 1931, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

return. Some administrators decided to work with the flow of pastoralist movement, rather than try to prevent it: Moore decided in 1944 with his French counterpart that the Zaghawa should be left to 'come and go as seasons, economics and family affairs directed'.²¹

Indeed, the most obvious cases of coercive measures carried out by British officials to return migrants are from sedentary areas of the border zone, where it was perhaps more straightforward to identify and locate migrant groups. In 1929 ten villages in the Masalit dominated zone of the border were burnt by British administrators; in neighbouring Zalingei returnees were 'roped or put in *shaibas*' (forked tree trunks fixed around the neck of returnees as restraints).²² Yet even the most rigid and ambitious DCs were ultimately defeated by the sheer length and permeability of the border.

Philip Broadbent, Resident of Dar Masalit in the early 1930s, wrote to his French counterpart that in 1933 'after three years of chasing refugees I have taken a well earned holiday.' After repeatedly trying to round up migrants, only for them to escape from the police on the way back to Tchad, or simply to later move back into Darfur, Broadbent was convinced of the futility of such efforts, directed against either sedentary or pastoralist migrants. He reminded his French colleague that Adre and Geneina, border towns on either side of the boundary, were 'economic centres for both grain and labour and sale of cattle'.²³ Therefore, large-scale continuous cross-border movement was inevitable, and its complete regulation was impossible. Dupuis, as Governor of Darfur, wrote to the Lieutenant Governor of Tchad that for large parts of the border's length 'our frontier offers no obstacle to penetration', that there were 'few and widely scattered frontier posts' and that 'the majority of immigrants obtain no permit' to enter Sudan.²⁴ Despite periodic and forceful coercive interventions by particular British officials, it seems clear that in general administrators were well aware of and resigned to the limits of their control of this lengthy frontier.

Historians of Africa have sometimes emphasised the mobility of peoples in the pre-colonial period, and the capacity of disgruntled subjects to move away from the authority of their leaders with relative ease, in comparison to a colonial system which confined and compartmentalized African societies.²⁵ But the relatively uncontrolled migration from Tchad to Darfur suggests that here there was less of a rupture between the pre-colonial and colonial periods in this respect than has often been suggested. Policy set at the highest level made it clear that the British colonial state was only paying lip-service to European norms of territorial sovereignty in order to avoid diplomatic embarrassment: officials would 'honour the principle, and in practice as the occasion arose, to return parties of refugees to French territory, and so 'keep an end up' in the event of diplomatic representations being made through Quai d'Orsay

²¹ Moore, DC NDD to Governor 18 May 1944, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/9.

²² Evans, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 12 June 1929, *ibid.*; Grigg, Resident Zalingei to Governor Darfur, 7 Jan., 1929, 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/8.

²³ Broadbent, Resident Dar Masalit to Chef Dar Sila, 1 Apr. 1933, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

²⁴ Dupuis, Governor Darfur to Lieutenant-Governor Tchad Colony, 8 July 1928, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

²⁵ See I. Kopytoff, 'The internal African frontier: the reproduction of traditional African societies' in I. Kopytoff (ed.), *The African frontier: the reproduction of traditional African societies* (Bloomington, 1987), pp. 6-7; Mamdani, *Citizen*, p. 140, 166, *passim*.

and the Foreign Office'.²⁶ Beyond this, administrators saw little advantage in a thorough pursuit of 'return' – rather, it was merely important that 'we avoid any suspicions that we encourage and welcome such immigrants'.²⁷

Of course, chiefs were quite obviously 'encouraging' and 'welcoming' of immigrants. British administrators observed with distinct approval Sultan Endoka's 'warm-hearted' approach to incoming migrants, even in the face of bitter French complaints about the Sultan's behaviour.²⁸ Successive Dar Masalit Residents dismissed any claim that Endoka's behaviour was improper, presenting French complaints in the most ludicrous manner possible:

If a rifle is stolen from Abecher the Resident immediately receives a letter saying that it is reported from a reliable source that the rifle is in the Sultan's house and its subsequent discovery in the neighbourhood of Abecher itself does nothing to remedy the idea. If a party of Arabs are forced by exactions of which they cannot complain, to run away, the Sultan is first accused of having sent emissaries to encourage them to come over and then when the Masalit on both sides of the border gather to loot their animals, of sending an armed party to facilitate their entry into Sudan territory.²⁹

Even the Governor of Darfur defended Endoka from some of the more embarrassing suggestions of the French. Some officials in Tchad believed that Endoka offered 'three years immunity from taxation as an inducement to immigrants' but Dupuis suggested this 'to be a distortion of the fact that in Dar Masalit, as in nearly all districts of Darfur, the assessment of taxation is carried out triennially'.³⁰ This rather generous assessment of the situation, and Endoka's effective protection by his administrative patrons, was also ensured by his ability to return unauthorized migrants when specifically prompted by British officials. Even this was a partial performance: it was noted that 'the Sultan produced Shottia and Mahamid (Arabs) with consummate ease but has rather a weak memory for cases involving Masalati'.³¹ One of the Residents noted of Endoka's discouragement of immigration that 'where French Masalit subjects were concerned such discouragement could scarcely be expected to be successful or whole-hearted.' Moreover, Endoka used colonial moral discourse to present creative justifications for his accumulation of subjects. When the French claimed that Endoka was 'propagandizing' among the Daju of Tchad, promoting emigration into his *dar*, he denied this to the British, saying that in fact the Daju who fled into Dar Masalit and asked him for employment were slaves fleeing their masters, behaving as any slaves did within Sudan territory in order to escape the influence of their oppressors.³²

Endoka benefited from and partially determined the permissive aspects of British policy towards immigration from Chad: he accumulated further wealth in people

²⁶ Note on discussion between Governor General, Governor Darfur and Resident Dar Masalit, 26 Nov. 1928, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

²⁷ Dupuis, Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 30 Oct. 1928, *ibid*.

²⁸ Annual Report Dar Masalit, 1938, NRO Darfur 1/34/175.

²⁹ Annual Report on Dar Masalit 1930, *ibid*.

³⁰ Dupuis, Governor Darfur to Commandant Wadai, 29 June 1931, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

³¹ Assistant Resident to Governor Darfur, 13 Sept. 1929, *ibid*.

³² Broadbent, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 20 Sept. 1931, *ibid*.

throughout the colonial period. He was not alone in benefiting from the limits of state control over border movement. At the micro-level, sheikhs were also clearly expanding their followings with new migrants. Broadbent wrote in irritation in 1931 that '*sheikhs* of villages should not grant cultivation areas, and *sheikhs* of town quarters should not grant tax-free residence to French subjects who are evading their fiscal obligations'.³³ Conversely, chiefs might also benefit from their role as boundary policemen, confiscating cattle from people grazing across the boundary, even if they had paid 'customary' dues to the chief to gain access to the land.³⁴ And the example at the beginning of this section demonstrated the potential for chiefs to violently accumulate cattle when pursuing migrating subjects.

Regulatory pluralism in the borderland

Control of this colonial border might therefore be regarded as dependent on all sorts of exceptions, with chiefs deciding how, when and if to police the line, depending on their own personal interests. This seems a good example of personalized, non-rule-bound political culture. Yet chiefs also appropriated the formal order of the state in establishing this apparently informal control.³⁵ For example, in 1931 the colonial states discovered that the Sultan of Dar Daju in Tchad had written to the Emir of Zalingei in Darfur across the border using the official French seal in his correspondence (without authorization), discussing questions of migration.³⁶ Border chiefs sometimes seized the goods of passers-by in the name of anti-smuggling restrictions.³⁷ The language of state sovereignty could be employed by Darfuri chiefs to gain support from British officials against the incursions of French state agents: a *melik* of Dar Masalit reportedly told a French officer pursuing refugees that he was 'in Sudan territory without right' before beating his war drums and intimidating the officer into retreat. Endoka supported his *melik*, saying to his Resident that the French had 'entered the boundary without reason'.³⁸

This mimicry of state forms and discourse in conducting relations between chiefs and between chiefs and state agents reveals how state power could be claimed as a resource by individuals who operated on the border between 'formal' and 'informal' spheres of authority.³⁹ Chiefs also came to agreements between themselves, establishing what became 'customary' norms for border-crossing which were then approved by the state: the informal was recognized by the formal. In 1926 Endoka and the Sultan of Dar Daju in Tchad 'of their own accord proposed that cultivation across the border should be allowed to private individuals who behaved themselves, were not infringing local rights and were willing to pay a tithe to the local authorities'.⁴⁰ But in other cases, the state was kept at a distance from the practices of chiefs, a sphere of regulation emerging outside the view or control of the state. For

³³ Broadbent, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 13 Sept 1929, *ibid.*

³⁴ DPMD, July 1944, NRO CIVSEC(1) 57/21/79.

³⁵ This analysis is close to von Trotha's suggestion that chiefs operate within an 'intermediary order', between 'state' and 'local' orders, but suggests rather more that the behaviour of chiefs in border zones at least, are more characterised by a conception of hybrid order, providing a stronger sense of the blurring of the boundaries between 'formal' and 'informal'. Von Trotha, 'Chieftaincy', p. 82.

³⁶ DC Zalingei to Governor Darfur, 31 Jan. 1931, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/1/2.

³⁷ Acting Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 25 Oct. 1929, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

³⁸ Evans, Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 27 Aug. 1928, *ibid.*

³⁹ Cf. Das and Poole, 'Margins', p. 23.

⁴⁰ Arkell, Acting Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 28 June 1926, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/1/2.

instance, chiefs might set up their own parallel systems of customs dues to that of the state, payable by those bringing goods across the border, and thus blur the boundary between formal and informal trade: traders might pay dues either to state agents, or to chiefs who were closely attached to, yet still separate from the formal sphere.⁴¹ Chiefs in Tchad also regularly gave letters of recommendation to those labelled ‘smugglers’ by the French colonial state, letters addressed to chiefs in Darfur, which guaranteed the trader access to the Darfuri market.⁴² Attempts by the French to force these traders to obtain *laisser-passers* directly from French officials were undermined by lack of co-operation from officials in Darfur. Broadbent wrote to his French counterpart

You must recognize that there does exist an enormous trade in cattle and mares, and it is the fault of your antiquated customs regulations that our respective Natives have to carry on their commerce by stealth. Your own Sultan Mustafa sends his cattle to Geneina for sale.⁴³

British officials took a permissive approach to this ‘unofficial’ trade, suggesting a reluctance to undermine this profitable ‘informal’ economy.

The borderland order imposed by chiefs, often functioning independently of formal state control yet also drawing on the symbolism and indeed sometimes the authorization or tacit consent of state power, was perhaps partially undermined in the later years of colonial rule by the increasing bureaucratization of border control. By the late 1940s a separate Passport Control Office had been established in Geneina, close to which the British oversaw ‘the annual incarceration of some 10,000 foreigners in a cluster of broken-down shelters at Dissa from periods from 2 to 21 days depending on the ability of staff to cope with documents’.⁴⁴ In the 1950s frontier posts, staffed with police and medical quarantine officials, were also established along the Dar Masalit-Tchad border, the course of which had been so scantily controlled previously.⁴⁵ In Northern Darfur, the liberal approach to pastoralist migration adopted by Guy Moore, was replaced by a system whereby crossing the border without a permit signed by a senior chief was made a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment.⁴⁶ Yet these changes were themselves something of a performance attempting to mask the continued ineffectiveness of the colonial state’s control of its border. The ‘broken down shelters’ of Geneina immigration facilities were matched by the poor state of the Passport Control Office itself: ‘the chair used by the passports officer is very clumsy and unless one keeps his balance he falls to the ground many times a day’. More seriously, the office itself, set away from the town, was simply ignored by many of those crossing the border. Many of those who were held in the shelters at Dissa subsequently evaded police control and ‘concealed’ themselves in Geneina with friends and family.⁴⁷ And the new frontier posts were not working as hoped: in 1953 ‘yet another case of highway robbery by a policeman on the Adre road

⁴¹ Acting Resident Dar Masalit to Governor Darfur, 25 Oct. 1929, NRO Darfur 3/1/5.

⁴² Bret, Chef Dar Sila to Resident Dar Masalit, 22 Mar. 1933, *ibid*.

⁴³ Broadbent, Resident Dar Masalit to Chef Dar Sila, 1 Apr. 1933, *ibid*.

⁴⁴ Annual Report Dar Masalit 1952-3, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 47/9/33; Annual Report Dar Masalit 1953-4, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 47/9/34.

⁴⁵ Dar Masalit Annual Report 1952-3, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 47/9/33.

⁴⁶ Charles, DC NDD to Chef Ennedi, 23 Feb. 1950, 24 June. 1950, and 14 Oct. 1950, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/9.

⁴⁷ Annual Migration Report 1949, NRO Darfur 47/6/29.

was detected'.⁴⁸ Local agents of the state might thus be transformed into local strongmen demonstrating that the 'frontier between the legal and extralegal runs right within the offices and institutions that embody the state'.⁴⁹ The informal and formal spheres of regulation on this border existed both alongside and in reciprocal relationship with each other, even in the final years of colonial rule.

It is striking that the British colonial state in Darfur was relatively untroubled by its inability to control migration, and often allowed local elites a great amount of discretion in managing flows of migrants into Darfur. Even pastoralist groups who were sometimes perceived as particularly unwelcome incomers often managed to evade colonial restrictions. Indeed colonial agents themselves sometimes gave official recognition to pastoralist movement across borders. The colonial state in Darfur was less concerned with imposing European models of territorial sovereignty, or restricting migration than has often been assumed of colonial states more generally. Rather it acquiesced, and perhaps also participated, in the tendency for local chiefs to expand their followings by welcoming unauthorized migrants under their jurisdiction. The increasingly bureaucratic approach towards border controls in the last years of colonial rule modified this approach, but could not consistently impose regularized state control over border crossing.

Moreover, the practices of border governance add further evidence to support the view that the process of state formation in colonial Darfur was characterized by a complex interaction between formal and informal modes of authority, with local elites appropriating and manipulating state discourse and representations of authority, whilst simultaneously concealing significant aspects of borderland governance from state representatives. While, from the perspective of formal bureaucratic control of the border, state authority looks weak in this peripheral zone of the Sudanese state, it is striking that borderlanders sometimes had a very clear sense of the link between political authority and territory. One of the survivors of the 1924 massacre detailed at the beginning of this talk remembered that as his party of migrants crossed the *wadi* that marked the border between FEA and Darfur 'we held rejoicings as we said "now we are in English territory and no one can harm us"'.⁵⁰ Borderlanders could therefore imaginatively construct the border as a real territorial and jurisdictional dividing line, even as state and non-state actors from either side of the line themselves contravened the border, and pursued their authority over people regardless of territorial divisions. Building and contesting this boundary was then always a joint enterprise, with state and local actors exhibiting tendencies in either direction depending on circumstance and interest.⁵¹

Finally, a brief comparison with more recent patterns of migration and the Sudan Government's policy towards migrants is perhaps worth making.

⁴⁸ Dar Masalit Annual Report 1953-4, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 47/9/34.

⁴⁹ Das and Poole, 'Margins', p. 14.

⁵⁰ Unnamed survivor quoted in statement of MA Effendi Abdel Radi, 8 Mar. 1924, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 59/3/7.

⁵¹ Cf. Nugent, *Smugglers.*, especially pp. 7-8, 113 for a very similar argument.

**Cross-Border Protest Migrations and Settlements in
Colonial West Africa: The Example of the Western Yoruba
Astride the Nigeria-Dahomey (Benin) Border**

by

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**Cross-Border Protest Migrations and Settlements in
Colonial West Africa: The Example of the Western Yoruba
Astride the Nigeria-Dahomey (Benin) Border¹**

*Anthony I. Asiwaju**

One erroneous image emanating from earlier periods of thinking by outsiders about Africa was that the peoples were stationary: tightly bound to local polities and regarding their neighbours with parochial suspicion. Later reconsideration, apparently inspired by decolonised African historical scholarship and revisionist anthropology, has reversed the old trend and asserted, in the words of Igor Kopytoff (a leading protagonist of the new school), that "contrary to the previously widespread stereotype of sub-Saharan Africa as a continent mired in timeless immobility, its history has emerged to be one of ceaseless flux among {its} population..." and that "population movements, now as in the past, have been brought about by famine, civil wars, ethnic rivalries, despotic regimes and conflicts between polities" (Kopytoff, 1987),

Mobility has been especially emphasised in demographic literature as the heart of strategies for responding to drought. It has, for example, been argued statistically (Hill, 1988) that such ecological disaster have resulted in less losses of life and livestock in the pre-colonial than the colonial and post-colonial period, precisely because of the enormous potentials for mobility in the earlier rather than later phases of history when both human and stock movements became restricted by modern state territories and boundaries.

In the last two decades or so, the theme of mobility in African history has come so much alive and has been brought under a much sharper focus and a world-wide attention by what has been presented as unprecedented mass of refugees and refugee movements, thanks to the ever increasing hiddcnis uf armed conflicts within and across many an African state frontier and the Panasonic coverage provided by modern electronic media, particularly the television. However, these modern developments have tended to becloud antecedents, thus underscoring the need to put the events in proper historical perspective.

This presentation, on cross-boundary protest migrations and settlements in the era of European colonial rule, is aimed at drawing attention to the colonial antecedents of the refugee category of migrations. In Africa, during the colonial period, this form of migration was quite widespread, especially from the French to the British sides of the mostly Anglo-French colonial boundaries in West Africa. The essay is hooked on and draws heavily from the writer's older works, notably the case study of the Western Yoruba in French Dahomey and similar examples in the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta (Asiwaju 1976a and 1976b).

The paper revisits the experience of the Yoruba-speaking peoples astride the former Anglo-French (now international) boundary between Nigeria and former French colony of Dahomey (now Republic of Benin), in light of a research update based on recently recorded eye-witness accounts of the origin and growth of Oke-Agbede/Moriwi² one of the major settlements that resulted from the events of the colonial period and now a rapidly growing border-boom rural community with a

strategic location in present-day Imeko-Afon Local Government Area of Ogun State in the Federal Republic of Nigeria³.

The essay is in five sections. Section 1, consisting of this Summary Introduction, is immediately followed by Section II, Theoretical Perspective and Wider Regional Contexts, aimed at indicating the conceptual framework and wider geographical contexts in which to situate the Yoruba case study briefly outlined in Section III. In Section. IV, Evolution of Oke-Agbede/Moriwi, the history of a specific settlement is sketched to illustrate the mode of insertion of refugees, who moved from the French side of Western Yorubaland to the British side in the colonial period, and their growth and development as a typical Nigerian border region community. Section V, Conclusion, comprises some general remarks and reflections which not only emphasise the need for today's managers of African refugees to be aware of the historical antecedents of the problems they are handling; the mode of insertion of the refugees and the evolution of their community ever since also provide us with one of the most telling illustrations of the continuous nature of what Kopytoff, our theoretical guide, has called "the reproduction of traditional African societies."

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND WIDER REGIONAL CONTEXTS

In presenting the Yoruba case, it is important to bear in mind both the wider geographical contexts and deeper historical roots of the phenomenon of cross-boundary protest migrations. With regards to history, it is, for example, important to remember that the protest migrations of the era of European rule in Africa were,

essentially, a continuation of the tradition of politically motivated migrations of the preceding epochs. From time immemorial, as Kopytoff has authoritatively and convincingly detailed (Kopytoff, 1987), politically motivated migrations from areas of jurisdiction of established states, in protest against establishment, constitute the focus of the traditions of origin of several pre-colonial state societies. Having brilliantly critiqued Jackson Turner's original formulation (as has been applied first to the history of the United States and, subsequently, such other White Settler state societies as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Latin America and Apartheid South Africa), Kopytoff has successfully argued for an adaptation and application of the "frontier" theory as an appropriate tool for analysing African culture history.

While we cannot go into all the details, which interested readers can easily find in the book-length "Introduction" to Kopytoff's classic, *The African Frontier*, it is essential to draw attention to two features of Kopytoff's reformulation and adaptation of Jackson Turner's original formulation. One is that the scale be reduced, from the level of macro-size immigrations of peoples from one continent or sub-continent forcefully moving in to 'colonize'¹ lands and peoples of another continent or sub-continent, to relatively local movements attracted by "frontiers" within regions and sub-regions. The second feature, arising from the essentially local nature of the colonisation movement or process in African indigenous culture and culture history, is the relative absence of 'moral' questions which arise from Jackson Turner's category where the colonisations were undertakings by racially and culturally different peoples. The fact of the identity of culture, as between the "colonizer" and the "colonized" or the

displacing and the displaced, so much the feature of African culture history, are known to have facilitated the process or mode of insertion of immigrants and mediated or mitigated the pains on the 'host' communities.

Western Yorubaland, partitioned between the French and the British by reason of the Anglo-French Agreement of 10 August 1889, has been described appropriately as a typical "African frontier." (Asiwaju, 1999). Featuring mostly small-scale and loosely organised chiefdoms of relatively recent formations at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the area, stretching from the Ogun to Opara rivers in the east and west respectively and with the Yewa river roughly running through the middle in a general north-south direction, became a 'frontier' for the competitive expansion of neighbouring "mature" state societies, notably ancient Dahome, moving in from the west; and Abeokuta moving in from the east.

So sandwiched between their more powerful and hostile neighbours, the Western Yoruba groups could only welcome the European colonialists as their "Liberators": the French who conquered Dahomey in 1892, banished the king in 1894 and signed a series of protectorate treaties with the groups situated west of the boundary delineated by the 1889 Anglo-French Agreement; and the British who not only declared their protectorates over the various communities in their portion of Western Yorubaland in 1891-1894 but also, conscious of the peoples' desire to be free from their Egba imperialist oppressors based in Abeokuta, arranged for an internal boundary, (the so-called Egba-Egbado boundary) that separated the British

part of Western Yorubaland from the Egba.

As would be seen in Section V, this 'frontier' situation could not have disappeared with the onset of European colonialism, the French in Dahomey and the British in Nigeria. Indeed, on the Nigeria side of the inter-colonial, later international, boundary, the 'frontier' situation may be said to have been accentuated. As has been argued more elaborately elsewhere (Asiwaju, 1970, 1976a and 1999), the Nigerian side of Western Yorubaland was so much a type of political vacuum that, unlike neighbouring parts of Yorubaland in Ogun State, especially the Egba and the Ijebu, the area lacked a centralised chieftaincy or paramount ruler to which other head-chiefs could defer.

Moreover, the localities in the proximity of the border were so sparsely populated to justify the creation of forest reserves and border wildernesses north and south of Imeko in the 1920s. It is significant that one of the choice locations for the colonial refugees fleeing from French Dahomey was the western edge of the Oha Forest Reserve, north of Imeko. The fact, so typical of other cross-border protest migrations and refugee movements, that the Yoruba crossing from French Dahomey share exactly the same culture and even kinship ties with host communities on the British side has also facilitated the refugees' initial insertion and subsequent growth and development as borderland communities. Apart from the context of deeper and wider historical roots, the other larger canvass in which to situate the Yoruba case is geographical. In this respect, we need to keep in mind the fact of a widespread

occurrence of cross-boundary protest migrations in the colonial period, notably from the French to the British sides of the mostly Anglo-French boundaries of West Africa up to 1945, for virtually the same reasons, and in more or less the same manner (Asiwaju, 1977).

In French West Africa, emigrations, as an expression of revolt against what subject peoples perceived as an extremely repressive regime, were a widespread phenomenon. Since the primary objective, everywhere, was to escape from the socio-political difficulties generated by French rule, the incidents were especially remarkable among communities situated along or sufficiently close to the inter-colonial boundaries, most of which the French shared with the British and beyond which relatively quiet conditions were seen to have prevailed. Apart from the strategic advantage of identical cultures and kinship ties across the borders, the largely conceptual nature and character of these boundaries meant that human mobility suffered no serious obstacles and was, in fact, facilitated. For peoples located far away from such boundaries, armed revolts and ideological protests (e.g. mahdism and other forms of messianic movements) were the alternative models of response to the same set of factors which provoked the exodus of vivisected subject populations.

There were protest emigrations from Senegal and French Guinea into the Gambia. From the French Guinea during the same period, large numbers of Mende-speaking peoples also crossed into Sierra Leone. In Cote d'Ivoire, which from 1936 to

1947 included the area of present-day Republic of Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), the exodus mainly into Gold Coast (now Ghana) involved not only Southern ethnic groups such as the Sanwi and the Affemas in the *Cercle d'Assinie*. The massive 'walk-out' on the French administrations in the areas now comprised of the republics of Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso also extended over the then *Cercles* of Indenie, Bondoukou, Ouagadougou, Kedougou, Kaya, Dendougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, Tenkodogo, Gaoua and Batie. The exodus involved several ethnic groups. In Cote d'Ivoire and adjacent territory to the North, the groups involved included the Baoule, the Agni, the Abron, the Kulango, the Lobi, the Mossi, the Koussassi, the Dagari and the Dioula. As has been shown in case studies (Thorn, 1970 and 1975; and Miles, 1994), the anti-French exodus did not leave out the Hausa and the Tuareg who moved in from areas of present-day Southern Niger into adjacent border areas of Northern Nigeria. The Kanuri in Chad were also involved in protest emigration into the midst of their kinsmen in North-eastern Nigeria (See Adefuye, 1985).

While the emphases may vary from one case to another, the universality of the factors which *pushed* subject populations out of the areas of French jurisdiction and *pulled* them to the British sides of the Anglo-French boundaries in colonial West Africa, has been aptly summarised in the remarkably honest and authoritative view of J.V. Vollenhoven, then Governor-General of French West Africa. He observed in 1917, with a particular reference to Ihc incidents in Cote d'Ivoire:

...L'autre cote de cette frontier (i.e. the British side of the Ivory Coast-Gold Coast border) purement conventionnelle c'est la liberte presque complete, c'est la vie traditionnelle peu modifiee du fait de l'intervention britannique...de ce cote' (i.e. the French side) au contraire l'autorite des chefs est meconnue ou annihilee par une ingerence constant de l'autorite francaise ... notre administration s'est fait tracassiere et tatillonne, elle intervient dans les plus pelils actes de la vie; des re"glemientations compliquees genent ceux qu'elles pre"tendent proieger; nous exigeons des impels, nous exigeons des prestaions, nous exigeons des soldats. Comment s'etonner que nos sujels... nous quittent pour aller chercher, de l'autre cold de la frontiere, une tranquillite que nous n'avons pas su ou pu leur donner⁴ ? ».

This rich quotation makes it abundantly clear that the factors which pushed people away from French into British territories were burdensome taxation, forced labour, conscription., insensitivity to subject people cultures, especially their cherished age-old chieftaincy institutions, repressive 'native administration', especially the application of the notorious "indigenat regime", and a general "derigisme". The British sphere everywhere proved to be an irresistible attraction either because of the sharp contrasts as in respect of a virtual absence of the policy of conscription, and the indigenat regime, the most important factors in every case of the exodus, or significant differences as were noticeable in such other policies as related to taxation, forced labour, and 'native' administration with special reference to chieftaincy institutions. These differences added to an over-all liberalism which made British rule relatively 'mild' on subject peoples.

One direct consequence of the exodus was the significant and lasting impact on the demography and settlement pattern in the border areas, In view of the time-scale involved - i.e. the whole of the colonial period up to the post-war reforms which saw to the abolition not only of conscriptive and forced labour but also the notorious

Indigenat regime - the protest migrations led, in many cases, to the establishment of permanent settlements on the British sides of the inter-colonial boundaries; and this has led to the general picture of greater population density on the Anglophone than the Francophone sides of the borders today. Just how important the demographic impact is difficult to measure, in view of the inadequacies of available statistical estimates regarding the volume of the exodus. However, some impression can be gained by the figures offered.

In respect of the cases on the Cote d'Ivoire and Upper Volta, where the exodus was a major problem facing the French (Asiwaju, 1976b), estimates ranged from 12 000 to 18 000 in reference to the events in the Assinie Cercle in 1916-1917. The *emigres* crossed over and settled in the Gold Coast where they became major, if not sole, elements in frontier villages such as Afforenu, Half Assinie, Adukru, Benin, Elubo, Tenosu, Jemma, Gakin and Yakasi. In the 1920s and 1930s, the exodus into the Gold Coast was estimated at between 71 000 and 100 000. In the Gambia, protest migrations from Senegal and French Guinea, provoked by military recruitments during the First World War, were reported to have led to significant rises in the local population from 147 000 in 1912 to 153 933 in 1915 and 186 633 in 1918. Needless to say, the demographic impacts have also led to greater economic activities on the British side.

THE WESTERN YORUBA CASE

The Yoruba do not need introduction, in view of the rich literature on them as one of Africa's best known culturally homogeneous groups (Baldwins, 1976 and Asiwaju, 1983). What needs to be emphasised is their status as one of the region's vivisected ethnic groups, created by the colonial partition of the extensive culture area concentrated in what became south-western Nigeria but with substantial extended communities in south-eastern parts of French Dahomey and central parts of the adjacent German Togo, subsequently absorbed by the French following the defeat of Germany in the First World War.

The focus of this presentation is on Western Yoruba sub-groups whose homelands lay directly on the path of the Nigeria-Dahomey border arranged by the British and the French at the turn of the nineteenth century. As has been more extensively discussed elsewhere (1976a), there were five principal subgroups so directly impacted; from north to south, these are the Sabe, the Ketu, the Ije or Oho-Ije ("Holli" or "Hollidge" in French records), the Ifonyin, and the Anago of Itakete (Sakete in French documents). The distinctions are based not only on the separate dialects of the Yoruba spoken, each sector also corresponds to the spheres of the different kingdoms into which the area was organized; Ketu and Sabe have been especially documented as two ancient Yoruba kingdoms directly affected by the Anglo-French partition whereby the former metropolitan provinces including the capital(s) were placed under the French while former vassal communities were situated under the British.

Massive protest emigrations involving whole villages and townships from the French to the British sides of the Nigeria-Dahomey border were common and regular events in Western Yorubaland in the period 1905 through 1945. As elsewhere in colonial West Africa, there are no reliable records to indicate statistically the exact number of the people involved, but that this was considerable is indicated not only in the surviving historical evidence, especially the oral traditions of the local people, but also in observable demographic and settlement patterns that have resulted.

It is, for example, a common place knowledge that, as a result of the emigrations, over fifteen new settlements were founded on the British side, to say nothing of the equally large but inestimable number that were dispersed into existing towns and villages. In Sabe, Ketu, Ije (Oho), Ifonyin and Anago areas on the French side of the border, corresponding ruins of residential quarters in towns and abandoned village sites were pointed out to the writer as vestiges of the emigrations that took place during the colonial period. The historical surveys are confirmed by an independent contemporary geographical assessment of the settlement patterns, as between the Dahomey and the Nigerian sides of the border. The reference here is to the findings by Robin Mills (Mills 1970 and 1973) to the effect that, on the Nigerian side of the international boundary in the late 1960s, there was (as there still is) a markedly abrupt increase in the number of settlements in the space of five miles from the boundary and a contrasting sudden drop in the corresponding zone in Dahomey, now Benin.

Although the series of exodus from the French to the British sides of the inter-colonial boundary in Western Yorubaland were provoked by a combination of locally detestable policies pursued by the French (conscription, forced labour, burdensome taxation, prestation, the Indigenat code, and so on), the cases varied in terms of the emphases in the different localities. In Sahe, where forced labour demands for portage and construction works on the colonial railway system had been causing considerable commotion, as early as February 1914 the French were already complaining that "Les Nagots {another ethnonym for the Yoruba} ... ne veulent pas fournir des tirailleurs. Leur en demander un seul serait s'exposer a les voir tous sans exception passer en Nigeria⁵."

In that month, serious threats of mass emigration to the British sphere were echoed not only in Sabe town itself but also in such outlying towns as Idio, Wogi, Saworo and Kabua. In spite of an appeal made in 1918 to the populations by Oba Momodu, the "chef superieur" or the traditional paramount ruler of Sabe who had just been released from a ten-year penal servitude in Portu Novo on allegations of treasonable interactions with the Alaafin of Oyo in Nigeria, Sabe refugees were already crossing the border into Saki District of Oyo Division in Nigeria; and, by 1945, settlements founded by them on The Nigerian side of The border had included Wasimi, Aiyegun, Galajumo and Jabatu Oke Odo⁶, without counting the *emigres* who settled with kinsmen in such existing towns as Ijio, Oke-Iho, Iganna and Saki. The sprawling village of Sabe, mid-way on the road between Iseyin and Saki, owes its foundation to the immigrations directly from the ancestral city of the same name in

French Dahomey.

In Itakete-Ifonyin region, the immediate cause which pushed people out of their ancestral homes in French Dahomey was a combination of administrative repression and a lack of sensitivity to the people's culture pivoted on their traditional chieftaincy institutions. Thus, the first major incident of cross-border emigration was offshoot of an armed rising in Itakete in 1905 when the mass emigrations enlisted the rank and file of the traditional political elite including Oba Agboola, the then monarch. The emigrations from Ifonyin-Ile, mainly in the 1920s, were directly connected with the chieftaincy crisis precipitated by the French, culminating in the deposition of the Elehinodo, the traditional ruler of Ifonyin, in 1925. Thus was founded Ifonyintedo as the Nigerian duplicate of the ancestral town in Dahomey, which it has since dwarfed.

The Olori area was also not left out of the colonial refugee movement. Emigration from Olori area occurred principally during the ruthless military operations effected by the French to crush the Olori revolts, especially those of 1914 through 1915. As a result of the military repression, one of the most annihilating in French West Africa (Asiwaju, 1974), Olori-Ije, the capital of the kingdom, was completely destroyed, given rise to a huge refugee movement into Nigeria and their settlement in several scattered communities including Ibeku, Orisada, Ibayun, Oja-Odan, Ebute-Igboro and other less known villages and hamlets in the border localities of present day Yewa South Local Government area of Ogun State.

In all these waves of the anti-French emigrations on Western Yorubaland, however, there is perhaps none as dramatic as the occurrences in Ketu area; and, here, the most

notorious factor that drove the Ketu out of their homesteads in Dahomey was the French policy of conscription. In consequence, the inhabitants of several residential quarters in Ketu itself evacuated the city and went to live permanently in their villages while several others crossed the bonier in search of safer havens in new and existing settlements in the British sphere. The same reason which drove Ketu town dwellers into village hide-outs in and outside French Dahomey determined the evaluation of such outlying towns as Dinrin, Iltikimu and Iselu, all of which remained evacuated between 1915 and 1945.

Evidence of the characteristic panic which gripped the people at the time of their mass emigration in July 1915 is provided by the fact, indicated in a pertinent administrative report, that they left without being able to take all their valued belongings. Thus, "its ont fait dire a leurs parents de Ketou de venir chercher les moutons et les cabris que, dans leur fuite precipilee, ils n'ont pu enlever⁷."

Although the majority of the people who fled Dinrin, Ilikirnu and Kelu itself eventually returned in the 1940s, only a few of the people who left Iselu ever returned. The length of the troubled times, virtually the period from 1914 to 1945, led to the transformation of the original refugee camps into permanent settlements. Apart from those who swelled the populations of existing towns -notably Imeko, Iwoye, Idofa, Ijoun, Ijaka, Ijale, Egua, Iranjin and Igan-Alade -Ketu immigrants founded a string of new and ever growing settlements on the Nigerian side of the boundary with French Dahomey. These are Tobolo, Ilara, Alagbe, Moyeba, Molumu, Alambasa, Komisini and, Oke-agbede/Moriwi⁸.

EVOLUTION OF OKE-AGBEDE/MORIWI

Oke-Agbede/Moriwi, originally two separate settlements but now a composite community with a combined population of about 10 000 inhabitants, owes its foundation directly and entirely to the exodus which in 1915 resulted in the complete evacuation of the township of Isele. The geopolitical history is of particular interest because of the illustration it provides for Kopytoff's theory of "the African frontier" and the continuous nature of its exploration. The fascination of this local history is additionally derived from its representative character, regarding the mode of insertion of the refugees from French Dahomey and their evolution as Nigerian border communities. Like the other such settlements, the question of identity is a rather complex matter involving a strategic insistence on modern national identification as Nigerians and not Dahomeyans or Beninois, while at the same time remaining Yoruba, Ketu or Sabe as may be required for the full exploration of the border advantage.

Oke-Agbede/Moriwi represents, in the totality of the people's experience, the last or the most recent phase in a long history of migratory movements, often dictated by problems of insecurity and the search for communal safety. Although the long sojourn in Isele and the location in the area of the ancient Yoruba kingdom of Ketu has led to the adoption of the Ketu dialect, the people of Oke-Agbede/Moriwi are, for the most part, ancestrally Sabe, Isele, abandoned by the people to found Oke-Agbede/Moriwi in 1915, was itself a settlement founded in consequence of the destruction of Iwoye, a Sabe-Yoruba town some ten kilometres due north of

Oke-Agbede/Moriwi, by Fulani Jihadists moving in from the north (probably Ilorin) in early nineteenth century. In the 1980s, as a result of the Dahomean invasions of Ketu and Sabe areas, Iselu, like other towns in Western Yorubaland, was destroyed. The town abandoned in 1915 was itself a resettlement that followed the French conquest of Dahome in the early 1890s and the subsequent establishment of French rule.

The point, then, is that, in their decision to evacuate Iselu in 1915 and seek asylum on the British side of the Anglo-French boundary, the founders of Oke-Agbede/Moriwi were guided by the awareness of their history and their established knowledge of the terrain in which they came to found their new home. Indeed, as their oral traditions assert, the site on which Oke-Agbede/Moriwi was located was part of a wider area of wilderness which hunters from Iselu had exploited for its rich games. It is also asserted that, to the extent that the area was part and parcel of Iwoye chieftdom with which they are associated, the refugees cannot be considered as strangers on the land. The movement from Iselu to Oke-Agbede/Moriwi was, therefore, one within the same and familiar homeland, not a foreign territory. Their immediate Nigerian neighbours, the Sabe in Iwoye to the north and the Ketu in Imeko to the south, are communities with whom the settlers in Oke-Agbede/Moriwi have had close and strong historical, ethnic, cultural and kinship affinities.

Needless to say, this geopolitical situation poses unlimited advantage for a painless insertion of the refugees crossing the border. This essentially pacific process of insertion was further facilitated, if not accelerated, by a special policy of reception accorded the refugees by the British administration. For apart from the general

absence on the Nigerian side of the causes of anxiety which drove the people out of the area of French jurisdiction, notably conscription and the Indigenat regime, the British offered the refugees certain irresistible attractions, including a moratorium on tax obligation, leaving the refugees enough time to settle down and produce sufficiently to permit earning enough income to pay the generally less burdensome taxes obtainable in the British side of the border. Native Authorities (i.e. the officially recognised traditional rulers with jurisdictional responsibility for areas settled in by the refugees, notably the Onimeko of Imeko in the area under study) were especially encouraged, if not instructed, to do nothing that would obstruct the inflow of the refugees and the settlement process. Finally, the British tacitly resisted the French diplomatic pressure mounted and sustained throughout the period, for the repatriation of their subjects who crossed into adjacent British territories.

The result today is a fast growing settlement and burgeoning border-boom rural community. Since its inception in 1915, Oke-Agbede/Moriwi has profited maximally both from its rich agricultural land and, more particularly, its location on a most strategic site on the Nigeria-Dahomey (Benin) border. Agriculture has remained the occupation of the vast majority of the people. In the colonial period, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, the agricultural production of the people contributed immensely to the reputation of the area as a cotton-growing region of very special attraction to the then British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA)⁹. Today, the area remains an indispensable food basket, supplying the bulk of the staple food stuffs - yams, cassava products and, most especially, vegetables as well as cattle - for urban markets in Ogun

and the adjacent Lagos States of Nigeria.

However, it is in the intelligent exploitation of the border advantage for business transactions that the fortune of Oke-Agbede/Moriwi as a Nigerian border-town must be seen to reside. Though officially viewed as smuggling, cross-border trade, as practised in the area under focus, has brought fortune (and misfortune too) to a successive generation of practitioners. In the colonial period, the cross-border flows have emphasised European consumer goods, especially alcoholic beverages, tobacco and printed cloths from the Dahomeyun to the Nigerian side, and gunpowder into Dahomey. Hut, in terms of 'boom', no period has been more dramatic in its local impact than the late 1960s through early 1980s when contraband in Nigerian cocoa boosted the fortune of so many individuals and families. Cocoa has since been succeeded by an equally clandestine trade/ in Nigerian petroleum products and the large-scale reexportation of Asian rice and European second-hand vehicles into Nigeria via the autonomous part of Cotonou in the Republic of Benin. The point to note is that, in its participation in cross-border trade over the years, the business community in Oke Agbede/Moriwi has exploited to the fullest advantage their extensive networks of socio-cultural and historical relations across the border and knowledge of the terrain on both sides, bequeathed by the local history.

Oke-Agbede/Moriwi has evolved on Kopytoff's model for the "reproduction of traditional African societies" - in this case, a traditional Yoruba society and, more specifically, a replication of the structure in Iselu, the old settlement vacated on the French side of the Nigeria-Dahomey border to found the new settlement on the British

side. Thus, shortly after its foundation, the government of the new community was carefully constituted: a *baale* or head chief was elected, and so were members of the traditional council that typically reflected a representation of the various constituent quarters, sectors and other interest groups.

Given the historical links with Iwoye, the Sabe-Yoruba chiefdom formerly vassal to the ancient Yoruba kingdom of Sabe with capital placed on the Dahomeyan side of the inter-colonial boundary, the traditional authorities in Oke-Agbede/Moriwi operated as a Sabe-Yoruba sub-system with direct allegiance, not to Ilikimu and Ketu as was the case in Iselu, but to Iwoye. However, since Iwoye itself was, in the heydays of British Indirect Rule on the Nigerian side of the border, an integral part of the Imeko District with the Onimeko (the traditional ruler of Imeko) as the officially recognised local "Native Authority", the Oke-Agbede-Moriwi sub-chiefdom operated as part of the Iwoye sub-sector of the Imeko District. In the post-colonial period, when Iwoye's traditional position was enhanced with the elevation of the head chief from the status of a *baale* to that of an *oba* with an officially sanctioned right to wear a beaded crown, Oke-Agbede/Moriwi, as a major part of the area of the prescribed authority of the new Oba, also gained in status. Distinction within and integration into Nigeria, a major goal of the community project, is evidenced in the fact that the Oba of Iwoye is today a prominent member of the Yewa Traditional Council, a body of the prescribed traditional authorities in the wider area of Western Yorubaland, officially so recognised by the Ogun State Government of Nigeria. It is conceivable that, in the future, the people of Oke-Agbede/Moriwi may consider themselves entitled to the status

of a full-fledged traditional Yoruba town with the position of their head-chief transformed from being a *baale* to becoming an *aba* with a right to wear the culturally coveted beaded crown¹⁰.

While the Nigerian identity was being carefully constructed and cultivated within the framework of an emergent traditional Yoruba society, it was at the level of the local western-educated elite that the process has received the greatest booster. As elsewhere, the incubators were the Western educational institutions, mainly Christian Mission Schools to which youths in the area gained access. Although the first educational institution in the area, the Methodist School, was not open until 1955, earlier enrolments of youths from Oke-Agbede/Moriwi took place in older institutions in Iwoye, Imeko, Abeokuta and Lagos. Of similar importance were the post-primary educational institutions which were at the disposal of indigenes from Oke-Agbede/Moriwi prior to the relatively recent establishments in their own locality. By their associations, naturally more with counterparts on the Nigerian than the Dahomeyan (now Benin) side whose francophone orientation was so different, the local educated elite has functioned as the major locomotive for the promotion of a Nigerian national identity and integration into the larger Nigerian mainstream state society.

Thus, as with the Hausa divided between Nigeria and Niger covered by William Miles excellent case study (Miles, 1994), the people of Oke-Agbede/Moriwi, like the other Western Yoruba communities on the Nigerian side of the border with Dahomey, take their Nigerian national identity more seriously than is often appreciated. While they recognise and intelligently explore their other identities as

Yoruba, Sabe or Ketu, including the transborder linkages, identity as Nigerians is a matter of high strategic importance. It is a tool for the preservation and consolidation of the gains of the history of colonial protest migrations, and one that ensures a continuous protective dissociation with the alternative Dahomeyan national project across the border, perceived by Nigerian border communities as still bearing the main features and heritages of French colonialism and, therefore, generally still less preferable to the relatively liberal system in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This Yoruba case study of refugee movements and settlements in colonial West Africa, situated within the wider canvass of time and space, points to the need for a long-term view of the current problems and the search for solution. Conditions that are productive of refugee movements in Africa today, however large their sizes and number and however dramatic the modern electronic media make of them, are not a monopoly of the post-colonial period. The colonial and pre-colonial antecedents underscore the need for long-term perspective studies. Although the focus is on colonial West Africa, the Oke-Agbede/Moriwi data of the Western Yoruba experience have been presented to emphasize the connections with earlier phases of history of politically motivated migratory movements. It has also been suggested that, in colonial West Africa as in earlier periods of history, such movements generally led to a systematic "reproduction of traditional African societies".

There is a major interrogation on modern management of refugees and refugee movements, based on the acceptance of national framework as defined by inflexible boundaries and applicable rules of international law¹¹ The practice of regarding refugees moving from one side of state boundaries to the other as aliens, based on the definition of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, does not accord with perceptions and treatments known in the earlier phases of history, including the relatively recent colonial past. Forcing refugee to return without the option to settle in areas to which they have moved, contradicts the important lessons of African historical experience.

NOTES

1. * Emeritus Professor of History, University of Lagos, president, African Regional Institute, Imeko, Nigeria. The Original version of paper was first presented at an international colloquium hosted by the Laboratoire SEDET (Sociétés en Développement dans L'Espace et le Temps), Université Paris 7, in 1999, and was included in the book of proceedings, which bears the same title as the originating colloquium: Catherine Coquery- Vidrovitch et al (eds.), 2003, **Être Étranger et Migrant en Afrique au XX^e Siècle: Enjeux identitaires et modes d'insertion** (Paris: L'Harmattan), 360-374
2. Interviews July 25-28, 1996 and April 10, 1999 with surviving eye-witness of the foundation and growth of the settlement: Jerome Alao, aged 101/104 and Karimu Ibitokun, 92/95 at Oke Agbede and Amos Ayinde, 99/102 at Moriwí.
3. The presentation would be illustrated with maps that are not attached here.
4. Archives nationales (Dépôt historique à la Pyramide). Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 1 Mi 25, Microfilms of the French West African Archives in Dakar, Série 3F9: M. le Gouverneur- Général de l'AOF à M. Le Lieutenant- Gouverneur de la Côte d'Ivoire, Dakar 20 October 1917, au sujet de l'exode en Gold Coast Réclamations d'Indigènes p.7), first cited in Asiwaju (1976b), p.1, translated in Asiwaju (1977), p.37
5. Archives nationales du Dahomey, Porto Novo (herewith AND): Savé, Rapport mensuel, avril 1918 first cited in Asiwaju (1976a), p.143.
6. Some of the place-names, "Wasimi" and "Äiyegun" for example, give the settlements up as histories of a search for peace or 'tranquility', or escape from trouble: Wasimi

literally means “Come and rest” while Äiyegun” means “Life is now settled”.

7. AND: 8G 15, OC, L' administrateur au Gouverneur du Dahomey, Zagnanado, 15-7-15 au sujet de recrutement de tirailleurs dans le canton de Ketou.
8. As in Sabe area, many of the place – names in Ketu localities point clearly to the circumstances under which they were founded: **Alagbe** literally means an “aside” or “step aside”, a “keep-off”; **Molumu** and **Moyeba** convey the same meaning – i.e. “dodge away” from trouble, or simply, ‘a refugee’. **Moriwi** means “I have a lot of story to tell or narrate”. The meaning of **Moriwi**, created out of the refugee movement, from Iselu, is further elaborated by a popular folksong rendered at the performance of stilt acrobatic dance; a typical stanza is “Iselu gu’ke o, Farase le’ni, l’a gu’ke odo fere!”, which translates as “The Iselu have crossed over the river bank, ‘The French have chased us out; and we have skipped across the river valley (i.e. the Yewa river which, in the area, marked the inter-colonial boundary) with style!. **Tobolo**, by the way, is a settlement erected by refugees from Aja-speaking communities such as Panku and Isonu near Ketu, who also fled their homes in circumstances similar to those of their Ketu-Yoruba neighbours.
9. The heart of the cotton-growing, which in the colonial era spread the fame of Imeko area for the production of the internationally recognised “Meko Stapple”, was Oke-Agbede/Moriwi. Indeed, the link road between Imeko and Iwoye through Oke-Agbede was originally constructed in the 1920s by the local community with the assistance of the BCGA,(British Cotton Growing Association) mainly to evacuate cotton to the central grading station in Imeko. Hence the road was baptized as “Cotton Road”.

10. The prediction, that the baale of Oke-Agbede or Moriwi might aspire to become an Oba of the community, is predicated on the several precedents in the neighbourhood: Imeko in 1927, Iwoye in 1961 (?); Afon in 1962 (?), Ilara in 1996.

11. For studies of modern refugee problem, see ZOLBERG et al. (1989), NANDA (1989), KORN (1999), COHEN and DENG (1998) and VIRMIN (1992).

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Negotiating Local Protection and Emplacement: The Silent Integration of Refugees on the Zambia-Angolan Borderlands

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Abstract

Over many years, the formal policy of Zambian government has a) required refugees to live in officially recognised settlements and b) offered no route to citizenship for those who enter the country as refugees. For long term refugees such as those from Angola, this appears to be a recipe for keeping people in a precarious position over generations. Nonetheless, many thousands of those who fled the civil war in Angola remained living in Zambian villages in the borderlands far from the settlements and they have effectively acquired citizenship. Drawing on fieldwork over the last 14 years, this paper will explore how the distinctive socio-political conditions in these borderlands have facilitated this 'silent integration' of Angolans, which is only now being belatedly recognised by the state. This can be contrasted with the formal settlements where Angolans have continued to be seen as refugees and the 'solution' of repatriation has been imposed.

Introduction

In this paper, I show how many of the Angolan refugees who moved into Zambia in the 1980s and 90s established a relatively secure and stable position in Zambian villages, largely beyond the reach of any aid interventions or the direct control of the state. Instead, they came under the protection of the local chief, who secured their place as local villagers and even Zambian citizens. While this local integration of refugees has been very effective, it runs counter to the formal policy of the Zambian government, which requires refugees to reside in camps and settlements. Moreover, Zambian law has no legal mechanism for transforming refugees into citizens. I contrast the situation of those Angolans who settled themselves in the borderlands with those who moved into the settlements. Since the war in Angola ended in 2002, the differences have become more stark. Those in the camps and settlements have been subject to extensive repatriation exercises which have seen a large majority of Angolans return. In the villages, many people have moved into Angola, but largely following patterns of movement they have chosen for themselves. For those who want to stay in Zambia, their integration has not been disturbed by the changes in Angola. In the camps and settlements, people continue to be labelled as displaced and subject to the imposition of ‘durable solutions’ in UNHCR parlance.

The paper draws on fieldwork carried out over a fourteen year period. This started in 1996, with a project looking at the prospects for repatriation among these self-settled refugees in Mwinilunga District of Zambia’s North-Western Province. During one year in the field, detailed interviews were conducted with 195 individuals in a village in the area of Senior Chief Kanongesha. These interviews enquired about individual’s history of movement, their links across the border, and their livelihoods. In addition, further interviews, focus group discussions and many other observations explored the wider social, economic and historical landscape. After a prolonged absence during which news of the regions was only available through correspondence, two further field visits were made in 2008 and 2010. In 2008, the time available was very short and it was only possible to conduct a very limited number of interviews. A six week visit in 2010 allowed for a more systematic exercise of re-interviewing original respondents from the 1996-7 round, reaching one quarter of the original group. These repeat interviews, focused on people’s links with Angola, intentions to go there, their livelihoods and ideas of nationality. It is important to note that throughout the research, no distinction was made between Angolans and Zambians; the same questions were asked of all.

In the next section of this paper, I start by setting the scene looking first at the arrival of Angolan refugees in Zambia and the formal policy responses, then narrowing the focus to the case study area in Mwinilunga. The following section starts by defining the concept of integration. It then applies this to the settlement of Angolans into local villages and shows how the refugee category largely dissolved making them virtually indistinguishable to

Zambians, especially to external eyes. I then show how people have moved into Angola since the end of the war leaving those who remained behind more Zambian than ever. This is contrasted to the very limited extent of integration that has been available to refugees in the formal settlements. Instead, they have been kept apart and subject to repeated repatriation exercises over the last eight years. The paper concludes by reflecting on the implications of the successful but silent integration of refugees in the Zambian-Angolan borderlands for the notion of 'durable solutions' to refugee problems.

Angolan refugees in Zambia

Angolan refugees first arrived in post-colonial Zambia in 1966 when an eastern front opened in the liberation war against the Portuguese that had started in 1961. The country had no respite after independence in 1975, when it was gripped by civil war that only ended in March 2002 with the death of Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the UNITA rebels. During these decades of conflict, the movement of people into Zambia ebbed and flowed with the security situation. There were major influxes in the mid-1980s with an escalation of violence in Moxico Province which borders Zambia. This struggle resulted in UNITA taking control of the border area. The numbers of Angolans arriving tailed off in the 1990s as UNITA maintained its grip through the 1992 elections and the resumption of war when Savimbi rejected the election results. The final major influxes started in late 1999 as the Angolan government forces launched a major offensive in the east to drive UNITA out of Jamba, its capital in Cuando Cubango Province, and Moxico Province. The numbers of refugees peaked in the final crescendo of fighting in 2001, when UNHCR estimated that there were over 220,000 Angolan refugees in the country. Throughout this period the majority of refugees settled outside the formal camps and settlements and lived unassisted by UNHCR or any aid agencies. In 2001, only 41% of Angolans in Zambia were receiving aid from UNHCR according to their statistics (UNHCR 2007).

Zambian government responses

When the first refugees from the Angolan independence war arrived in Zambia in 1966 and the Zambian government was faced not only with humanitarian but also major security problems. There were various incidents on the border with Angola, where Portuguese troops entered Zambia. For example, in one incident in Mwinilunga District in October, they set fire to a village and kidnapped a woman.¹ Cabinet papers from 1967 show that the government remained committed to providing support for refugees and meeting their international obligations to provide protection, despite the complaints of some residents that assistance was being given to refugees and Zambians were excluded. However, they were

¹ Telegram report 31/10/1966, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MFA/101/7/3/Loc 514 Incidents on the Zambia Border, Zambian National Archives

concerned about the prospect of increasing numbers of refugees and were already hoping to persuade neighbouring independent states to accept some. Moreover, they were adamant that the refugees should neither be allowed to settle in Zambian villages nor stay permanently in Zambia.

[The Cabinet] agreed that under no circumstances should refugees be permanently settled in Zambia and no impression should be given to them of any prospects of permanent settlement;

agreed that refugees should all live in camps and that they should not be allowed to infiltrate into villages...²

Moreover, they agreed that refugees in the camps should be assigned land to cultivate their own food. This position was formalized in 1969 by Zambia's accession to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, and in 1970 the Refugee (Control) Act entered Zambian law. This law still governs the treatment of refugees within Zambia today. A government department under the Ministry of the Interior was established to deal with refugees headed by the Commissioner for Refugees.

As its name suggests the Refugee (Control) Act is concerned mainly with the control of refugees. It stipulates that any refugee entering Zambia should register with the authorities and carry a refugee identity card at all times. They may be ordered to live in a designated area and are only allowed to move outside that area with written permission. Zambia made reservations to various articles of the UN 1951 Convention³ including Article 26, which governs the freedom of movement of refugees (Chisanga 1996; Wulff 1989). It has also made reservations to Article 34, which obliges contracting states to 'as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees'. The Refugee (Control) Act makes no mention of naturalization of refugees, and the Commissioner for Refugees and immigration officers have consistently stated that there is no provision for refugees to obtain citizenship. This is still the formal position today.

The first two refugee settlements were opened at Mayukwayukwa in Kaoma district of Western Province and Lwatembo near Zambezi in North Western Province. People were rounded up from the villages where they first stayed and sent to these sites. The Lwatembo settlement proved not to be viable and a new settlement was started at Meheba, 80km from Solwezi, the provincial capital of North-Western Province. Up to 1998, Meheba and Mayukwayukwa were the main settlements for Angolan refugees. The former had a population of 25,000 and the latter 4,000 Angolans.

² Cabinet Minutes 28/7/1967 MFA/5/266/01CONF/Part 1/Loc 527, Refugees from Zambia, Zambian National Archives

³ Reservations made to Articles 17(2), 22, 26, 28 and 34.

The situation changed dramatically in late 1999, with the major influxes caused by the renewed fighting in eastern Angola. The population of Angolans in Meheba rose to about 40,000, Mayukwayukwa went up to a peak of 22,000 by 2002. Moreover, with the fall of Jamba – the UNITA headquarters – in late 1999, a new camp, Nangweshi was opened in January 2000 and its population peaked at 24,000. This was set up as a camp rather than a settlement; the people were not assigned land for cultivation and were expected to subsist on food rations. It subsequently declined and was closed in November 2006 through repatriation and the transfer of the population to Mayukwayukwa.

Despite this policy, throughout these decades the official figures suggest that there are as many if not more Angolan refugees in Zambia who have remained outside the camps and settled themselves in Zambian villages or towns.

Self-settled refugees on the Angola-Zambia border

The main focus of the study was on a village was set within the territory of the Lunda Senior Chief Kanongesha in Mwinilunga District. This is an area where large numbers of refugees who fled the war in Angola settled, especially from the early 1980s. The vast majority of Angolans who fled to Kanongesha arrived between 1982 and 1986 as UNITA took control of many parts of Moxico Province, including towns of Cazombo, Calunda, and Lovua. The process of integration and their interest in repatriation were the initial focus of the study (see Bakewell 2000).

While the war in Angolan created a large surge in movement into Zambia, framing the situation as a refugee influx created far too narrow a perspective. These ‘refugee’ movements had to be seen in a broader historical and social context where narrative s and practices of mobility, including cross border mobility, was a part of the backdrop for people’s lives.

The people of the area are predominantly Lunda (Ndembu), an ethnic group that extends across the nearby borders into Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Pritchett 2001; Turner 1957). The history of the Lunda of Mwinilunga and related peoples – the Luvale, Chokwe, Mbunda among others - is one of migration from the court of the Lunda Emperor Mwantiyavwa based in the upper Kasai area of present day DR Congo. The Lunda Empire had largely collapsed by the end of the 19th century, but even today the Mwantiyavwa is still regarded as the Paramount Chief of the Lunda in Zambia. From the 17th to 19th century, in broad terms, one can trace a general drift of population from the west and north into present day Zambia in response to the slave trade (both to catch slaves and avoid being caught) and in the hunt for ivory, beeswax and rubber (For a detailed discussion of pre-colonial trading across the region see von Oppen 1995). Kanongesha was no exception to this pattern.

In the 20th century the establishment of the border added new class of movements which might be termed administrative. The most obvious example of this was in the avoidance of taxation. One of the key roles of the British colonial administrator in Zambia was to collect taxes from the villagers and frequently people ran across the border to avoid registration. When taxation was first introduced there was a mass exodus from Zambia into neighbouring Angola and Congo. Similarly, when the Portuguese introduced their taxes, people moved in the other direction (Pritchett 1990; von Oppen 1995: 432). The imposition by the Portuguese of forced labour on Africans also caused many people to cross into Zambia. This practice continued well into the 1950s and was also cited as reason for people moving into Zambia. People in Kanongesha recalled the harshness of the system whereby they were forced to go and work on roads, bridges, railways and other projects for no wages and even no food.

Every adult had to do forced labour; people would be taken in turn from the village. A group might work once per week or even for a whole month. No pay was given but possibly a cup of salt. The workers had to bring their own food. If people hid in the homes they would be beaten and then forced to work and this caused many people to come to Zambia (interview 5/2/97).

This wider picture of grand migrations and large scale movement described above is reflected in the social organization where allegiance is to lineages rather than land. Individual households, whole villages and headmanships can be relocated following disputes or in search of greater autonomy or better livelihoods. There is also a high level mobility in people's lifecycles, driven by shifting cultivation, matrilineal descent with virilocal marriage means women usually move, often multiple times with divorce, and children are routinely spending extended periods of time with maternal kin. While there is some evidence that residential mobility is declining (Pritchett 2001; Turner 1957), during my fieldwork in Kanongesha, new villages appeared, old ones were abandoned and individuals came and went at a bewildering pace. This offers challenges for research and also provides an important backdrop for any analysis of integration.

Integration of Angolan refugees

While the language of integration is in common usage in debates on migration to the wealthy regions of the world, it is much rarer to hear it used about migration to sub-Saharan African countries (with the exception of South Africa). This seems to reflect the common characterisation of sub-Saharan Africa as sending region. The exception is when attention turns to the integration of refugees, especially the long-standing refugee populations – the so-called protracted refugee situations (Crisp 2003; Loescher, Milner, Newman, and Troeller 2008). I take this as a starting point for establishing what I mean by the concept.

The refugee studies literature has provided a number of definitions of integration as it relates to refugees. Harrell-Bond suggested a simple but useful definition:

a situation in which host and refugee communities are able to co-exist, sharing the same resources - both economic and social - with no greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community (Harrell-Bond 1986: 7).

This is helpful as it recognises the prevalence of conflict rather than setting the bar at no conflict. However, as she points out, the arrival of refugees may increase the levels of conflict; there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case in Kanongesha. Moreover, equal access for refugees and hosts does not mean equitable distribution of resources; refugees can be integrated into poverty and exploitation.

While there is much talk about integration and it is a recurrent theme in both academic literature and operational guidelines, there is no agreed formal definition. While this might be lamented for those involved in implementing programmes with integration among the goals, it is inevitably a contested political process which is unlikely to be amenable to neat checklists. That said, Crisp (Crisp 2004) describes local integration as a 'process which leads to a durable solution for refugees' with three dimensions:

- Legal – whereby refugees gradually gain the rights of residents and in due course full-citizenship;
- Economic – refugees establish sustainable livelihoods, independent of international aid, participating fully in the local economy and achieving same living standards as the host community;
- Social – refugees live among host population with no fear of discrimination, intimidation or exploitation by hosts or authorities.

Such definitions of integration rest on the idea of some identifiable difference between refugees and hosts. As I have long argued in cases of self-settlement, such differences cannot be taken for granted (Bakewell 2000; Bakewell 2008). This creates difficulties for the external observer, who cannot tell the 'refugee' from the 'host' to recognise whether integration has occurred. Indeed in cases such as that of NW Zambia, it may be more appropriate to speak of the assimilation of refugees. Here, those who arrived into Zambia fleeing the war in Angola looked to shake off their identity as refugees, which marked them out and conform to the host society (as villagers).

I am more attracted to a notion of integration as the process of different groups coming together to such an extent that the differences between them no longer have any salience or significance in any contexts. This is drawn from the field of social psychology. Brewer and Miller (Brewer and Miller 1996) write of a social category gaining salience (prominence) depending on a) the level of importance attached to it by the individuals concerned, and b) how far the category 'fits' with the social context under consideration. The question of the

level to which 'refugees' are integrated into Zambia society can be recast as how far is the 'refugee' category a salient one in the context of the border villages.

This can then be tackled in two parts. First, does the category refugee come into people's social identities? This is an aspect missing from other definitions. It makes for a stronger test for integration, but is a crucial component. The second aspect of understanding integration is to see how far the category 'fits' within the context of the villages? If we divide the villagers in refugees and non-refugees, will there be observable differences between members of these two groups which can be attributed to their group membership? I briefly consider these two sides to integration in the case of self-settled Angolans in Kanongesha.

Integration of self-settled refugees during the war

There are two words used in Lunda to convey the idea of refugee: *ngiza* (plural *angiza*), a person who has come from another country, with some connotations of running from war; and *muntudunka* (plural *antudunka*), a person who has come from another country to settle. These terms were usually used either in reference to the past, 'we were refugees' or 'refugees came in 1985,' or as referring to other people, 'those who are refugees are in Meheba'. There was a strong association of a refugee being a person in receipt of aid or unable to support themselves so many people made comments such as 'we are not refugees since we stopped receiving any aid,' 'there are no refugees here - when people first came they were refugees but now they all have their own fields so they are villagers like us'. People also contrasted themselves to those who went to Meheba 'the refugees are the ones who went to the camp and will return to Angola - we are not refugees'. It is the refugees from Meheba who have been 'called back to return to Angola'.

Moreover, in general people do not refer to themselves or their neighbours as refugees – especially since the Senior Chief discouraged it. There are references to 'Angolans', our friends or brothers from Angola, and so forth, but the terminology of refugees is not much in evidence. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that the category of refugee is rarely visible as part of the people's social identities (even if they might be formally counted as refugees by the authorities).

In 1997, I systematically gathered data on people's social relations (including marriage, friendships, participation in village institutions), and their standards of living (use of land, ownership of livestock, housing, employment, access to education and healthcare). I concluded that at the level of the villages there is almost complete integration in every aspect of life.

Refugee as a social category had almost completely dissolved within the villages. The vast majority of people did not use it either for themselves or to apply to other people. Spatially, socially and economically there were no distinctions which could be reliably made between

refugees and non-refugees; within this context the category did not fit. Even when it came to formal identification by the state, over 40% of those who could be considered refugees by the state held Zambian NRCs, which is not possible within the law. Some had obtained these through schools and some of the older people had gained theirs at election time.

There was no large group of people in the Kanongesha villages who saw themselves as living in exile and waiting to return to their homes. Moreover, there was no local pressure on anyone to move back into Angola. People felt they could stay where they are and make migration decisions in their own time as they see opportunities develop in Angola. Refugees were not seen as living in villages as the guests of generous Zambian hosts who will tire of their presence when peace comes. There was a general expectation that many people would move to Angola but it was more commonly said in the villages with regret rather than eager anticipation.

The post war picture

The end of the war in 2002 stimulated the start of a major programme to repatriate refugees. From 2003 to 2007, UNHCR assisted the return of 74,000 Angolans from Zambia. Most attention was paid to the refugees staying in the settlements and Meheba acted as the logistical base for starting the journey, where the refugees were cleared for return by the Angolan consulate (based in nearby Solwezi).

According to UNHCR statistics, the number of Angolan refugees in Zambia fell from its peak of 220,000 at the end of 2001 to 43,000 by the end of 2006, a drop of about 180,000. In this same period the numbers of refugees receiving assistance fell from 90,000 to 18,500, a fall of about 70,000. This suggests that the number of self-settled refugees fell by over 100,000. However, UNHCR only claimed to have assisted 74,000 people return in the repatriation programme. It is not clear what happened to reduce the numbers of refugees on UNHCR's books. While many have actually repatriated, UNHCR statistical tables show a reduction in the total number of Angolan refugees by 63,000 for 'other reasons' between 2004 and 2006. These statistics have been based on crude estimates of the self-settled refugees for many years and as I argue above the notion of 'refugee' becomes virtually meaningless in areas such as Kanongesha. Hence they can tell us little about what is actually happening in the borderlands. They are more likely to give clues to how UNHCR and the Zambian Government perceive the situation of self-settled refugees. Have they been written off the books in recognition of the fact that they are permanently settled?

The question remains how far this complete integration found in 1997 has been unsettled by the end of the war and repatriation. As part of the repatriation programme, the Government of Zambia and UNHCR attempted to register 'self-settled refugees' for return. What effect did it have on people's plans to return and, perhaps more importantly, their integration in

Kanongesha? Had those arriving from Angola only managed to carve out a temporary niche in Zambia or had they established something more permanent?

The exercise to register self-settled refugees did not faze people. In interviews in 2008 and 2010, nobody reported any pressure to register, let alone sign up for repatriation. Up to today, the chief has been discouraging people from going to Angola arguing, quite reasonably, that the security situation is uncertain and services, in particular education and health, are not adequate.

Nevertheless significant numbers of people have moved to Angola since the end of the war. During my first round of fieldwork in 1997, I gathered data on people's interest in going to Angola, whether to visit or settle. The same question was asked regardless of whether people had come from Angolan or not. The responses are summarised in table 1.

Table 1: 1997 Intentions to move to Angola against country of birth and reason for leaving Angola

Reason for leaving Angola	Country of Birth	Plans to go to Angola when peaceful				Total	
		Settle	Visit	None	Not sure		
War	Angola	31	13	16	10	70	36%
	Zambia	5	1	3	1	10	5%
	Congo	0	3	1	0	4	2%
	Sub total	36	17	20	11	84	43%
Other reasons	Angola	5	7	5	0	17	9%
	Zambia	2	2	5	0	9	5%
	Congo	1	2	0	0	3	2%
	Sub total	8	11	10	0	29	15%
Never resident in Angola	Zambia	12	22	35	4	73	37%
	Congo	1	2	6	0	9	5%
	Sub total	13	24	41	4	82	42%
Total		57	52	71	15	195	100%
		29%	27%	36%	8%	100%	

These can be compared with the data on respondents' locations in 2010 (Table 2). Note that these are only reported locations and it has not been possible to verify the reports given by relatives, friends and neighbours. In many cases the responses came from more than one source and many of the same moves were also reported in 2008. This consistency gives me some grounds to believe that these figures are reasonably accurate.

It is clear that there has been a significant shift of population from Zambia to Angola since 1997, and I would argue since 2002, the end of the war. About 30% of my respondents who were resident in Zambia in 1997 have now relocated to Angola. In terms of absolute numbers, this is unnervingly close to the number of people who said they wanted to go back to Angola in the first round of fieldwork. It is important to note, that even in 1997, the idea of moving to Angola was not restricted to Angolans. Of the 57 who claimed they planned to settle in Angola, 22 (40%) had not been born there and 13 had never lived there before. Again, this is reflected in the figures for those who actually moved – 12 went to live there for the first time.

Table 2: 2010 Reported location against country of birth and reason for leaving Angola

Reason for leaving Angola	Country of birth	Reported country of residence 2010					Total	
		Angola	Zambia	DRC	Died	No data		
War	Angola	33	27		9	1	70	36%
	Zambia	3	7				10	5%
	DRC	0	4				4	2%
	Sub-total	36	38		9	1	84	43%
Other	Angola	6	7		3	1	17	9%
	Zambia	1	5		3		9	5%
	DRC	1	2				3	2%
	Sub-total	8	14		6	1	29	15%
Never lived in Angola	Zambia	11	47	1	9	5	73	37%
	DRC	1	7		1		9	5%
	Sub-total	12	54	1	10	5	82	42%
Total		56	106	1	25	7	195	100%
		29%	54%	1%	13%	4%	100%	

The neat correlation between plans and outcomes suggested by these tables is destroyed when we compare the intentions people declared in 1997 and their location in 2010 (Table 3).

Table 3: Plans to go in 1997 vs. reported country of residence in 2010

1997 plans to go to Angola	Country of residence 2010					Grand Total
	Angola	Zambia	DRC	Died	(blank)	
Stay	28	22		6	1	57
Visit	8	37		4	3	52
D/K	8	5		1		14
None	12	41	1	14	3	71
No response		1				1
Grand Total	56	106	1	25	7	195

In summary, of my population of 195, 86 might be considered Angolan refugees – i.e. they a) were born in Angola or had spent a considerable period of their lives in Angola, and b) either ran from the war or, having left for other reasons, were prevented from returning to Angola. This categorisation was achieved by analysis of the empirical data - the term refugee was not used in the fieldwork. Of these 86, one had disappeared and there was no news of her whereabouts, nine had died, 40 had gone to Angola, and 36 remained in Zambia. See table 4.

In practice, the majority of people who have gone to Angola had lived there before, but by no means all. Those who have moved to Angola include significant numbers of people who are Zambian by birth. People's reasons for moving are inevitably complex and, since the interviews were all conducted on the Zambian side of the border, this analysis can only reflect the explanations put forward by those who remain in Zambia. For some, no doubt, going to Angola was seen as a return home: the 'classic' repatriation. This was mentioned

quite frequently in interviews in 1997 (about 15% of respondents with some interest in going to Angola) but other factors also made Angola an attractive destination – not least the possibility of better livelihoods. When people talked about those who went to Angola in 2010, these other explanations were more common.

Table 4: Reported country of residence by refugee category and gender

		Reported country of residence 2010					
	Gender	Angola	Zambia	DRC	Died	No data	Total
Refugees	F	16	19		4	1	40
	M	24	17		5		46
	Sub-total	40	36		9	1	86
Non-refugee	F	11	39		6	3	59
	M	5	31	1	10	3	50
	Sub-total	16	70	1	16	6	109
Grand Total		56	106	1	25	7	195

For most people in Kanongesha, livelihoods are based on the cultivation - of cassava, maize, beans and other vegetables – and some livestock rearing. A very important supplement to these agricultural activities is provided through hunting, fishing, honey production and gathering mushrooms and caterpillar. Many of these forest products have been sourced in the under-populated bush on the Angolan side of the border. Even during the war, access to these resources stimulated a considerable level of movement back and forth into Angola. In addition, there were also trading opportunities, especially while Alto Zambeze district was largely cut off from the rest of Angola, and people would cross to take maize, cassava and basic manufactured goods to exchange for meat and fish. Hunting and bee-keeping have been the exclusive preserve of men, but women go on fishing and trading trips. The gathering of caterpillars and mushrooms is more commonly undertaken by women. As a result, for many years people in Kanongesha have seen Angola as a source of wealth. It was not surprising to find that the search for better livelihoods, in particular access to fish and meat was often cited as a reason for people to go to Angola after the end of war.

The people who were bringing fish and meat from Angola have gone back there. Those who have stayed have put their mind to farming rather than catching fish and meat (man, interview 2.32 3/09/10).

Many have gone [to Angola] already and more may go as they say they are suffering here (woman, interview 2.06, 2/09/10).

The movements of many others were associated with family changes. In particular, marriage, the death of a husband or divorce, would result in women moving away from or back to their home village; such movements often entailed crossing the border. The mother of one respondent explained how her daughter had gone to Angola, but she had every expectation that she could return in due course:

My daughter is married [in Angola] so will remain Zambian, as if the marriage ends she will come back here. When women go to another country, they don't want to claim that nationality (woman interview 9.a 2/09/10)

However, the draw of the family appeared to vary with individuals' situation and inclinations. The marriage bond among the Lunda is relatively fragile (Pritchett 2001) and husbands and wives might go their separate ways over decision about whether to move. Husbands may be attracted to move by opportunities for hunting and bee-keeping but find their wives refuse to go with them. Likewise, wives may insist on going to join relatives in Angola, leaving their husbands behind. Intergenerational bonds were also liable to fracture over decisions to move, as one young man explained:

"I don't like the area my father has settled in. Here we have freedom to move and trade, and we have schools and clinics. Father has gone with small children and they are not going to school. Majority of people in village from Angola stayed in Zambia, including my 'elder father' and I stay with them. I have no plans to go to Angola." (man interview 10.a 18/08/10)

There impact of the formal repatriation programme was also cited as an incentive to move by one respondent, but only to obtain access to the humanitarian aid on offer. He did go to Angolan but returned to Zambia.

I joined the group for repatriation, planning to go and get relief food and then come back. When I reached Angola, I thought of myself as Zambian and did not register to stay there - so I did not get the relief foods. (interview 21.00 man 75).

These reasons for people settling in Angola are consistent with the responses offered in 1997. However, as the tables above show, many people did not stick to the plans they reported. It is difficult to discern any clear pattern which can explain why some followed their plans and others changed their mind about staying or going. Some explanations were offered by those who were interviewed in 2008 and 2010.

Security remained a major concern. Although it was known that there had been a decisive end to the war with the death of Savimbi, many people expressed nervousness about the stability of Angola, especially as presidential elections have been repeatedly delayed.

The way of living in Angola is quite variable. Some days it seems quiet but the war could start again. So if you build your home there, you could lose it all. I stayed for two years, but never planned to stay permanently, I just went to get fish (man interview 23.05 17/8/10).

In 1997, the cost of living in Zambia was too high and it was very difficult – at that time Angola looked better. But realise that if I go to Angola, I would lose sense of worth as the way of life is very poor over there. Any wealth would be lost as the place is insecure – is if you make money you will lose it later. Now, I won't even think about going there as the children are now in school and there are no schools there (man interview 9/03/08).

This second quotation also points to another set of reasons for people's change of mind; their different periods of their lifecycle. The younger people interviewed in 1997 have now

established families and are very concerned about the lack of education and health services for their children. While some (but not as many as before) may still go to Angola for hunting, fishing, trading etc, they have abandoned ideas of settling there. Others have aged and their health has deteriorated so they can no longer risk moving as they might have done in their younger days. As one woman said,

I have no plans to go in future – there are no hospitals or schools. I am often sick and am lucky as medicine is available here in Zambia (female interview 6.07 17/08/10).

Besides such worries about what they would find in Angola, others suggested that the opportunities in Angola no longer looked much better than those available in Zambia. One man commented that he had abandoned his plans to go to Angola as he found that the way of life there was no different and would be improved by moving.

If someone is working hard and doing okay in Zambia, then it would be the same over there; if not [doing okay], then the same in Angola (man interview 14.02 9/03/08).

It is harder to know about why some of those who had no plans to go to Angola ended up moving there. These were the people that I have not been able to interview; there is a missing side to this research, in Angola, which needs another long term study. For women, it is very possible that plans changed as they entered into marriage where the husband was in Angola. As noted above, there were many reports of women who had married in Angola. However, the data does not show a clear gender divide with women's plans changing more than men's.

It is clear that people are taking decisions in the light of the particular changing conditions in Zambia and Angola. People move a lot, both locally and over longer distances, even while staying in the Lunda speaking areas. If the Angolan economy in the east picks up or there is major investment in road and public infrastructure, no doubt many more people will cross over. At the moment, the developments seems more promising on the Zambian side, with continued higher levels of services, government initiatives to support maize cultivation and the slow expansion of the Copperbelt to the north-west.

Return and integration

The shift of population from Zambia into Angola since 2002 has not undermined the integration of Angolans that was evident in 1997. Those people who came as refugees and have elected to stay in Zambia are as settled as ever. The refugee category has become even more irrelevant. Nonetheless, there do seem to be some signs of change in relationships across the border. In particular, the reassertion of Angolan state control right up to the border and the growing need for identity papers to cross the border is tending to make the border less porous. Perhaps more significantly, the very flexible identifications that were expressed during the war – with people claiming to be Angolan or Zambia quite freely – have become more uniform. All those who had described themselves as Angolan in 1997 and

were re-interviewed in 2010 described themselves as Zambian; a couple of them denied ever having changed nationality. For example, in 1997 one man described himself as ‘full-time’ Angolan and planned to return as Angola ‘is my country’ (man 2.32 interviewed 26/02/1997). In 2010, these responses were forgotten:

I have been in Zambia 15-20 years, so I see myself as Zambian rather than Angolan. When I came to Zambia in 1984, I said I would never go back to Angola but stay here in Zambia, so I said I was Zambian (man 2.32 interviewed 3/09/2010).

Those who remain in Zambia are all now considered to be Zambian.

Those who came from Angola have become Zambian and have their NRCs [Zambian National Registration Cards] (village group discussion 18/08/10).

Now I say I am Zambian. If I stay in Zambia, I am Zambian. I have an NRC. Before, I used to call myself Angolan as I used to go there to hunt and fish. Now the people who went back are Angolan, and those who stay here are Zambian. (man 14.02 interview 9/03/08).

It seems that the term ‘Angolan’ has shifted from being associated with refugees and the stigma of war to referring to a ‘normal’ nation state. During the war, it was possible for people in Zambia to declare themselves to be Angolan without further explanation for their presence. Today, that has changed and those who remain in Zambia only refer to themselves as Zambian. There now appears to be a greater correlation between people’s declared nationality and their nationality which is officially recognised through identity papers - even if these are identity papers to which they were not entitled according to Zambian law.

In these borderlands, those who came from Angola have been fully and robustly integrated into the local society. People have been able to settle and stay without any direct interference from the state. It is a space where their different origins and their personal histories of migration are not salient in their day to day to lives. Those who started life as Angolans are now fully accepted as Zambians. Their sense of belonging and people’s acceptance of them has not been undermined by the end of the war and the government’s call for refugees to go home.

The fluctuating fortunes of integration in the refugee settlements

This picture of integration in the borderlands is very different from that found in the refugee settlements. When first I wrote of the Meheba, the largest refugee settlement, in 1999, I described as a place of separation, where Angolan refugees were living on segregated territory, marked apart from the Zambian society. By definition, those resident in Meheba were recognised by the Zambian authorities and UNHCR as refugees and they accepted and used this as a self-description very readily. People referred to themselves as Angolans and were very conscious of their being outsiders in Zambia. The refugee category was salient first as a marker of suffering – this was no doubt particularly emphasized for a new European visitor. While facing similar problems to the people living in the borderlands -

lack of cash, limited access to markets, raising money for school fees, and so forth – these were routinely presented as if they were a particular problem for refugees. Second, being an Angolan refugee in Meheba entailed the understanding that one did not have a permanent home in Zambia and would move to Angola when the time came. In contrast to Kanongesha, it was very noticeable how many people referred to Angola as home and looked forward to going to their country. Comments such as ‘this is not our place’, ‘home is home’ and other such sentiments were more commonly expressed in Meheba than in Kanongesha. This was by no means universal and some people who had been in Zambia for many years felt that Angola no longer had anything to offer them. In particular some of the older people in Old Meheba said that they had lost all their relatives in Angola and they are too old to move and start again. However, they accepted that when repatriation would come, they would go, even if they did not want to.

A few years later after the new influxes of Angolan refugees into Zambia, there appeared to some potential shift in the formal government policy towards those in settlements. In August 2002, UNHCR announced the launch of the Zambia initiative in Western Province, ‘a government-led plan to coordinate donors' efforts in reducing poverty, linking relief and development assistance, and contributing to peace and stability in refugee-hosting areas of Zambia’ (UNHCR 2002). While this programme was not explicitly associated to the integration of refugees, the same announcement also claimed that the Zambian government would be bringing forward a new refugee bill within two months that would open up an avenue for long-term refugees to become citizens.

An unpublished evaluation of this Zambia Initiative conducted in 2006 also hinted at its links with integration:

In the case where some proportion of the refugees may seek to remain in their country of asylum, UNHCR has proposed a strategy called ‘Development through Local Integration’ (DLI). DLI would solicit *additional* development assistance with the aim of attaining durable solutions in terms of local integration of refugees as an option and not an obligation.

Central to the success of this strategy, is the attitude of the host government and the local authorities, as well as the commitment on the part of the donor community to provide additional assistance.

At present in Zambia, the legal framework is not in place to facilitate local integration, but due to the large number of self-settled refugees, the practice is ahead of the legislation. (Tournée and Chinene 2006: 3 - emphasis in original).

However, in practice the Zambia Initiative was largely concerned with integrating the provision of services to refugees and local Zambians. It aimed to ensure that the latter benefitted from interventions to support refugees thereby encouraging their ongoing support for refugees’ presence in their districts. Moreover, the promised new refugee legislation was never introduced.

From 2003 to 2007, Angolan refugees were repatriated from Meheba, Mayukwayukwa and Nangweshi in large numbers as part of the formal programmes sponsored by UNHCR and the governments of Angola and Zambia. Once these programmes ended, there were some expectations that the 'residual caseload' of Angolans who could not or did not want to return would be enabled to stay in Zambia (interviews in Zambia 2010). UNHCR's policy is to encourage local integration for Angolans who have been in Zambia for many years (UNHCR 2011). In November 2010, the Zambian president was reported to have declared in Luanda that Zambia would consider integrating some Angolan refugees at the end of repatriation.⁴ However, as Zambia prepares to invoke the cessation clauses of the UN Convention which bring to an end Angolan's refugee status in the country, the rhetoric of the government has turned away from any talk of integration. A renewed repatriation programme was started for four months from June to September 2011. In July 2011, the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Home Affairs was reported as claiming that the government was working with UNHCR on repatriation alone and the ministry had no immediate plans for integration.⁵

Rethinking durable solutions

The concept of integration is often associated with a durable solution – but it is always important to note that durable does not mean the same as permanent. Crisp (Crisp 2004) attempts to distinguish local integration from local settlement by suggesting that the former assumes that refugees will remain indefinitely in the country of asylum. In contrast, local settlement is offered as a temporary solution.

While this distinction may be very important in discussion of policy – we do need to know if we are pursuing a policy of (temporary) settlement or (permanent) integration – it does not really work in the context of NW Zambia. As I have shown, refugees came, settled themselves, integrated fully and then many went back to Angola when the war ended. At the same time many stayed.

To a large extent, from the perspective of the villages, this area of Zambia has been a largely policy free zone. They occasionally see missions from international organisations wanting to count refugees, warn them about land mines or other such initiatives, but day to day the lives of those who arrived as refugees is governed by the institutions of village life – the headmen and chiefs. This has provided sufficient protection from any state or international actors who might want to intervene. Angolan refugees have been able to settle themselves,

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<http://www.southerntimesafrica.com/article.php?title=Zambia%20agrees%20to%20take%20%20in%20Angolan%20refugees&i d=5215> accessed 15th August 2011

⁵ <http://www.lusakatimes.com/2011/07/02/zambia-intentions-integrating-refugees/> accessed 15th August 2011

avoid *refoulement* and live without discrimination, effectively protected from the state mediated by the chief.

Despite the policy against local integration, but local integration has happened on quite a large scale. In the very small area where I have done research, nearly half have stayed in Zambia. If this is replicated among the reported numbers of self-settled refugees who were present in Zambia in the 1990s (I will not include those who arrived in the final days of the war from 1998), this would mean about 60,000 people may have self-settled⁶.

Moreover, I am talking about a strong form of integration that leaves refugees indistinguishable from hosts, except to the close and trusted observer – not observable by government surveys and registration exercises. It also leaves people with effective citizenship – perhaps not gained through fully legal channels that would hold up in court, but probably as robust as any other citizen of the area.

Of course, it is important not to overplay this picture of integration, belonging and settlement as if the society is transformed into harmony. ‘Schism and continuity’, as Turner (Turner 1957) put it, might still be a reasonable way to characterise Lunda society (although the later study by Pritchett 1990 argued that Turner had not paid sufficient attention to change). The intrigues between couples, families, headmen and chiefs remain active and vivid with occasional eruptions in dramatic outbursts. My argument is simply that the contours of these schisms do not follow the boundaries of the origins in Angola or Zambia or refugee status.

Of course, these contours are malleable and open to personal and political manipulation. People’s origins and ancestry can become salient in challenged in most unexpected ways. For example, in Zambia Kenneth Kaunda’s citizenship was challenged based on his grandparents’ birthplace in Malawi after he had been President of Zambia for nearly thirty years. One only has to look to the former Yugoslavia to find more frightening examples of identities being reanimated for violent political ends. However, as long as there is no resurgence of the pan-Lunda movements associated with Moise Tshombe in the 1960s nor a Lunda candidate for the Zambian presidency, questions about the belonging of the ex-Angolan refugees are unlikely to be raised. Indeed, if such questions are raised they are just as likely to catch those born in Zambia as those born in Angola.

The question remains as to whether this outcome of integration could have been achieved by application of a formal policy. It is politically awkward as it is likely to unpopular to open up citizenship to refugees. One of the most likely reasons for the Zambian government’s reluctance to countenance any support for integration in 2011 is the imminent election.

⁶ This matches the missing 63,000 mentioned above (page 9) rather well but I would be very wary of claiming these figures are linked!

Nonetheless, there is an accommodation which has proved very effective for the people concerned. Large numbers of people have settled themselves and found a de facto 'durable solution' of local integration.

While it may be impossible to persuade states to adopt policies to facilitate local integration in this way – and perhaps it might be counterproductive as it could stir up hostility among chiefs or local leaders who do not share such open views about refugees – it is important that such outcomes are understood and acknowledged. At the least it can help us to question the very limited range of solutions which are on offer and open our imaginations to new possibilities in other settings. Moreover, for those engaged in developing policy and designing programmes, it is important to understand more of the complex mix of interests and negotiations which might be agreed below the level of the state – perhaps invisible to the state. These may have much more significance for the lives of refugees than the best efforts of the international aid regime.

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Panel 4: “Forced migration and the role of borders”

The politics of deportation and its ‘frontiering effect’ on transnational livelihoods

– Draft version, please don’t circulate beyond the conference –

In a peripheral island state like Cape Verde nobody can negate the ubiquity and the influence of borders. Surrounded by the salty waters of the Atlantic, each of these small nine islands carries and displays the physical reality of a limited human mobility. However, the archipelago is not isolated from other landscapes and populations, rather the contrary. Different from mountains, waters don’t separate, but connect and bring people together. Hence, since their discovery, Cape Verdeans managed to establish multiple forms of mobility, exchange and networking and therewith secured this strategically important position between Africa, Europe and the Americas.

Due to a harsh and hostile environment, repeating droughts and a severe lack of natural resources, border-crossing and cross-border connectedness in Cape Verde became the most important ground for securing human supply early on. Therefore, migration and transnational social relations need to be understood as the most important means for ‘making a life’ (Åkesson 2004). Becoming a person, i.e. an accepted member of society, requires travelling, keeping in touch, caring across long-distances as well return – in certain ways.

Nevertheless, the parameters of globalization may accelerate the cross-border movements of capital, services, information or products, but human beings, today more than ever before, are controlled, indexed, categorized before they can eventually be granted access to cross-border mobility. In our days, so-called “smart borders” are able to identify who belongs to the admissible healthy, non-criminals, with high purchasing power and of benefit for labor markets and social security systems. The rest is unwanted and supposed to stay. Borders of the 21st century operate in a highly selective manner and policymakers, using Foucauldian techniques of government construct classifications to advance bureaucratic control of populations, especially targeting migrants. Hence, globalization generates expulsion and new forms of immobility for some individuals in conjunction with the more transparent ‘flexibilities’ forced upon others (Pratt 2005, Kaufmann 2006).

In this paper I will elaborate on the impact of cross-border control and selectivity in relation to a livelihood which has been based on cross-border mobility already over centuries. I will

focus on the practice of deportation, a long established technology in the continuous governing of populations and the making of citizens, as members of the nation state (Walters 2002). Particularly in the USA in the course of the last decade, the quest for security – of borders as well as the nation – lead to substantial transitions in the governance of immigration penalties. The events of September 11/2001 and the following USA Patriot Act¹ went along with an expansion of powers of law enforcement as a response to the theorist threat and once more contributed to a discursive association between the threat of terrorism, national security and immigration (De Genova 2002, 2007). In the fiscal year 2006 there were more than a million removals from the USA. Evidently, these forced returns have considerable impact on the social landscape in the receiving, i.e. former ‘home’ countries, which to date remained understudied.

In the following I will elaborate on the impact of deportation on the livelihoods of Brava, the smallest Cape Verdean island, where migration is predominantly directed towards the USA. After summarizing important aspects and shifts in the history of Cape Verdean migration, I will use my empirical data for exemplifying the ‘frontiering effect’ of deportation, reflected by different kinds of social interaction between deportees and their alleged ‘home’ communities.²

The historical establishment of ‘irregular’ livelihoods

Brava, the smallest of the Cape Verdean islands, lies in the south-west of the archipelago and covers an area of 67 square kilometres, with a population of slightly more than 5000 inhabitants. It has a mountainous landscape, and precipitation from the trade winds contributes to a relatively humid climate in comparison to the other nine islands. Most islanders have small gardens where they cultivate corn, legumes and vegetables and occasionally raise goats, pigs or, rarely, cows. Fishing is another element in the island’s economy. In addition, most islanders combine small-scale farming with wage labour and migrants’ remittances to make their living. Most households on Brava foster relations with relatives or friends living in Massachusetts or Rhode Island.

Cape Verde is an exemplary case of transnational migration insofar as survival and the economic management of this place has always been connected to intercontinental mobility

¹ „Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act”.

² My account is based on 12 months of anthropological fieldwork conducted between 2006 and 2008 on Brava and Fogo, two small islands in the southwest of the archipelago. On these islands emigration is predominantly directed towards the United States and Portugal. While deportation was not initially at the centre of this research, I found that its impact on transnational livelihoods was undeniable, as the position and the destinies of deportees fundamentally contradict the inner logics of transnational social fields. My approach therefore situates the impact of deportation and the position of deportees in the wider context of my general research interest on the moral economies of transnational family lives (Drotbohm 2009, 2011b).

(Meintel 1998). Already in the 17th Cape Verdeans established this particular way of life as seamen and traders. Later, they continued to sail under the Portuguese flag, established their lives in lusophone African countries as a creole elite, on whaling ships they went to the Americas, where they worked on cranberry fields and in factories of textile or furniture, and, after national independence, some of them also became part of the African diaspora in Europe, where they found work in different kinds of service industries (Carreira 1982, Batalha 2004, Halter 1993, Lobban 1995, Meintel 1984). However, while these earlier phases of transnational existence required flexible modes of attachment and manoeuvres within different and changing political regimes, recent times brought new challenges.

The strict control and gradual closing of North American borders in the course of the last decades questioned the continuation transnational connectedness (Carling 2004). While the access to western labor markets constituted a legitimate ground for visa applications until the 1970s, the tightening of visa regimes created new forms of alternative entries and residence in the countries of destination. For most islanders, especially those the poorer strata, family based migration today constitutes the most probable and most convenient way to access a visa. Additionally, those who are able to travel on a tourist or student visa or use a medical certificate for entering their country of destination.

However, no matter which kind of entry, the regularization and naturalization process for all immigrants remains a key obstacle. Mainly US-American scholars concentrate their work on the rising number of undocumented migrants, whose living conditions became irregularized and hence, criminalized (Willen 2007, Chavez 2007, Peutz 2007). With regard to the nexus between cross-border mobility, the clandestine lives caused by their undocumented status and the obligation to sell their labor force under exploitative working conditions, Nicholas de Genova argues: *“it is deportability, and not deportation per se, that has historically rendered undocumented migrant labor a distinctly disposable commodity”* (De Genova 2002: 438).

Today, the islanders often reflect on the changing conditions for cross-border mobility, and some tend to glorify those earlier times when leaving the islands and travelling to Europe or North America was possible with just an identity card. Additionally, the fact that the outcome of migration is not what it was before, that it does not guarantee as successful and prosperous life anymore and that some migrants do not manage to support their family left behind but – in the worst case – return empty handed, is a recent trend often discussed. Most islanders know that some migrants may do well, manage to find work, legalize their stay, send a little something back to their homes and eventually make their kin follow them – while others don't. If we consider the fact that many Cape Verdeans live in the US without legal citizenship, work undocumented, live in violent neighbourhoods, narratives on the bumpy character of migrant trajectories do not come as a surprise.

It is also against this background that the islanders are well aware of the increasing rates of deportation, which force more and more migrants to return involuntarily to their island of

origin. While during the 1990s only few Cape Verdeans were returned by state force, in the course of the last years several hundreds reached the islands and today, deportees for instance make more than 2% of the population of Brava.³ Those returning by state's force, often simply called DPs, formerly have been part of the migrant's narrative of success. Most of them have been taken along by their families or, in some cases they went on their own and acquired respect and acceptance among those who stayed on the islands. Before returning to Cape Verde, be it for only several months or up to 40 years, have been part of European or American societies. Immigrants, documented or not, act as social citizens in the sense that they live, establish and cultivate their social lives, build houses, go to work, most of them pay taxes, and some participate actively in enhancing their migrant community's rights and benefits within western welfare state. However, in the end, due to different kinds of reasons, they were not able to respond to the expectations of transnational networks but instead were sent back empty handed.

'Frontiering' and transnational livelihoods

In the following I will argue that deportation, as a state practice enacting or executing 'the border' not only between nation states, but also between citizens and strangers, entails a dividing effect on the former sending societies of transnational migration movements. As I intend to show, the division between insiders and outsiders is transferred into those world regions where livelihoods are, and need to be, based on transnational mobility. In my analytical approach I will make use of the term "frontiering", which initially has been introduced by Deborah Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela in their well-known edited book on "the transnational family" (Bryceson/Vuorela 2002). "We define frontiering as agency at the interface between two (or more) contrasting ways of life" (Bryceson/Vuorela 2002: 12). They suggest this conceptual term for capturing the ongoing negotiation over different cultural values, experimentations as well as confrontations between genders, generations and individuals which shape transnational modes of family life. In the following I will take on this understanding of 'frontiering' and expand it on encounters not only within transnational families, but also within village communities or larger collectivities which extend their social interaction, communication and collaboration across national borders.

³ According to a statistical overview of 2008 provided by the *Instituto das Comunidades* (part of the *Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Cooperação e Comunidades de Cabo Verde*), the number of deportations has increased annually, beginning with five in 1992 and reaching its peak in 2007 with 128 officially recorded deportees. Until 2002 Portugal was the country sending back the largest contingent, but since 2002 the majority have been sent back from the United States. In 2007, 50% of all deportees were sent back from the United States, 33% came from Portugal, 8% from France, and the rest from Spain, Luxembourg, Germany and Brazil. Of those returning to Brava, 100% came back from the United States; of those returning to Fogo, 83% were returning from the United States and 17% from Portugal. The ratio of female deportees has always been between below 5%. In addition to this it is important to note that only a minority of deportees get registered at the moment of their entry into Cape Verde. Therefore, estimates of the actual number of deportees should be considerably higher (Instituto das Comunidades 2008).

For illuminating the ‘frontiering’ effect caused by the practice of deportation, I centre my account on the situation and understandings of one individual deportee: Raúl⁴, 33 years old at the time of my fieldwork, was one of approximately 25 other deportees, who I came in closer contact with. Together with his friends he almost certainly could be met at the central plaza of Brava’s main town, where they sat together, drinking Coke, smoking weed. While Raúl’s deportation story was in a way exemplary for many I heard, I particularly appreciated our talks and interviews, since he had a pertinent and illuminative way of telling his story and sharing his interpretations.

Raúl had been returned 5 years before our encounter, after leaving the island of Brava as a child, after living 15 years in a Boston neighbourhood, after visiting US-American schools and after installing his professional life as a car mechanic – while leaving his behind entire existence his parents, siblings, his partner and his friends, his job as well as his material achievements. A couple of days before his return Raúl’s mother had called her brother who was still living on the island and asked him to receive his nephew in his house. On the day of his arrival, Raúl encountered a place he hardly remembered, with unfamiliar habits and modes of consumption, a language he had rarely used during his years in the US, a social environment which received him with suspicious glances.

During the phase of my fieldwork Raúl lived together with a friend in a small apartment in Nova Sintra, Brava’s main town, received a monthly Western Union check from his mother living in Boston and worked irregularly on a day-to-day basis either on the fields or on local construction sites. The fact that I did not manage to fully ‘clarify’ the legal background of his involuntary return was nothing specific, as many deportees avoid going into the details of their deportation histories. Raúl was somewhere in the middle between those who emphasize their ‘innocence’, as being returned due to their undocumented residency, and those who constantly allude to their spectacular gang-and-crime stories. As will become clear in the following, this behaviour need to be seen in relation to deportees’ careful manoeuvres within a social environment, where their position and the legitimacy of their stay are ‘sensed’ along an established moral economy of transnational livelihoods. For illuminating the practice, the perception as well as the evaluation of their particular situation I will concentrate my account on different levels of social interaction: First, spatial practices, second, practices of consumption, and third, moral discourses reflecting the position and the legitimacy of deportees within their alleged ‘home’ communities.

Sensing and displaying modes of return

⁴ To protect the privacy of the individuals included into the research, I have used common names as pseudonyms.

One day, when I met Raúl at one of his regular spots, he mentioned that he soon would move back to Praia, the country's capital located on the neighbour island. From our interviews I knew that some of his distant family members were living in Praia. However, I did not understand his motivations, because, according to my understanding, his situation on the island had just begun to improve. Some weeks ago he had found a good job on a construction site, he had put some energy into refurbishing his apartment and also began to date a nice girl from a local family. When we talked I raised these points, asking him whether he would not risk losing what he just achieved.

“I can't stay here. You're right, I am ok here. But the main point is, I have to leave in order to come back.”

This sentence highlighted the notion of return as a particular moment within mobile life worlds. When we continued to talk about the importance of return, Raúl explained:

“When I come back, this is such a good feeling. This is what makes me feel good. Friends come by, we hang around, watch some new videos I brought, it's like a kind of festa. But then, after some weeks, things become normal. And see, I have nothing to do here. I talk to my mum on the phone, I ask her to send me some bucks, I wait, I hang around, there is nothing to do on these islands. Then I decide to leave.”

When Raúl talks about the boringness of his existence, he also provides insights into the incompatibility of a type of socialization in the US, which equipped him with skills and competences unneeded in this rural environment. Already some months after his arrival Raúl had to realize that his particular expertise as a car mechanic was useless or unwanted in a place, where nearly no private cars circulate and where the local economy is mainly based on farming and fishing and offers a few jobs in construction or service sections. Therefore, he refers to patterns of return migration as they are common in Cape Verde, and draws on the idea of the successful visiting migrant, who comes back to his home island during his summer break in order to celebrate his material gains and family linkages (Drotbohm forthcoming).

With regard to his current situation Raúl explains:

“It's not that I am gone, no, I will get back to this job and this place, don't worry. I like Brava somehow, it's calm, yes, but the people -- when I am always here, they wonder who I am, even I wonder who I am. I am a migrant, a traveller, I can't always stay. I feel paralyzed. Some friends even don't know what I am here for, what brought me here. I am not a refugee, man! I am able to go and come back and continue what I'm doing.”

This quote reflects an attitude which is typical for Cape Verdean deportees. Just like Raúl most of them continue or even establish a 'mobile' way of life on the islands. While their moving back and forth between different locations on the islands can be considered 'normal' in comparison to those Cape Verdeans who never left, deportees also move a lot between the islands, staying some month on each, inserting their lives into different kinds of social

networks, before returning to their initial and often main points of living. As it was mentioned before, leaving, being away and – especially – returning, constitute crucial cultural practices in Cape Verde, as they display the gains and capacities of those citizens, who ‘made it’, who managed to cross national borders, who improved their social status, who earned respect and admiration. Mobility in these villages serves as a key resource, which deportees try to reinvent for marking their position, but also for claiming social integration.

In our interviews, several deportees reflected on a kind of ‘sensing’ of mobility, especially among their younger peers, who admire the successful returnee for their journeys to places where they did not yet manage to go. Hence, one deportee, who had returned only a couple of months ago, complained that his friends on the islands were always asking: “*when are you going back?*” ‘Back’ across the national border, ‘back’ into the diaspora, ‘back’ for proving the continuing ability to move. Here, the ambivalent character of return migration becomes most obvious: On the one hand deportees, by means of moving back and forth between the other islands, and Brava, revive the classical distinction between the traveller, the mobile one and the rooted peasant – a distinction constituting an important Cape Verdean axis of differentiation already since centuries. However, the local population knows about the most recent trends of return. They may continue to appreciate the successful returnee, who confirms his Cape Verdean origins, but they try to distinguish him from the deportee.

From the perspective of deportees, being part of the mobile sections of society is not only related to their identities as migrants, it is also an important means of status affirmation and for social integration. However, due to the particular conditions of their return, it can remain difficult to live up to the expectations linked to this practice, as will be illustrated in the next paragraph.

Sensing and displaying consumption

Already at the beginning of my fieldwork I identified DPs as being ‘different’ from other returnees, as they visibly stood out from the ‘ordinary’ Cape Verdean by means of their outer appearance, their fashion style with baseball hats worn backwards – sometimes several ones on each other – , oversized t-shirts and baggy pants. Also their body movements, their gestures and their spatial consumer habits facilitated their identification. Apparently, deportees do not only adhere to their former mobilities by means of their spatial behaviour, as it was described in the previous paragraph, but through their consumption style and fashion.

However, the continuation of their habits brought along from the diaspora poses strong challenges. Especially those returnees who spent their formative lifetime in Europe or the US complain about the poor living conditions in Cape Verde, where they are assigned to

households with irregular electric supply, a low hygiene standard, in many cases without fresh water. Evidently, island family members receiving them are aware of the fact that DPs are used to relatively affluent life conditions, including electricity, a daily shower and an American diet unaffordable to most islanders. In the following interview sequence, Raúl remembers the first weeks after his arrival on the island of Brava:

“Oh my god, I thought I would go crazy. My *tiu* [uncle, H.D.] lives high up on the hill, you know? That’s just wind up there, nothing else, just the wind! I tried to adapt, do what they all do, my cousins, they sit and wait, they play cards and do nothing. But I can’t stand it, there is nothing! Hey: I can’t do this. I need to do something. I went down to *bila* [into the centre, H.D.], we played table soccer and that kind of thing, meeting friends, talking. Later I moved together with a friend. We found a little apartment; we tried to put everything into our house, a television, a sofa, books, magazines, toilet paper! Just normal, see?”

When I talked to Cape Verdean family members of deportees in the diaspora, it became apparent that this inconsistency between a ‘modern’, an urban and affluent life style and local simplicity was an important ingredient of their worries. In some cases, my interviewees in the diaspora had never managed to visit their deported kin and imagined their living conditions as being extremely difficult. In addition to this, the failure of a migrant is often interpreted as a family affair. Therefore, many family members in the diaspora suffer from feelings of guilt, since according to their interpretation they did not manage to protect their kin – either from the seductions of a delinquent life style, or from being detected as being undocumented, detained and returned. Hence, providing their loved-ones with material supplies is often felt as a kind of compensation of their deprivations.

Raúl does not only receive a monthly check, but also so-called *bidons*, old barrels filled with canned food, clothing or technical equipment. During my fieldwork I often witnessed deportees sitting together and sharing their memory of certain products and tastes. Therefore they usually communicate their needs and desires via phone calls and order particular types of brands and flavours from their kin living abroad. One deportee for instance praised the arrival of a particular kind of cinnamon crunch cereal: “*When I got this, I take just a little bit, I try to expand this taste over weeks, I chew slowly, slowly, I try not to loose one grain!*”

While deportees use these consumer items for creating a bodily sensation of their former lives and try to hold on to routines they feel familiar with, these practices are observed and commented on in a particular manner. Many of the younger ones, especially those who have never left the islands, impatiently expect these *bidons* sent to a deportee. On the day of the arrival of one of these, I curiously went to Raúl’s place for grasping a glimpse on what he had received. But I was not the only one: Two young guys who I had talked to several times without knowing them too well, had also taken the occasion for visiting Raúl. While we stood there in the shade of Raúl’s yard and expected the opening of the drum like a ‘holy grail’, I

got to understand that these two, who I had always found extremely young for being deported, were Raúl's younger cousins, who had never left the islands. Obviously, they had learned their English by hanging around with him, had studied carefully the way things are used or how fashion is combined and worn and learned how to behave and move around like an 'emigrante'. In this moment I had to realize that the identification of deportees along a certain consuming style was less clear-cut than I had thought initially and that not only these consumer items but also the respective using habits are adopted and copied immediately on the islands.

While the frontier between 'migrants' and 'locals', between the mobile ones and those who did not yet manage to leave, seemed to blur among the younger generations, the attitude of the elder generation was usually quite different. Elder kin, often household heads, complained about the consumption habits of deportees, as they would also expect support and compensation of their expenses from the diaspora and had to observe increasing material differences in their households. Often they protested against the unjust distribution of remittances, when deportees were supported for maintaining their standard of living, while their own cuts were hardly considered. Additionally, elder people often grumbled about these urban habits, which they did not only associate with a costly foreign life style, but also with these most recent trends of an 'American' way of life, which imported modernity's problems and immoral 'vagabundos' back to Cape Verde. In this context, deportees were seen as lazy absorbers of remittances, not contributing to the survival of their non-migrant kin, but rather importing new types of disorder. When we discussed the attitude of the islanders towards deportees during our interview, Raúl commented in the following way:

"This was it, with my uncle, I found this really difficult. They don't talk. They think we're all gangers. They watch these American music videos, see the same kind of style, hear about what's going on in Praia, what's happening over there, crime and all this, and then they think we're all like these gangsta rappers! It's simple, they don't ask, they just watch what we look like and judge."

In the following section, this association between a certain type of consumer style and the classification of persons along moral criteria will be reflected more into detail.

Sensing moral legitimacy

Already before his arrival, but also in the course of his first months of his involuntary stay, Raúl's return was preceded by rumours on the reasons and the 'legal' conditions of his return. In general, deportees struggle with the stigma of reaching the islands as *criminosos* – 'criminals' – accompanied by a melange of rumours about their criminal careers. More often than not their coerced return by state force produces initial suspicion and feelings of social distance. Often, the islanders' doubts and moral evaluations are not addressed in an open

manner, but rather through gossip, which contributes to the depiction of DPs as family outsiders. This leads many deportees to complain about the direct association between deportation and criminal activities, about the wary observation of their behaviour on the islands and the intricate web of rumour-based information criss-crossing the ocean.

Those DPs who return to Cape Verde because of criminal offences struggle most with their negative reputations as an obstacle against normalizing their stay in Cape Verde and constantly fear that the legitimacy of their stay could be called into question on the basis of their prior expulsion. By situating the juridical process in the context of social exclusion and techniques of criminalisation experienced in the United States, deportees emphasise vulnerabilities created by segmented integration and call for understanding of their life conditions overseas.

Interestingly, as I already mentioned at the beginning, many deportees do not describe the particular conditions of their return into detail. While some emphasise that they had to come back due to their undocumented residence status and complain about the wider society's criminalising discourses, others who were convicted of criminal activities try to justify their transgressions, and still others tend to reproduce the image of the 'brutal gansta' in their own stories.

While their criminal reputations may complicate social contact, especially with members of the older generation, many of their younger peers tend to admire and envy their crime-related experiences and the urban knowledge that is presumed to come along with it. Raúl reflected in particular on the attitude of his cousins and his female friends, who seemed to be attracted by his aura of a 'criminoso': According to Raúl, *"If I am the normal boy, just anybody, no one would be interested. They don't listen. They want me, the gansta. That's what I gotta give."* Some deportees described a tricky negotiation between their desire for socialisation and rehabilitation on the one hand, and an exoticising attitude among their cousins and friends on the other. This puts DPs in a position where they constantly oscillate between underlining their innocence or victimhood and recounting their experiences of gang life, robberies and violence.

While their former mobility and a mysterious background of return may enhance their attractiveness among the younger generations, it may also hamper their integration. First, with regard to their family staying in the diaspora, deportees are usually forced to 'prove' their eligibility to remittances and support in general. As their forced return, and crime-related return in particular, can disturb their family's reputation, those residing in the diaspora tend to articulate the conditionality of their assistance to the deportee and exercise social control over their deported kin. Therefore, many deportees are obliged to display impeccable moral behaviour and to refrain from any kind of delinquent activity in order to remain eligible for their migrant kin's assistance.

This reaction finds it's parallel within the wider society, which regularly discusses the trend of deportation and its impact on a Cape Verdean livelihood in public debates. Interestingly however, the fact whether deportees return due to criminal convictions or due to their undocumented residence status in this context often remains unaddressed. Rather, deportation itself seems to be perceived as an 'immoral act', as countering a Cape Verdean existence, which is grounded on mobility and cross-border networking. The return of migrants without any gains as well as their future immobilites going along with this most recent trend of return migration, entails a threat scenario, questioning the ground of this kind of transnational livelihood.

Conclusion: Frontiering and negotiated membership in transnational social fields

The impact of deportation, as a practice which exercises states' borders by means of the expulsion and the forced return of non-citizens, reaches deep into societies, where livelihoods already since centuries are entangled with external economic and political spheres. Eventually Cape Verde, due to the early establishment of transatlantic mobility, can be seen as a particular and exceptional case. However, history has shown that trends and shifts of globalization rather could be identified particularly early at this small spot in the middle of the Atlantic. Comparable to the Cape Verdean case, the impact of deportation also becomes obvious in other countries, which have a long migration history towards Europe or the US (Peutz 2007, Willen 2007, Zilberg 2004).

In my account it became obvious that deportees, like refugees and migrants in general, are 'social constructions and moral imaginations' (Malkki 1996: 382), produced by social encounters with mobility. Categories such as 'DPs', 'illegals' and 'criminals' are powerful constructions of othering within island communities where mobility is a crucial element for defining the position of a person and his or her social landscape. In this paper I have illustrated the ambivalent position of deportees, who are returned to their alleged 'home country' in times when migration in general and return migration in particular are evaluated with a more ambivalent undertone.

I have used the term 'frontiering' as it was introduced by Deborah Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela for illuminating three different fields of social encounters, in which the particular understanding of deportees becomes most visible: Their spatial behaviour, their consuming habits as well as their moral perception, which is linked to their position within society. In line with the earlier suggestion of the term, 'frontiering' does not denote the clear-cut marking of insiders and outsiders. Rather, it describes the symbolic articulation of different life styles and moral values, which distinguishes the mobile sectors of society from those who never migrated. This type of 'frontier' is not only performed, but also evaluated along

membership duties and rights in the context of shifting patterns of contemporary migration.

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European migration border control in North Africa: the challenge of migrants' human rights protection

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Abstract

This paper highlights some of the key issues relative to the intersectionality between the migrants' human rights protection and the EU border control policies in time of mixed migratory flows, using the impact on Morocco as an example. This research proposal will try to highlight some of the human rights violations perpetrated against irregular migrants in the transit countries, beginning on the examination of the pattern and dynamics of transit migration towards North African-European countries, because the dynamics of unauthorized migrations has received extensive media coverage but little academic attention.

The first part provides a brief introduction of the applicable legal framework addressing the issue of the externalization of migration control between EU and Morocco as illustrative case study of how border management is directly influencing the way EU define its borders. In particular this part outlines the definition of basic principles of a European approach of Migration and Borders to take contextual complexity into account and a more specific analysis offers a review of signed agreements (international and bilateral), their effectiveness, and the applicable standards in case of rejection to and from North Africa. This part starts to explain the characteristics of these instruments and, on this basis, it takes as starting point that these instruments must comply with those international human rights standards that are binding upon EU Member States and seek to identify which restrictions these norms impose on States and the challenges transit countries are facing in order to implement these agreements. In the second part the research will focus on the national legal practice of Morocco in the context of identifying the exact scope of States' obligation in case of mixed migratory flows and on the examination of the implied influence exercised by legal measures adopted by European Union linked to the control of external borders.

1. Irregular Migration and “transit” countries: the case of Morocco

Irregular migration is emerging as one of the most critical, social and economic issues of this decade and had become a major source of concern to many countries, identified as “transit” countries for their geographical position and the role played in the migration process.

The current definition, adopted at international level by the International Organization of Migration, of transit country is “a stopover passage, of varying length, while travelling between two or more countries” (IOM, 2004) and “transit migrants” are persons who were initially trying to reach a more distant destination- Europe, North America, Gulf States- but found themselves stuck at the gate of their intended destination because of the adoption of restrictive policies regarding the entry and stay of aliens and increasing border control.

In this regard transit migration is a phenomenon which shows a paradox: if the circulation of persons is more frequent and easier all around the world, enormous obstacles still exist to migration as a result of restrictive legislations on immigration and tightened border controls in most major countries of destination. As consequences, a growing number of would-be migrants in these areas

not able to reach their intended destination and that remain trapped in unsettled situation as irregular migrants. As consequences, countries that border major regions of destination of international migrants are turning into place of transit for migrants originally bound for their neighbor.

The existing nexus between human rights and migration is not a new one and most of the doctrine affirms the application of international human rights standards to migrants, independently of their status. Nevertheless, the legal situation of international migrants in relation to their enjoyment of human rights is a complex one and it is characterized by overlapping layers of norm-creation and norm-application. These layers include national, transnational, and international regulations and forums; and binding and non-binding regulations and forums.

Morocco is a traditional country of origin towards the countries of the European Union, North America and Middle Eastern. In recent years, Morocco has turned into a country of destination while remaining country of origin, part of immigration it receives is migration flow originating in sub-Saharan Africa. Today the main countries of origin of irregular migrants are Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Guinea, Senegal and Algeria.

Since the beginning of the 1990s Morocco, as all major countries of emigration of North Africa, is changed its position at international level with regard to the European Union Migration policy, becoming a host country, a country of origin and a transition country, which poses a threefold challenges (Lahlou, 2005). The irregular migrants who come to Morocco have two options: either to use the country as a step zone in order to reach Europe, or, if they are not able to cross the Strait of Gibraltar to stay in Morocco, because in most of the cases the situation there is better than this left behind in their country of origin. In each case, transit migrants are considered as “unwanted newcomers”, because they represent different concerns at social level (they may become an additional vulnerable group), at administrative level (Morocco as traditional country of origin, has been confronted with a lack of institutions and normative instruments dealing with the entry and the residence of foreigners), and at economic level (taking into account the critical situation of the labour market at national level).

In particular, the Government of Morocco was affected by new legal and administrative challenges, as it will be deeper analyze in the next section. In fact, as traditional country of origin the Government had to adapt legislations and regulations to a new situation of countries of destination and to supply the deficit existing in the legal framework governing the entry and settlement of aliens. This deficit had opened the doors to prolonged transit and different cases of violations of human rights of migrants, by contrast of the adoption and also application of restrictive measures to contrast irregular migration by the traditional countries of destination at the border.

In this regards, in an official response to the concerns raised by the Special Rapporteur, Morocco stated that it was aware of the existence of the difficulties to be faced with the influx of clandestine migrants. In this context, it worked on specific legislative and administrative instructions to provide clandestine migrants with all guarantees, including deportation to their countries of origin. Morocco added that investigations had been carried out and that deportation processes were undertaken in a normal manner (E/CN.4/2006/73/Add.1).

The situation of migrants, particularly irregular sub-Saharan migrants, is subject of deep concerns as public stated by the international treaty bodies of United Nations and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (Special Rapporteur). In particular the Special Rapporteur highlighted

several violations perpetrated against irregular migrants and he invited Morocco to ensure that the national provisions reflect compliance with the international human rights standards (E/CN.4/2006/73/Add.1). As affirmed by Bustamante (2002), states do not always manage to conciliate the “nationals versus non-nationals” distinction with respect for universal human rights standards.

Moreover we recall that the vulnerability of the situation of irregular migrants in Morocco has been addressed repeatedly by the international organization constantly involved in the protection of their rights and the illegal actions committed by the Moroccan authorities denounced (Amnesty International, 2009; UNHCR, 2008; Moroccan Human Rights organization, 2008). In their public statements those organizations evidence abuses including unlawful expulsion, excessive use of force, lack of due process, collective expulsion and deportation to Algeria and Mauritania, no access to health care, education or decent food. As described in the Amnesty International report 2009 *“Thousands of people suspected of being irregular migrants were arrested and collectively expelled, mostly without any consideration of their protection needs and their rights. Some migrants were reported to have been subjected to excessive force or ill-treatment at the time of arrest or during their detention or expulsion; some have been dumped at the border with Algeria or Mauritania without adequate food and water”*.

Face to this situation, observing the ongoing abuse of irregular migrants throughout the migration process, it is important to highlight the relationship existing between some of the violation against irregular migrants and the responsibility of the State to take measures to prevent such violations. In particular, another element of concern is the role played in this scenario by the influence exercised by the externalization of migration control policies of European Union and the implication of readmission agreements on Euro-Mediterranean relations.

1.1 Relations between Morocco and the European Union

This situation as both country of origin for migrants into the European Union as well as a country of transit from other African countries has influenced and oriented the strong relationship established between EU and Morocco. In fact this relation is *a long standing one*, as analysed in details by Gil-Bazo (Gil-Bazo, 2006), and it has constantly evolved since 1960.

I would like to recall just the principal steps which characterized the last few years in order to conduct an analyse apt to highlight the consequences unregistered and the restrictions that these provisions impose into the country of transit, as Morocco, and the next challenges that transit countries will face in order to implement these agreements.

In particular, EU-Morocco relations were inspired by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership established at the Barcelona Conference in 1995, and more details in this context were added by the 1996 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership between the EU and Morocco. At art. 2 is affirmed that the *“respect for the democratic principles and fundamental human rights established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shall inspire the domestic and external policies of the Community and of Morocco and shall constitute an essential element of this agreement”*.

During the years, the statement as to the respect of human rights has been invoked and repeated, but in practise it seems to be empty of substance, in fact the process of consultation and coordination was oriented first of all at controlling or managing movements from countries of origin. One of the main relevant results of the inclusion of migration matters into the EU external

relations has been the export of restrictive EU migration control policies to third countries with the adoption of more restrictive legislative response to EU's demands. In this regard, the enter into force in Morocco of the national act n. 02/2003 is illustrative of this trend, as it will be explained later.

In October 1999 the European Council endorsed the Action Plan for Morocco prepared by the High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration that drafted several measures in order to address the root causes of migration from this country. Later, within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Morocco was also selected as one of the first countries for the development of Action Plans (COM 795, 2004). Among its objectives, the prevention and the control of illegal migration to and via Morocco was stated, in addition to the development of legislation in line with the international standards. In this context, another element of interest, that will be deeper considered, is the relevance covered by the adoption of readmission agreements in order to strengthen and develop the cooperation between Morocco and EU. In particular, the Commission highlighted that *"Morocco should work closely with the EU to implement the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan ad to reach final agreement on and adoption of an EC readmission agreement in the near future"* (COM (2005)352). Also the Declaration made by European Union in Luxembourg the 13 Octobre 2008 at point 26 *"Tout en rappelant les efforts entrepris par le Maroc en matière d'immigration illégale, l'Union européenne regrette que les négociations sur un accord de réadmission n'aient pas pu être conclues depuis la dernière sessions du Conseil d'Association. L'UE réaffirme l'importance qu'elle attache à la conclusion prochaine de cet accord, qui ouvrira de nouvelles possibilités de développement de la coopération avec le Maroc, y compris dans le contexte du dialogue sur le renforcement des relations bilatérales »*.

The readmission agreements constitute a key element of the mechanism set up by the European Union to address the phenomenon of irregular migration. Many countries of destination have shown a keen interest to sign readmission agreement because those instruments represent the opportunity to go beyond the general principles affirmed under international law.

The aim of the paper is to give an outline of the readmission agreements in order to stress the dangers of readmission agreements for migrants in irregular situations and the impact on the countries generating immigrants' flows, particular Morocco.

In fact, all these provisions utilize promises of aid, supplying with training in preventing irregular migration, infrastructure, including naval, radar systems for strengthening their activities of border control and interception of migrants, financing detention centres, training programmes for police officers, in order to transform Morocco into a so- called "buffer zone" (Cholewinski, 1999) to reduce migratory pressures on receiving countries (Hein de Haas, 2007). The main concern is that these policies, while addressing irregular migration, they contribute to the criminalization of irregular migration because they treat migrants as criminal without including proper guarantees in order to protect their rights and avoid abuses or other cases of violations in the process (Amnesty International, 2006).

Illegal v. Irregular Migrant: towards terminological coherence

At the international law there are practically no binding definition of this phenomenon of irregular migration.¹ The terminology adopted by governments, journalists and in the literature differs substantially (clandestine, undocumented, illegal, irregular migrant etc.) and it is inconsistent and rarely based on a substantive definition.

In the context of the historical movements of people the concept of illegal immigration is a recent one. It was only when States were in a position to formulate rules governing the entry and residence of foreigners and

¹ Guild Elspeth, *Security and Migration in the 21st century*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2009, p. 16

to enforce them that contravention of those rules- and consequently the concept of illegal immigration- became possible.² As stated by Martin Baldwin-Edwards, the definition of illegal migration could be simple: “it is migration that occurs outside of the legal-institutional framework established by states”.³

The main criticism of “illegal” is based on the fact that only an act could be illegal and to refer to foreigners could generate negative effect to address their protection. Groenendijk, stated that the use of this label disqualify human beings.⁴

This study adopts the term “irregular migrant” and “migrant in irregular status”, to avoid the risk to limit the protection of their human rights, by considering them as outside the protection granted by law and in a situation of inferiority because it is sufficiently comprehensive to capture different aspects of irregular movements.⁵ This term is preferable also because a broad range of situations are included under this: in general irregular migrants are persons who contravene migration regulations in their host country.⁶

At international level migration semantics have evolved and the use of the term “irregular migration” is increasing to avoid in particular the imputation of criminality to those in this situation.⁷ This reflects a view that to try to move to another country to better oneself and one’s family economically, or to escape poverty and unemployment, is not in itself a reprehensible motive for migration; and that to do so outside the rules laid down is more in the nature of an administrative than a criminal offence.

This was recently affirmed by the Commissioner on Human Rights, which pointed out the need to use a “fairly neutral terminology”, highlighting that “The choice of language is very important to the image which the authorities project to their population and the world. [...] Illegal immigration as a concept has the effect of rendering suspicious in the eyes of the population (including public officials) the movement of persons across international borders. The suspicious is linked to criminal law – the measure of legality as opposed to illegality”.⁸ Also the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, J.Bustamante, stated that “The term “illegal” is a negative term, reflecting the current tendency on the part of host governments for criminalization of irregular migration”.⁹

The need to pay a specific attention to the terminology adopted was invoked recently by the Committee on Migrant Workers¹⁰: “The Committee is generally concerned about the association of irregular migration with criminality and the use of the term “illegal migrants” rather than migrants in a “non-documented” or an “irregular situation”, which is the

² See for example the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provision) Convention (n. 153)- the first international instrument to deal with the issue of migration in abusive conditions- uses the term “clandestine” to refer to irregular migratory movements and “illegal” to refer to undocumented employment.

³ Martin Baldwin-Edwards, “Towards a theory of illegal migration: historical and structural components”, *Third World Quarterly*, 7, 2008, 1449.

⁴ Kees Groenendijk, “Introduction”, in B. Bogusz, R. Cholewinski, A. Cygan and E. Syszaczak, *Irregular Migration and Human Rights: Theoretical, European and International Perspectives*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2004.

⁵ Wickramesekara Piyasiri, “Protection of Migrant Workers in an Era of Globalization: the role of International Instruments”, in *Comparative Labour Law and Industrial relations in industrialized market economies*, R. Blanpain, Kluwer Law International BV, The Netherlands, 2002.

⁶ P. Fargues, “Irregularity as normality among immigrants south an east of the Mediterranean”, *CARIM AS* No. 02 . San Domenico Fiesole: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced studies, Institut Universitaire Européen, 2009.

⁷ In 1975 the UN General Assembly recommended that all UN bodies use the term “non-documented or irregular migrant workers”, “General Assembly Resolution (3449 (XXX), 1975, “Measures to ensure the human rights and dignity of all migrant workers”) at article 2 “Requests the United Nations organs and specialized agencies concerned to utilize in all official documents the term “non-documented” or irregular migrant workers, to define those workers that illegally and/ or surreptitiously enter another country to obtain work”.

⁸ Commissioner of Human Rights, “Criminalization of Migration in Europe: human rights implications”, Issue Paper, *Council of Europe*, 2009.

⁹ UNHCR, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Jorge Bustamante”, UN Doc. A/HRC/7/12, 25 February 2008.

¹⁰ The Committee on the Protection of the rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families monitors the respect of the provisions of the International Conventions on the Protection of all migrants Workers and Members of their families. It has substantively examined the implementation and the application of the provisions of this Convention to the irregular migrant workers, in interpreting and applying the rights in practice.

terminology used in the Convention. In this regard, the Committee is concerned that a considerable number of migrant workers in the State party are non-documented and that their irregular migration status is considered a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment and/or fines under Law No. 08-11 of 25 June 2008".¹¹

Among the categories belonging to irregular migrant mentioned above, I would like to focus particularly on transit migration. Even there is no generally accepted definition of this phenomenon a growing number of people find themselves in a situation called "transit". It has become so common that in addition to countries of origin and destination, a intermediary category has emerged: the category of transit countries.¹²

I would use for the purpose of this paper the following definition of "transit country" adopted by the Committee on Migrant Workers "any State through which the person concerned passes on any journey to the State of employment or from the State of employment to the State of origin or the State of habitual residence"¹³ and "transit migrants" are persons who were initially trying to reach another destination- Europe, North America, Gulf States, but found themselves stuck at the gate of their intended destination because of the adoption of restrictive policies regarding the entry and stay of aliens and increasing border control.

Migratory movements today are of a mixed nature, including migrants moving for economic reasons, refugees and asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, vulnerable people in an irregular situation. In particular, as stated by Aspasia Papadopoulou, it is possible to identify two main ways in which these two phenomena of irregular migration and asylum overlap: "on the one hand, persons in need of international protection increasingly take the irregular migration path in order to reach European territory; they enter the first asylum country illegally and may also remain in the country undocumented, hoping to for asylum in another European country at a later stage. Rejected asylum seekers also become irregular when they remain in the country of asylum after the rejection of their claim. On the other hand, persons that seek to migrate to Europe but are not in need of protection tend to enter the asylum system, hoping to use this as an alternative means of immigration".¹⁴

3. The principle of sovereignty

Before considering the international human rights framework, the vulnerability stems from the fact of state sovereignty, from the role ascribed to states as guardians or protectors of human rights (Goodwin-Gill, 1989).

The main issue is related to the link between the concept of sovereignty of State and basic human rights of irregular immigrants. In fact it seems more relevant to determine what the basic human rights of irregular migrants are and to decide how far the protection might be extended by sovereign states. In particular this point raise concerns about the organizational capability within society, questions about costs and questions about balancing the aims of an immigration policy with the needs of individuals who sought to reach those societies.

Any attempt to formulate rights for irregular migrants came up against the concept of state sovereignty.

At the national level each State develops "laws" that govern its own migration policies as well as protect the rights of migrants. In addition, States possess broad authority to regulate some aspects of the movement of forcing nationals across their borders. Despite limitations to these authorities, States exercise their sovereign powers to determine who will be admitted and for what period. In support of these powers, States enact "laws" and "regulations" governing the issuance of passports, admissions, the exclusion and removal of aliens, and border security. The term "law" is used broadly

¹¹ UNHCR, Committee of Migrants Workers, Algeria, UN Doc. CMW/C/DZA/1, May 2010, para. 18-19.

¹² Michael Collyer, "In-between places: trans-saharan transit migrants in Morocco and the fragmented journey to Europe", *Antipode*, 2007, 668-689; Francis Duvell, "Transit Migration in Europe", Paper presented at the "First Conference on Irregular Migration", Compas, 2008. Available at www.compas.com (last visited 25 October 2010).

¹³ UNHCR, "Working Paper", Committee on Migrant Workers, UN Doc. CMW/C/2/L.1., 25 March 2005.

¹⁴ Aspasia Papadopoulou, "Exploring the asylum-migration nexus: case study of transit migrants in Europe", *Global Commission of International Migration*, Geneva, January 2005.

to refer to legislation, collective agreements, other formal and informal rules including customs and practise. These apply within a defined national territory and may be “hard law” that is legally enforceable through courts, or “soft law” operating as policy guidelines. States vary in the types of laws and regulations adopted, with some being more restrictive than others.

There is no general right to enter a country, with the exception of nationals of that country or, arguably also, non citizens who have acquired a long-term or secure residence status in their adopted State. Moreover, State action in this area is further constrained by international refugee law and particularly by the principle of *non-refoulement*, which is regarded widely as part of international customary law. Consequently, States are under an obligation to provide assistance to those who fear for their lives and freedom by non- returning them to their country of origin so they can lodge a claim for protection.

In fact, state authority is frequently limited by international law norms and in many situation there is a gap between the rights which migrants, both regular and irregular, enjoy under international law, and the difficulties they experience in the countries where they live, work, and across which they travel. This gap between the principles agreed by governments, and the reality of individuals’ lives, underscores the vulnerability of migrants in term of human rights. While some migrants, might be able to obtain legal entry to another state, those migrants that are, or would be, denied legal entry, may, as frequently occurs, attempt illegal entry. The right to leave continues to confront the fact that there is no general right to enter other states for most of the world’s migrants. In an increasingly interconnected world, in which states generally support the free movement of goods, services, and capital, there is a lack of consensus on the part of states to liberalize their policies on the free movement of migrants (Martin, 2005).

The decision to admit migrant remains within the discretionary power of State authorities and immigration countries normally require a visa before entry into the country. Despite the possession of a visa granted by diplomatic or consular missions entry is subject to the discretion of immigration officials or internal regulations. In most countries, there is no legal remedy against the refusal to grant a visa.

The basic guidelines to consider this matter were set out by the Human Rights Committee, which monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Committee adopted in 1999 a General Comment n. 27 on the right of freedom of movement that provided detailed principles to guide states on the position of aliens.

According to this interpretation “*the Covenant does not recognize the right of aliens to enter or reside in the territory of a State party. It is in principle a matter for the State to decide whom it will admit onto its territory. However, in certain circumstances an alien may enjoy the protection of the Covenant even in relation to entry or residence, for example, when considerations of non-discrimination, prohibition of inhuman treatment and respect for family life arise*”. This is in line with its previous General Comment n. 15, 1986, which stated that each State party must ensure the rights in the Covenant to “*all individuals within its territory and subjects to its jurisdiction*”.

The right of freedom of movement is more than just the right to cross the border, is also the right to normal living conditions in the country of residence, enjoying normal living and working conditions. The right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country, and to have the possibility to enter other countries, without discrimination. The situation has radically changed and

the violation of human rights and freedoms in connection with the exercise of the right to enter a foreign country are so numerous that it has become a matter of urgency to consider that.

As affirmed by the Special Rapporteur *“This power to manage admission and expulsion has, however, to be exercised in full respect for the fundamental human rights and freedoms of non-nationals, which are granted under a wide range of international human rights instruments and customary international law”* (A/HRC/7/12, 25 February 2008).

4. International instruments relating to irregular migrants

The analysis of the practices of Morocco within the context of the EU’s Justice and Home Affairs external dimension give raise to a variety of issues that I am going to approach. The study will argue that a human rights approach to migration law serves the purpose of grounding any legal analysis of migrant rights and corresponding States’ duties under International Law within a conceptual and methodological framework that best allows identifying what States are legally bound to do under International Law in relation to irregular migrants under their jurisdiction.

In principle, migrants enjoy the protection of international law. The international law is well developed and there are international standards that deal directly with migrants, and those that deal with wider human rights questions that affect migrants. The most important international human rights instruments, such as the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the two Covenants (the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights) which came later in 1966, introduced the basic human rights of all human beings including migrant in a regular or irregular situation. In fact, the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights recognizes a number of rights with respect to aliens as well as nationals. Under article 2, each State party undertakes to respect and ensure to all individuals within its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the Covenant “without distinction of any kind”.

Migrant workers are defined as person who wish to settle in another country with a view to being employed otherwise and they may easily be subject to exploitation and it is mainly for this reason that international law started looking into the status and the conditions of migrants workers. The Preamble of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization includes among the aims of the Organization “the protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own”. The International Labour Organization developed a number of conventions and recommendations which nowadays constitute the relevant international instruments for protection of migrant workers (Boutkevitch, 1988).

The ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (n.143) of 1975, concerning migration in abusive condition and the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment of migrants’ workers, was the first attempt to address the situation of irregular migrants. The Convention contains two parts and the first creates a link with the rights to leave as set forth in the Universal Declaration and Covenants. It requires the adoption of all necessary measures at the national and international levels (1) to suppress clandestine movements of migrants and their illegal employment and (2) to take action against the organizers wherever they are, of illicit or clandestine movements of migrants for employment and against those who employ workers who have immigrated irregularly.

The most important instrument is represented by the International Convention concerning the rights of all migrant and members of their families (ICRMW), entered into force on July 1, 2003.

The 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the rights is the first comprehensive instrument defining basic, universal human rights and addressing the protection of all migrant workers, including irregular and regular migrants. The main idea was to recognize that all human beings are entitled to human rights, regardless their legal status and to include a category of migrants not addressed by previous treaties. Article 5 of the Convention recognizes as migrant workers for purposes of the Convention those who are considered to be documented as well as those who are considered non-documented. Article 7 affirms that the rights enumerated in the Convention are to be respected without any distinction of any kind and Part III of the Convention from article 8 through 35 enumerates a comprehensive set of rights applicable to all migrant workers and members of their families. Undocumented migrants enjoy access to legal treatment, emergency medical care, freedom of thought and religion, respect of cultural identity, protection from arbitrary interference with privacy, education of children.

The Committee on the Protection of the rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families, in charge of the supervision mechanisms to monitor the respect of the provisions, has substantively examined the implementation and the application of the provisions to the irregular migrant workers. In this context, the CMW' Communications or Comments are important because they provide guidance in applying the rights in practise. Communications demonstrate how the rights have been interpreted when states have submitted their annual report under the ICPMW.

In particular in a recent consideration on the report submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic (CMW/C/SYR/CO/1, 2 May 2008), the Committee recalled that "in accordance with the definition of "migrant workers" in article 2, paragraph 1, of the Convention, Part III of the Convention is to be applied to all non-nationals engaged in remunerated activity, including those in an irregular situation. In the lights of the State party's position that the said Iraqi nationals are not to be considered refugees, and as they are not therefore excluded from the scope of the Convention under article 3 (d), the Committee encourages the States party to consider according to all Iraqi workers in an irregular situation, to the large extent possible, and insofar as this is not already the case, the rights provides for in Part III of the Convention".

The relevance to work at national level is to ensure the basic human rights that should apply in every country and region. Such rights are independent of what government might decide separately. The hard core of the human rights could be defined at global level but what would only be the narrowest possible definition because the more general the level at which work was done in this field.

There are two ways of formulating rights for irregular migrants; the first was to start from scratch and the second to extend the application of existing agreements to irregular migrants

5. International obligations implementation and national provisions

At international level, Morocco is party of most relevant international human rights instruments. Morocco has either ratified or acceded to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women, the International Convention on the

Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

In applying the provisions of international conventions, Moroccan courts have confirmed the primacy of international human rights law in a number of judicial decisions. The Supreme Court has endorsed the primacy of international norms in several decisions such as the Judgement n. 426 of 22 March 2003, and with its Judgement n. 143 of 23 May 2007, the Casablanca Appeal Court cited the Supreme Court Judgement in support of its ruling, noting *“that the international convention constitutes a special norm that as primacy over national law”* (A/HRC/WG.6/1./MAR/1).

In particular Morocco ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the rights of all migrants' workers and members of their families (ICRMW) on 21 June 1993 with a Declaration on article 92 (1). Morocco was an initiator of the Convention, the first country to ratify the Convention and Moroccan Delegates, with Mexico, was the only one to be involved during the entire time span of the negotiating process (11 years) until the adoption of the Convention and has played an important role in all the process.

In a first time, Morocco as sending country was interested by the articles contained in part VI of the Convention concerning the promotion of sound, equitable, human and lawful conditions in connection with international migration of workers and members of their families, for guarantee the protection of its emigrants. Morocco, however, became a transit country for migratory flows to Europe, a situation that has determinate the establishment of undocumented migrants in this country.

This new perspective and the practical consequences registered have influenced the following implementation of the ICRMW and it is not a case if the initial report on implementation of the Convention is overdue since 2004.

I would like to dwell on the relevance of this instrument and the position of irregular migrants with regards to access to human rights, in particular to equal work conditions and social rights, because ICRMW explicitly grants rights to undocumented migrants or irregular migrants workers.

In official responses to the communications sent out by the Special Rapporteur, the Government of Morocco stated without exceptions the non-applicability of the provisions of the Convention to the migrants in irregular situation, as following

“En ce qui concerne l'allégation de violation des dispositions de la Convention internationale sur la protection des droits de tous les travailleurs migrants et des membres de leur famille, le gouvernement a signalé que le Maroc a ratifié ladite Convention en vertu du dahir chérifien n° 4 93-5 en date du 14 juin 1994. La Convention protégerait les droits des travailleurs migrants et des membres de leur famille qui se trouvent en situation régulière et légale dans le pays d'accueil. Elle ne s'appliquerait pas aux immigrants clandestins qui pénètrent illégalement sur le territoire national pour essayer de passer en Europe. » (E/CN.4/2005/85/Add.1).

This aptitude is confirmed also by Cholewinski and Touzenis, recognizing that a number of sub-Saharan migrants in transit through Europe fulfill the conditions of the ICRMW for protection, but they are without any form of safeguard and subjects to sanctions and expulsion. *“Certain migration officials in Morocco declared, on the basis of interviews sub-Saharan transiting the country are not migrant workers, that they only seek to access to Europe in order to work there and that they have no interest in contacting the Moroccan authorities”*. (Cholewinski and Touzenis, 2009).

This information, even if not comprehensive, clearly demonstrates that the level of implementation is not satisfactory and that exists a substantial gap between the commitments made by Morocco and the application to migrants in irregular status and the need to interpretation in line with international standards.

5.1 Harmonization of domestic legislation with international instruments

It is important to highlight that the ratification on international instruments represents a first step but the effective implementation could guarantee the realization of the provisions at national level. In this context, a brief overview of the legal background existing in Morocco to state the entry into, transit and exit, could contribute to assess the level of implementation and to focus on how Morocco incorporated international standards into its domestic legislation.

A new immigration law was adopted in November 2003; act n. 02-03 on aliens' entry to and stay in its territory, and according several scholars it contains articles that do not follow the spirit of the ICRMW (Pecoud, 2006). This new legal provision tried to introduce an instrument capable to balance the need to protect on one side the basic human rights of migrants and on the other side to introduce specific measures to control the migratory flow.

The purpose of the new law is to unify the existing texts, established between 1914 and 1950, brings the law into line with the provisions of the Criminal Code as part of the process of updating the existing legal framework, establishes and defined precise categories of offences relating to illegal emigration and trafficking in migrants, through effective oversight. In particular, the Act incorporates the hierarchy of laws of basic principle, in as much as all its provisions are to be applied subject to International Convention ratified by Morocco (art.1).

The protection and guarantees included for undocumented migrants are less developed than expected by the Convention. Moreover, no mention is made of family reunification and access to medical services is only available to documented migrants. In addition the right to legal remedy at jurisdiction level and the existing obligation for administrative authorities to justify their decisions in not efficient, as exhaustively described by Rbii (Rbii, 2007). The content of the national provision envisage a potential conflict with international treaties, and it relevant to consider which rules will eventually be followed, in light with the predominant jurisprudence. In this regard, the Human Rights Committee, examining the fifth periodic report presented by Morocco on the implementation of the International Covenant on civil and political rights, has raised several questions concerning the adoption of the act n. 02-03 (CCPR/C/MAR/2004/5). The experts, also, introduced a concern on the current situation on migrants particularly in irregular situation, asking « *quel est le statut juridique des étrangers et immigrés, y compris les immigrés clandestins nombreux notamment à venir d'Afrique subsaharienne et à transiter au Maroc dans l'espoir de rallier l'Europe* » (CCR/C/SR.2237), but not further measures have been formulated by the Government of Morocco even if it is important to recall that the observations made by the Human Rights Committee have to be taken into account in order to establish the human rights of individuals .

However, little information is available on how these measures are actually enforced.

5.2 Specific issues concerning Morocco practice and Human Rights violations against irregular migrants

The existence of aforementioned legal standards - embodied in specific conventions and national provisions - is not sufficient to avoid the augmentation of case of abuse, discrimination and exploitation in correspondence with the increase of irregular migration. In fact, specific challenges remain to ensure the enjoyment of rights at the national level.

In the past years, several human rights concerns have been raised by different international organizations and national organizations¹⁵ about the particular vulnerable situation of migrants in irregular situations and alleged human rights violations.¹⁶ After the “fatal border incidents” occurred near the fences into Ceuta and Melilla in 2005, the phenomenon of irregular migrations appeared more evident and more information became available on the current situation.¹⁷ The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants expressed deep concern at reports of the deaths of migrants of sub-Saharan origin on the border between the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla and Morocco, “for which security forces policing the border were reportedly responsible”.

Those events have raised a particular attention on the difficulties that the Government was facing at administrative and concrete level to address this growing phenomenon. As stated by the Consultatif Council on Human Rights (*Conseil Consultatif des droits de l'homme, CCDH*)¹⁸ in the Report published on those dramatic events: “*Le Conseil Consultatif des droits de l'homme n'a, à aucun moment, doute de la complexité du sujet ni de ses ramifications multiples. De par sa nature, la question est multifactorielle. Elle se situe aussi bien au niveau national qu'international, au niveau politique autant qu'au niveau social. Elle pose des exigences de droit au même titre que des nécessités humanitaires. Le problème dépasse, par ses embranchements, les seules capacités du Maroc à y répondre*”.¹⁹

These violations against people trying to cross the borders included: collective expulsions²⁰, use of excessive force by law enforcement officials and precarious living conditions.²¹

- *Collective expulsions*

The lack of legal clarity has facilitated a number of human rights violations. When people are intercepted by national authorities they are often immediately unlawfully expelled through the border closest to Algeria territory.²² In several cases they do not have the opportunity to obtain legal advice nor they given access to an interpreter despite those rights are guaranteed by Moroccan law.²³ In particular one were not told that they were going to be expelled and no one, as acknowledged by Amnesty International, was given the rights to appeal against the decision before an administrative

¹⁵ See for example, Friends and Families of the Victims of Clandestine Immigration (AFVIC), the Moroccan Association of Human Rights.

¹⁶ FIDH, “*Les autorités marocaines ont procédé ces dernières années, à des rafles et à des reconduites illégales de migrants à la frontière et ce, en violation flagrante de la loi marocaine sur l'entrée et le séjour des étrangers au Maroc, adoptée en 2003 et de la Convention de Genève sur le statut des réfugiés. Parmi ces migrants, on a dénombré des personnes ayant été reconnues par le Haut Commissariat aux réfugiés (HCR) comme éligibles au statut de réfugié Il faut noter toutefois, que grâce aux efforts des ONG dont l'OMDH et du HCR, les demandeurs d'asile et les réfugiés n'ont pas fait l'objet de refoulement depuis décembre 2006*”. FIDH, “Statement submitted to the Universal Periodic Review”, 2008.

¹⁷ Amnesty International described that “*Thousands of people suspected of being irregular migrants were arrested and collectively expelled, mostly without any consideration of their protection needs and their rights. Some migrants were reported to have been subjected to excessive force or ill-treatment at the time of arrest or during their detention or expulsion; some have been dumped at the border with Algeria or Mauritania without adequate food and water*”.

¹⁸ The Consultative Council on Human Rights Council has been created the 8 May 1990 and it represents one of the most important evolution regarding the protection of human rights. This institution has been modified in 2001, to repond to the new needs emerging at international level “*dans le cadre d'une monarchie constitutionnelle, démocratique et sociale, fortement attachée aux droits de l'Homme tels qu'ils sont universellement reconnus; demeurant, déterminée à consolider et promouvoir les acquis démocratiques dans leurs expressions culturelles et leur traduction dans la réalité [...]. En regard, en outre, à nos engagements internationaux en faveur de la protection, la préservation et la promotion des droits de l'Homme, engagements considérés, chacun, comme référent normatif en la matière [...] Pour que le Royaume du Maroc demeure au Cœur de la dynamique de son ère, toujours fidèle à ses engagements internationaux dans le domaine des droits de l'homme*”.

¹⁹

²⁰ The Moroccan Ministry of Interior in a number of statements published by the Moroccan Ministry of Interior stated that more than 20.000 non-citizens suspected of being irregular migrants were arrested between January and November 2005 and the majority have been deported.

²¹ As described in the Amnesty International report 2009, “*Thousands of people suspected of being irregular migrants were arrested and collectively expelled, mostly without any consideration of their protection needs and their rights. Some migrants were reported to have been subjected to excessive force or ill-treatment at the time of arrest or during their detention or expulsion; some have been dumped at the border with Algeria or Mauritania without adequate food and water*.”

²² They have to walk across the border into Algeria and to reach the nearest Algerian village which was around 30 km away.

²³ Art. 23 and art. 24 of Law n. 02-03 concerning the entry and residence of foreigners in the Kingdom of Morocco, and Irregular Emigration and Immigration.

court, to examine the elements on which the decision was taken, to be assisted by a lawyer or to contact the consulate of their country of origin.²⁴

During those collective expulsions from Morocco to desert areas not only irregular migrants were arrested, however people who had made asylum claims at the UNHCR office in Rabat. Even if they had produced a UNHCR document confirming that they started the procedure some officers saying that they don't have any instructions from competent authorities to grant them specific kind of protection. The SRHRM, expressed his concerns about the mass expulsions stating that "collective deportations in these conditions endanger the right to life".²⁵ Collective expulsions are prohibited by the provisions of article 22 and 23 of the Migrant Workers Convention, which Morocco has ratified as illustrated above, and according to the definition of migrant worker adopted in this instrument, this provision apply to these circumstances. This issue was raised by a communication sent by the SRHRM²⁶ to the Government of Morocco which excluded the application of the Migrant Workers Convention replying that "*La Convention protégerait les droits des travailleurs migrants et des membres de leur famille qui se trouvent en situation régulière et légale dans le pays d'accueil. Elle ne s'appliquerait pas aux immigrants clandestins qui pénètrent illégalement sur le territoire national pour essayer de passer en Europe*".²⁷

- *Living conditions of irregular migrants*

Although Morocco as mentioned above is bound by international human rights instruments, migrants who live in irregular way in Morocco also are subjected to human rights violations that affect their security and their conditions of live, work and residence and also forms of discrimination based on race and religion.

Doctor without borders (MSF) on 30 September 2010 raised concern "*over the medical condition of migrants after mass expulsions by the Moroccan Police*", denouncing that around 600/700 migrants have been arrested between August and September 2010 and deported from Morocco to the desert area at the border with Algeria.²⁸ The migrants were left at the border between Morocco and Algeria without any food or water. Martin Jorge, in charge of MSF in Morocco, stated that "*Our team has witnessed the direct impact of these mass raids and expulsions on the medical condition and mental health of the migrants [...]. We provided medical support to a woman who had given birth to her child just six days before. She was arrested by the police forces and spent five days in a police cell with her newborn child. Then she was taken back to the*

²⁴ Amnesty International, *Spain and Morocco: Failure to protect the rights of migrants- Ceuta and Melilla one year on*, October 2006.

²⁵ UN Press release, *Rights expert expresses deep concern over situation of migrants in Morocco and Spanish enclaves, urges to end to collective deportations*, 12 October 2005.

²⁶ "Toujours selon les informations reçues, depuis le début du mois d'octobre de déportations massives de migrants et de demandeurs d'asile d'origine subsaharienne ont lieu de manière régulière. Au moins 800 personnes, y compris des femmes enceintes et des enfants, auraient été abandonnées dans des régions désertiques sans eau ni nourriture. Plusieurs d'entre elles seraient des migrants d'origine sub-saharienne détenus près de la frontière du Maroc avec Ceuta et Melilla. Le 3 octobre 2005, environ 240 migrants auraient été déportés vers la Mauritanie à bord de quatre autobus contenant une soixantaine de personnes chacun. La région de la frontière du Maroc avec la Mauritanie étant particulièrement aride ceci engendrerait des

risques graves pour les personnes expulsées. Certaines personnes seraient expulsées vers l'Algérie dans la région du désert, sans l'accord du gouvernement de ce pays, sans eau ni nourriture, entraînant un grand risque pour leur santé. Les informations indiquent qu'un certain nombre de ces personnes aurait été trouvées et soignées par des organisations humanitaires. Le sort des autres personnes demeure inconnu. 212. Finalement, plus de 1000 migrants, y compris certaines personnes qui avaient auparavant été amenées dans des régions désertiques et qui aura besoin de soins médicaux urgents, auraient été déplacées dans des installations militaires à Guleimin en vue de leur expulsion imminente en bus et en avion. L'accès à ces personnes par des organisations extérieures aurait été restreint».

²⁷ UNHCR, "Report submitted by M. Bustamante A. Jorge, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants-Addendum Communications sent to Governments and replies received", UN Doc. E/CN.4/2006/73/Add.1.

²⁸ MSF raises concern over the medical condition of migrants after mass expulsions by the Moroccan police, MSF Press Release, 30 September 2010.

border. She has managed to come back to Oujda, but is now suffering from acute gastrointestinal syndrome". In this regard, women are forced to give birth in quite unacceptable conditions of hygiene and without any medical attention whatsoever

6. Readmission agreements and their effect in transit countries

Readmission agreements are concluded to facilitate the removal or deportation of "persons who do not, or no longer fulfill the conditions of entry to, presence in or residence in the requesting states" (COM (2002) 504 final: 206) to his/her home State or a State through which he/she passed en route to the State which seeks to return them (IOM, 2004).

Many scholars, have already stressed that bilateral cooperation on readmission is not new in the history of international relations (Kruse, 2006) and that, since the early 1990s, the issue of readmission has become part and parcel of the immigration control system developed at bilateral and multilateral levels (Lahlou, 2002; Belguedouz, 2009). It is possible identify different kind of readmission agreements: a first generation readmission agreements signed in the fifties, in order to cope with the irregular movement of persons among Member States; a second generation developed since the beginning of 1990 as instruments to address directly the issue of illegal migration and a third generation according the provision of the article 63 (3), paragraph (B) TEC which highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to migration and asylum, addressing political, human rights and development issues in countries of origin and transit (Boutellet-Paquet, 2003) .

There is a customary law obliging countries of origin to facilitate the return of their nationals or of those persons identified as being nationals of these countries. By contrast to the right to leave, above introduced, at the traditional level of State to State relations, the State's obligation to admit its nationals is the correlative to other States' right of expulsion. Adopting an other perspective, the State's right of protection over its citizen abroad is matched by its duty to receive those of its citizens who are not allowed to remain on the territory if other States (Goodwill, 1979). There is no formal obligation under international law of state to accept non-citizens to their territory, and in relation to that there is no an international obligation of states to readmit to their territory third countries nationals who have passed through the requested State. Otherwise, there are no possibilities to send back third countries nationals, unless the State agrees by signing a readmission agreement. For these reasons, considering the practical difficulties existing or the EU Member States to remove irregular migrants, those instruments could be consider a privileged instrument of their return policies, most of all because they include both nationals and third country nationals.

The vast majority of readmission agreements are concluded at a bilateral level. For instance, Morocco has completed a bilateral agreement with Spain, on 13 February 1992, on the circulation of persons, transit, and readmission of illegal immigrants, however the enforcement has not been very successful. Morocco has only accepted 5 out of 600 illegal immigrants, rejecting all the others on the ground that documentary evidence showing that they have passed through Morocco is lacking (Cholewinski, 1999). The issues regarding the readmission of non nationals and the forms of evidence to be proved, still remain the main obstacles to avoid the agreement on the readmission agreement between EU and Morocco, under discussion since 2000.

Actually, the reference document for national policies is the standard bilateral agreement between a Member State and a third country, adopted by the Working group on immigration, created by the

Secretary General of the Council, by a recommendation in 1996 (OJEC, n. C 274). Such arrangements set out administrative and operational procedures which are jointly defined by the contracting parties regarding the means of identifications of the unauthorized migrants and ensuring delivery of travel documents. The national authorities in charge of cooperation on the removal of the foreigners are clearly stated in the agreements and the border control points which may be used for readmission purposes are listed.

Both contracting parties commit themselves to the respect of reciprocal obligations which are formally mentioned in the agreement. These obligations pertain to the fact that each contracting party agrees to readmit at the request of the other contracting parties foreign nationals who do not or no longer fulfill the conditions of entry or residence on the territory if the State of the requesting party.

They also commit to carrying out removal procedures without unnecessary formalities and within reasonable time limits, with due respect of their duties under their national legislation and the international agreements on human rights and the protection of the status of refugees, in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status and its 1967 protocol.

The reciprocity of obligations does not mean that the contracting parties benefit equally from the conclusion and the implementation of the readmission agreement. The perceived costs and benefits attached to the conclusion and to the implementation of a readmission agreements differ substantially between both contracting parties. This assumption is far from being trite when it comes to accounting for the vested interests that each party has in engaging in this kind of bilateral agreement. Whilst the interest of a country of destination sounds obvious, the interest of country of origin may be less evident, above all when considering that its economy remains dependent on the revenues of its (legal and illegal) expatriates living abroad, or when migration continues to be viewed as a safety valve to relieve pressure on domestic workers.

These considerations are important to show that the conclusion of a readmission agreement is motivated by expected benefits which are unequally perceived by the contracting parties, on the one hand, and that its implementation is based on a balance between the concrete benefits and costs attached to it, on the other. In other words, reciprocal obligations are not sufficient to account for the conclusions of readmission agreement, nor are they sufficient to secure their effectiveness in the long term.

This important to underline this aspect, in fact the perception in Morocco of the practice of readmission and their human rights consequences. Some European countries and, recently, the European Union concluded agreements with their Moroccan counterpart “aiming” at readmitted or repatriating its nationals who are caught in an illegal situation in return for certain benefits. According to these agreements, the role played as transit country to other emigration countries for persons cross the country on their way to Europe is in cause, in fact the recent draft under discussion include also the readmission of non-nationals who travelled through the country.

Readmission agreements are important instruments of the EU’s border strategy to address “illegal” migration, involving presumed reciprocal undertakings by the European Union and third-country to facilitate the return of irregular migrants to their countries of origin or transit. The main objective is to “facilitate and expedite the enforcement of return decisions in respect of irregular migrants and

may also function as an incentive for countries of origin or transit to enhance their migration control”.²⁹

Since 2007, European Union has started to conclude and negotiate readmission agreements including third-country nationals. In this context, it is relevant to focus on the rights of third-country nationals. A particular question that I would like to discuss in this part is whether the conclusion and implementation of readmission agreements could raise human rights concerns when applied to this group. In fact when an irregular migrant is returned to a country which is not its country or origin might risk to be exposed to the violation of its human rights or to be unable to claim the protection of its specific rights and to be placed in a vulnerable situation.³⁰

Most readmission agreements contain “non-affected clauses” which provide that this particular instrument “shall be without prejudice to the right, obligations and responsibilities of the Community, the Member States and [the partner] arising from International Law”.³¹ Since 2004, the Commission reworded the original clause³² including explicit reference to the international human rights instruments, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the 1984 United Nations Torture Convention.

This aspect needs to be considered if the readmitting state fails to respect international obligations, as highlighted by the Ms T. Strik, Rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population³³, “*A starting point should be that sending countries make sure, when negotiating readmission agreements, that the relevant international instruments are ratified by receiving countries, but also that they are correctly implemented*”.

In this regard, it is interesting to recall the specific provisions adopted by the Resolution 1741 (2010) “Readmission agreements: a mechanism for returning irregular migrants” at art. 6 which explicitly call to conclude those agreements only with countries “*that comply with international human rights standards*”.³⁴ Such as the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees and the obligations established by the European Convention on International Human Rights law to avoid the risk of breach of international standards the sending countries also have the responsibility to evaluate the situation in the receiving country, for example if they risk to return irregular migrants in a country where they lack access to asylum procedure. It could be helpful to recall also the extraterritorial effect of the provisions included in the international human rights instruments, such as for example the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, that can arise where a State Party adopt measure having an effect on individuals in the territory of another State. As stated McGoldrick, in the case of a state party deporting or expelling an individual within its territory to a state where there is a risk that he/she would face a treatment contrary to the provisions of the Covenant this action can violation its own obligation under the Covenant.³⁵ As affirmed by the Human Rights Committee “ if a state party extradites a person within its jurisdiction in

²⁹ Parliamentary Assembly, “*Readmission agreements: a mechanism for returning irregular migrants*”, Resolution 1741 (2010), adopted on 22 June 2010 (22nd Sitting).

³⁰ This particular issue was raised by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, see the Report “*Readmission agreements: a mechanism for returning irregular migrants*”, Doc. 12168, 16 March 2010.

³¹ C. Billet, EC Readmission Agreements: A prime instrument of the external dimension of the EU’s fight against irregular immigration. An assessment after ten years of practice, *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 12, 2010, p. 72.

³² In the first clause, included in the first three agreements, there was no specific instruments enumerated and this clause seemed to be too general.

³³ Report, Doc. 12168, 16 March 2010.

³⁴ Art. 6

³⁵ Dominic McGoldrick, “The European Convention on human rights and extraterritorial jurisdiction: a comment on life after Bankovic”, in Fons Coomans and Menno T. Kamminga, *Extraterritorial application of Human Rights Treaties*, Intersentia: Antwerp-Oxford, 2004, p. 54.

circumstances such as a result there is a real risk that his or her rights under the Covenant will be violated in another jurisdiction, the State party itself may be in violation of the Covenant”.³⁶

The European Commission is pushing forward Morocco in the negotiation and conclusion of such instrument, considering a valid instrument in the external relations in the field of migration. In this context the European Union don't seem to take in consideration the compatibility of this instruments and the human rights concerns raised above. A specific reference should be done the national legal framework adopted by the Government of Morocco since 2003. As mentioned above, in Morocco to leave the country irregularly is punished as a crime and the consequence is that the readmitted person risks to be imprisoned or to be punished with heavy fines upon return to the transit country. The Rapporteur expressed her concern to enforce readmission agreements “to countries in which these scenario are likely to occur” affirming that these agreements should not be used for such cases.³⁷

Conclusion

This article has addressed a number of issues related to the protection of human rights of migrants in irregular situation.

The aim is to retain a focus on the existing relationship between the violations perpetrated against vulnerable groups of irregular migrants, such as in the context of transit migration, and the restrictive measures adopted in order to address national security and to foster border control at European level.

First, in the context of the practice of Morocco the existing relation with the European Union has played a relevant role in the formulation and application of the national legal framework and it seems to prevail the affirmation of the instances of the principle of sovereignty of the states concerned instead of guarantee the needs and basic human rights of migrants in irregular status. The instruments adopted by the European Union are clearly oriented to keep the migrants more close at their country of origins, but a question of the legality of this system has been raised.

The above analysis demonstrated that several areas need improvement so that irregular migrants and refugees to have their rights respected. There exists a binding international legal framework to ensure the rights of people in irregular situation, nevertheless one needs to have a legal framework which not only works at international level but also at national level.

International instruments existing in international human rights law provide a strong normative framework but much more needs to be done to empower migrants in irregular situation to denounce the violations occurred and to claim their rights. In particular, in order for Morocco to act in accordance with its international obligations, the Government must give irregular migrants access to some social rights, among which the rights to healthcare and to adequate living conditions. Second, as explored earlier, the need to guarantee a minimal judicial control to avoid absolute discretion over deportation orders.

There is an urgent need to enhance up capacity to increment national legislative provisions in order to implement and properly interpret the provisions of the International Migrant Worker Convention. The effort to promote respect for legal standards and rights of migrants, irrespective of their status. There must be adequate dissemination of information on migrants' rights in order to make national authorities aware of human rights of migrants.

³⁶ Kindler v. Canada, UN Doc. A/48/50, 30 July 1993.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, paragraph 63.

Finally, on the basis of the considerations and the concerns illustrated above, it appears clearly that the future conclusion of instrument such as readmission agreements could put a relevant number of irregular migrants at risk returning them in a country such as Morocco where the impact of this instrument could be raise human rights violations of third country nationals in transit. In fact it should be assess the real impact that this kind of instrument could have in the receiving country, from the fact that even if a State is part to international human rights treaties, as the case of Morocco, the analysis conducted showed that these obligations are not always respected.

Finally, on a question as sensitive as the movement of persons between states, I would like to recall Goodwin that stated *“it perhaps only to be expected that compromises will emerge. The effective implementation of international standards depends strongly on cooperation between sending and receiving countries, in an equation nonetheless where the balance is necessary tilted in favor of the latter”* (Goodwin, 1979).

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¹ SEC (2004), 569, of 12 May 2004, 3.

¹ COM (2004) 795 final, of 9 December 2004.

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Migration forcée des Tchadiens dans le département du Faro au Nord Cameroun (1980-2010)

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Résumé

Depuis les indépendances, les tensions se succèdent en Afrique, notamment la guerre du Biafra au Nigeria de 1967 à 1970, l'écartement politique des opposants au régime de Sékou Touré en Guinée, la lutte de libération en Guinée Bissau de 1963 à 1973. Le Tchad ne déroge pas à la règle. En effet, l'histoire politique tchadienne de 1980 à 1990 est marquée par la violence, la répression et les coups d'Etat à répétition. Depuis la fin de la décennie soixante dix jusqu'à l'aube du XXI ème siècle, le Tchad a connu et connaît toujours une instabilité récurrente. Les différents conflits ont engendré de pertes humaines énormes et provoqué le déplacement de centaines de milliers de réfugiés. Le Cameroun, pays voisins du Tchad caractérisé par sa stabilité politique représente pour les réfugiés tchadiens une terre d'accueil. L'introduction ou alors l'acceptation d'un élément nouveau dans une société a toujours été problématique. C'est ainsi que l'arrivée des réfugiés tchadiens dans le département du Faro au Nord Cameroun va entraîner un certain nombre de mutations aux conséquences actuellement visibles. Aussi, posons-nous la question de savoir en quoi l'implantation des réfugiés tchadiens dans cette zone peut-elle être présentée comme une variable explicative des dynamiques économiques, socioculturelles et politiques dans ce département.

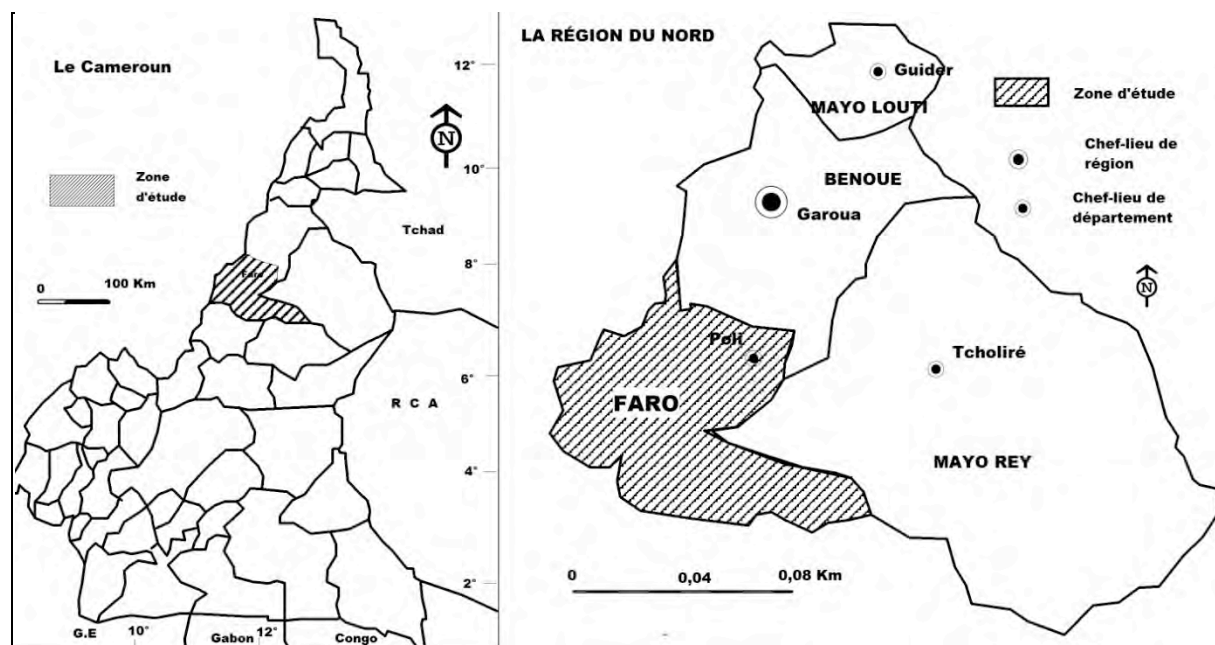
Mots clés : Migration forcée, Tchad, Nord Cameroun, dynamiques et mutations.

Introduction

Les migrations en Afrique centrale restent un champ d'étude à défricher. On pourrait même dire que cette thématique représente un domaine marginal dans l'historiographie de cette région. Pourtant, les guerres et les instabilités politiques qui la caractérisent depuis les indépendances entraînent le déplacement des populations. Pour une plus grande sécurité, ces populations se déplacent de ville en ville ou de pays en pays, en quête de terres d'asile ou de pays d'accueil paisibles et stables pouvant les mettre à l'abri des conflits, de la persécution et leur garantir une certaine sécurité.

Le Cameroun, pays de l'Afrique centrale, se présente comme un havre de paix et de sécurité dans une sous région marquée par les conflits multiples. Cette position fait de ce pays un réservoir d'un nouveau bassin migratoire constitué par la géographie des violences et des guerres. Parmi les réfugiés issus de différents pays africains et résidant au Cameroun, le Tchad compte la plus grande colonie, avec environ 40 000 âmes,

principalement installées dans la partie septentrionale du pays¹. C'est ainsi que le département du Faro a accueilli plusieurs milliers de réfugiés venus du Tchad voisin. L'arrivée des ces réfugiés dans ce département va entraîner un certain nombre de mutations aux conséquences actuellement visibles. Aussi, posons-nous la question de savoir en quoi l'implantation des réfugiés tchadiens dans cette zone peut-elle être présentée comme une variable explicative des dynamiques économiques, socioculturelles et politiques dans ce département (voir carte de localisation).



Source : Base SIG des villes du Cameroun, Laboratoire de Géomatique/université de Ngaoundéré,
Adaptation : Baska Toussia, 2011

Figure 1. Localisation de la zone d'étude

A- Les déplacements involontaires

Le début de la décennie 80 a été marqué par un afflux important des Tchadiens au Cameroun en général et spécifiquement dans la région septentrionale. Cette arrivée massive des Tchadiens trouve son explication dans la conjonction de plusieurs facteurs à la fois politique, militaire et économique. Le choix des sites d'accueil n'a pas été un simple fait du hasard. Il a obéi à des critères bien définis. Fuyant les guerres en général, les migrants présents dans le département du Faro sont de différentes catégories socioprofessionnelles. Avant

¹ UNHCR, Rapport annuel, 2002, in www.unhcr.org/statistics, consulté le 20 août 2011.

même de s'intéresser aux causes de départ des Tchadiens, il est nécessaire de rappeler que les migrations en Afrique ne datent pas d'hier.

1- Les migrations en Afrique : un phénomène ancien

Très largement assimilée aux migrations forcées affectant les pays du Sud, la notion de réfugié, au sens moderne du terme, est relativement récente. Sa construction, en l'occurrence, doit beaucoup à la crise palestinienne de 1948 et à la signature, trois ans plus tard, de la Convention de Genève, qui a régulé les procédures d'asile politique et donné naissance au Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés (HCR).²

Si la notion de réfugié est récente, les migrations elles ne sont pas un phénomène nouveau en Afrique. La configuration actuelle des peuples en Afrique n'est que le résultat d'un long processus migratoire dont les sources s'enracinent très loin dans l'histoire. Les raisons de migrer s'articulent généralement autour des situations de crises qu'elles soient politiques, conflictuelles ou alors écologiques.

De la vallée du Nil jusqu'au pourtour du Lac Tchad, l'Afrique centrale du XIX^{ème} siècle a beaucoup souffert de razzias esclavagistes qui ont suivi l'expansion de l'Islam dans la région. Celles-ci ont provoqué des déplacements de population qui, n'avaient rien à envier aux ravages que provoqua la « guerre sainte » du djihad peul en Afrique de l'Ouest à la même époque³. Cette situation conflictuelle a amené les peuples entiers à se déplacer vers des zones relativement stables. Ce faisant, ils ont dû se débrouiller par eux-mêmes pour organiser les trajectoires de leur fuite et les modalités de leur réinstallation. Les migrations anciennes en Afrique trouvent également une explication dans la fragilité des systèmes agraires.

Dans les sociétés rurales africaines, le départ vers un autre site plus ou moins proche représente pour ceux qui partent une solution qui s'impose lorsque la satisfaction des besoins les plus essentiels devient problématique (faible productivité des sols, saturation de l'espace, alimentation etc...). Dans un contexte de saturation foncière et de pression démographique croissante, l'accès aux ressources devient compétitif. Par rapport à ce contexte de crise, la nécessité de migrer s'impose comme l'ultime réponse viable. Ainsi, une partie de la population se déplace des régions les plus peuplées vers celles vides ou moins peuplées. C'est bien le cas des Toupouri qui au XVII^{ème} siècle voit une frange de sa population migrer de leur site d'origine (Sud-Est du Tchad) vers une région faiblement peuplée et boisée au Nord-Est du Cameroun.

² D. Dennis. Cordell, 2002, « Des « réfugiés » dans l'Afrique précoloniale ? L'exemple de la Centrafrique, 1850-1910 », in *Politique africaine*, N°85, p.16.

³ *Ibid.* p.18.

Pendant la colonisation, les administrateurs européens ont en particulier mis en place des migrations de travail, saisonnière en direction des villes, afin de se procurer une main-d'œuvre. On a enregistré alors des migrations de développement dont le but était l'acheminement de la main d'œuvre pour la réalisation des travaux d'intérêt public. Incités par la recherche effrénée du profit, les colons vont pour leur main d'œuvre ignorer très souvent l'aspect qualitatif de celle-ci pour se limiter à l'aspect quantitatif. C'est vers les campagnes et non vers les villes que les « négriers » se sont spontanément dirigés pour rechercher la ressource humaine dont ils avaient besoin. A cette époque encore, 90% de la population vivaient en dehors des villes. Dans l'Extrême-Nord du Cameroun par exemple, certaines régions étaient considérées comme réservoir de main d'œuvre. Il s'agissait des populations non islamisées qui étaient nombreuses, vigoureuses et travailleuses. Dans la perspective de l'exploitation des colonies, les colons ont toujours encouragé le déplacement des populations. C'est bien ce qui ressort des propos de Colette Dubois :

La mobilité des hommes peut être saisonnière : déplacement des « navetanes » (main d'œuvre saisonnière recrutée pour récolter au Sénégal l'arachide) ; migrations des Mossi vers la Gold Coast, pour cultiver les champs de cacao ; recrutements de coupeurs pour les chantiers forestiers du Gabon ; recrutement de Khroumen (hommes d'équipages et dockers) sur la côte occidentale de l'Afrique par les compagnies de navigation, etc.⁴

Aux lendemains des indépendances, l'impératif de développement des jeunes Etats a imposé la création d'unités industrielles dans certaines localités du pays. Ce faisant, les besoins en main d'œuvre se pose avec acuité comme ça été le cas de la zone de Mbandjock dans la région du centre Cameroun. Des migrations organisées par l'Etat en direction de cette unité agro-industrielle de la SOSUCAM (Société Sucrière du Cameroun) ont eu lieu. Ainsi, les Toupouri, les Massa, les Moundang ont été mobilisés pour servir de main d'œuvre dans cette unité industrielle.

L'aggravation des contraintes économiques au lendemain des indépendances ainsi que les problèmes liés à l'alternance politique vont amplifier et diversifier les mouvements de population au cours des dernières décennies du XXème siècle.

2- Les causes des déplacements forcés des Tchadiens

⁴ C. Dubois, 2005, « Quelles politiques de développement pour l'Afrique subsaharienne durant la colonisation ? », Communication réalisée lors des Cinquièmes Rencontres de la Durance, P.8.

La situation du Tchad s'est dégradée progressivement aux lendemains de l'indépendance le 11 août 1960 aboutissant à une série de guerre et à une ruine du pays. De très nombreux déplacements, dont ceux des Tchadiens, en furent la conséquence. La crise politique et économique est la cause immédiate des départs et a créé un cadre de production massive des migrants forcés. Passer en revue l'histoire politique récente de ce pays donnera à coup sûr une lisibilité du phénomène et rendra intelligible la question de recherche. La création du Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad (FROLINAT) en 1966 par Ibrahim Abatcha à Nyala dans le Darfour Soudanais ouvre la série des conflits armés entre les différents gouvernements centraux à N'Djaména et les Mouvements politico-militaires. Les causes de ces luttes armées sont d'origines multiples: politiques, économiques, sociales, militaires.

a- Politique

Le président Tombalbaye interdit dès 1962 les partis d'opposition, et certains de ses administrateurs zélés notamment certains militaires ont commis des exactions sur les populations de la partie septentrionale engendrant ainsi la création du Frolinat en 1966.⁵

La balkanisation de ce mouvement après la mort de son fondateur a conduit à des excroissances ou tendances rivales (FAN, FLT...) qui ont pris le pouvoir en février 1979. Mais très tôt les rivalités pour le contrôle du pouvoir, l'esprit clanique, la vision lucrative du pouvoir par les leaders respectifs ont conduit à des multiples alliances et contre alliances puis à des affrontements militaires internes généralisés et sans discontinuité. Ce qui a pour conséquence l'aggravation du fragile équilibre social, politique et économique du pays. Cette situation n'est pas propre au Tchad. Bon nombre de pays en Afrique partage ce constat. C'est bien ce qui fait dire au Secrétaire Général lors d'un discours au Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies :

Plus de trente ans après que les pays d'Afrique ont acquis leur indépendance, les Africains eux-mêmes se rendent de plus en plus compte que le continent doit chercher ailleurs ce qui l'accable, aujourd'hui plus que jamais, c'est elle-même que l'Afrique doit examiner. C'est la nature du pouvoir politique dans bien des pays d'Afrique, de même que les conséquences réelles ou perçues comme telles - de la prise du pouvoir et du maintien de celui-ci qui est une source majeure de conflit dans le continent.⁶

⁵ Ley-Ngardigal, Djimadoum, 2008, « La crise tchadienne », Emission radio *Afrique Plus*, avec Jean-Marie Vianney.

⁶ « Les causes des conflits et la promotion d'une paix et d'un développement durables en Afrique », in Rapport du Secrétaire Général présenté au Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies, 16 avril 1998, P. 3.

En effet, cette conception du pouvoir, loin de contribuer à l'épanouissement et au progrès, constitue un blocage, cause de discorde et de tensions sociales où le détenteur du pouvoir devient méfiant et s'entoure des siens pour une supposée protection. L'absence de dialogue, la méfiance réciproque entre gouvernant et gouvernés, l'insatisfaction des besoins primaires font des mécontents qui n'hésitent pas à conquérir le pouvoir par la force. Ce faisant, le pouvoir devient instable et conduit à une situation de guerre perpétuelle détruisant tout le tissu économique.

b- Causes socio-économiques

Les ravages de la guerre se traduisent par le déclin économique, la destruction des infrastructures, la destruction des systèmes de production alimentaires qui mène à la sous-alimentation, la famine et la mort. C'est dire que le champ politique influence de manière certaine les conditions de vie économiques et sociales et les dégrade. Les querelles politiques ont créé une situation de sous-alimentation, de problèmes sanitaires et de chômage accru. Devant cette situation chaotique, la seule alternative viable qui se présente est la fuite. Il faut non seulement chercher un asile mais surtout trouver les ressources pour sa survie. Comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, la confiscation du pouvoir par une minorité clanique et le clientélisme politique ont pour corollaire l'appropriation des ressources du pays considérées comme propriété privée et surtout l'exclusion de la majorité de la population. Cette exclusion des populations de la gestion des ressources conduit inéluctablement à la paupérisation de ces dernières accélérant ainsi leur départ. Les trajectoires suivies par les migrants forcés ne sont pas identiques et obéissent à certains paramètres.

3- Choix du site d'accueil

Avant de parler de la zone d'étude qui accueille les migrants tchadiens, il est judicieux de présenter le Cameroun comme un havre de paix dans une sous région en perpétuelle ébullition. De ce fait, ce pays a constitué pendant longtemps une terre d'accueil qui a vu venir depuis des décennies d'importantes vagues de migrants issues de différents pays. Il constitue une zone réceptacle où se rencontrent et se mélangent les traditions africaines. Nous pouvons relever dans l'histoire du Cameroun quelques faits se rapportant à l'arrivée des migrants étrangers.

Entre janvier 1966 et janvier 1970, période où la guerre du Biafra bat son plein au Nigéria, le Nord Cameroun accueille des milliers de réfugiés et principalement les populations nomades, les Haoussa musulmans⁷. En 1978, le Cameroun est encore sollicité par un afflux de ressortissants équato-guinéens fuyant la dictature de Macias Nguema, situation qui coïncide d'ailleurs avec une déclaration de coopération entre le HCR et le gouvernement du Cameroun. Entre 1980 et 2000, le Cameroun accueille des milliers de Congolais fuyant le

⁷ H. Bocquene, 1986, *Moi un Mbororo*, Paris, Karthala, PP.207-217.

régime dictatorial de Mubutu. A la suite des conflits ethniques survenus en janvier 2002 au Nigéria, les grassfields (Donga mantung, Banyo) accueillent près de 20 000 ressortissants nigériens. Entre 1979 et la 1990, la partie septentrionale accueille l'arrivée de plus de 100 000 réfugiés tchadiens fuyant la guerre civile⁸. Plusieurs raisons expliquent cet afflux des réfugiés tchadiens vers le Nord Cameroun.

La proximité du Tchad avec le Cameroun est l'avantage évident qui facilite la réalisation du déplacement en termes de coûts engagés et de la simplicité à entrer dans le pays. Le facteur distance est également la garantie d'un suivi régulier des nouvelles du pays. Bien plus, le niveau de développement économique du Cameroun à l'époque relativement supérieur à celui du Tchad a joué en faveur de cet attrait.

Comme pour l'ensemble de la province, le climat est de type « soudano-guinéen » à deux saisons alternées. La zone d'étude, au sud de la province, profite de conditions plus humides et moins chaudes, avec une pluviométrie moyenne annuelle supérieure à 1 400 mm et une température moyenne annuelle de 25°C, pouvant cependant alterner entre 11°C en décembre/janvier et 37°C en avril (fin de la saison sèche)⁹. P. Brabant et Gavaud situent la densité à 10 hab. / km²¹⁰. Il s'agit donc d'une région faiblement peuplée. Cette faible densité humaine suppose également une disponibilité en terre cultivable. Bien plus, la région du Nord-Cameroun en général et la zone d'étude en particulier présente des proximités linguistiques et culturelles qui facilitent l'intégration des réfugiés originaires de la région sud du Tchad. Les migrants forcés qui sont accueillis dans le département du Faro sont d'origines diverses.

4- Typologie des migrants

Les migrants forcés qui ont déferlés à Poli-Taparé ont des trajectoires socioprofessionnelles différentes. C'est bien ce qui ressort des propos suivants :

Fuyant les conflits et les persécutions, ou poussés par le désespoir, un grand nombre de Tchadiens se retrouvent aujourd'hui au Cameroun...Ils sont fonctionnaires de l'Etat, diplômés sans emploi, étudiants, commerçants, simples paysans...Certains sont réfugiés statutaires ou demandeurs d'asile. D'autres des

⁸ UNHCR, Rapports annuels, 1991-2003, in www.unhcr.org/statistics, consulté le 24 août 2011.

⁹ P. Brabant, F.-X. Humbel, 1974, *Carte pédologique du Cameroun. Poli*, Paris, ORSTOM, notice explicative 107 p, 1 carte 1 / 200 000

¹⁰ P. Brabant, M. Gavaud, 1985, *Contraintes et attitudes des terres. Provinces du Nord et de l'Extrême Nord. République du Cameroun*, Paris, ORSTOM-MESRES, 24 feuilles 1 / 750 000, 4 cartes 1 / 500 000

nomades ordinaires, des migrants économiques ou des aventuriers tout azimut¹¹ (Mbainaye, 2004).

Les affres de la guerre leur ont imposé un dénominateur commun : réfugiés en quête de survie. Sur la base des enquêtes réalisées sur le terrain, nous avons comme réfugiés des hommes en tenue, des enseignants, des personnels sanitaires et une majorité de paysans. Selon les estimations des informateurs interviewés sur le terrain, le village Taparé a accueilli au moins 5000 réfugiés tchadiens depuis le début des crises politico-militaires qui secouées le Tchad. Cette masse non moins importante de migrants forcés dans le département du Faro a sans doute entraîné des conséquences multiples.

B- Impacts de l'installation des migrants

De tout temps, l'intrusion d'un élément nouveau dans une société a toujours été problématique. L'implantation des Tchadiens à Taparé a été un facteur de mutations. Celles-ci sont visibles au niveau socioculturel, économique, politique et environnemental.

1- Impacts socioculturels

L'arrivée des tchadiens à Taparé a mis en exergue un autre type de relation entre les réfugiés et la population locale. Ces rapports ont souvent été profondément imprégnés par la peur de l'autre chez les populations locales en raison de la situation de départ des réfugiés tchadiens. Cette méfiance et cette suspicion sont renforcées par des préjugés et des clichés stéréotypés longtemps véhiculés qui présentent les Tchadiens comme des bagarreurs, brutaux et prompts à tuer sans état d'âme. Cette stigmatisation s'explique aussi par les propos qui leur sont adressés notamment : « sale Tchadien ». En fait, ici les conditions économiques vécues au Tchad renforcent cette position et présente les Tchadiens comme étant très pauvres, vivant dans la misère et dénuement total. En tant que nouveaux arrivants, les déplacés occupent les plus bas rangs de leur nouvelle société. Leur statut d'éternels assistés ne favorise pas le changement d'attitude à leur égard. Cela renforce davantage leur vulnérabilité.

La précarité dans laquelle ils vivent contribue amplement à la solidification de leur vulnérabilité. Ce d'autant plus que l'attribution du statut de réfugié est faite sur la base générale et non individuelle en Afrique. La

¹¹ Mbainaye Bétoubam, 2004, « Les Tchadiens du Cameroun : 1ère partie », *laltchad Presse*, P.22.

convention de 1969 de l'organisation de l'Union Africaine (OUA) élargit en effet le statut de réfugié sans qu'il soit nécessaire de démontrer une persécution individuelle il reste que cet élargissement de la notion de réfugié participe du phénomène de déresponsabilisation des États occidentaux face aux crises qui ne les touchent pas directement¹². Ainsi, alors que 80 % des réfugiés en Afrique ont obtenu le statut sur la base collective ou *prima facie*, le contraste est frappant avec l'Europe où la majorité (voire la totalité) des demandeurs a obtenu le statut de réfugié sur une base individuelle. Et le HCR de conclure : « Les différences régionales en matière de reconnaissance s'expliquent en partie par la nature du cadre juridique existant ainsi que par le niveau de développement économique (la détermination individuelle du statut de réfugié est exigeante en termes de ressources) »¹³. Ces dispositions légales contribuent à l'irrégularité de l'aide et de la prise en charge générale des réfugiés. Ce faisant, les réfugiés sont abandonnés à eux-mêmes augmentant ainsi leur vulnérabilité par rapport à l'infection du VIH/SIDA.

Les nombreux facteurs contribuant à l'augmentation du risque de transmission du VIH parmi les réfugiés sont relativement bien compris. Les réfugiés sont coupés de leurs racines, loin de chez eux et de leur communauté. Ils perdent leurs moyens de subsistance. Cette fracture institutionnelle et sociale se répercute sur la cohésion de la communauté, mettant à mal les normes sociales et sexuelles qui régissent les comportements. Le fait d'être réfugié, loin de chez soi et dépourvu de tout, peut accroître la consommation d'alcool et d'autres drogues, et de ce fait altérer la notion de risque au niveau des attitudes individuelles et collectives. Dans les camps de réfugiés, les femmes et les filles sont également confrontées à la violence sexuelle et à l'exploitation. Les réfugiés ont à lutter pour satisfaire leurs besoins élémentaires en nourriture, eau, et hébergement ; dans ces conditions, les femmes et les filles n'ont souvent pas d'autres choix que celui de troquer des services sexuels contre de l'argent, de la nourriture, et une protection. Les enfants sans soutien parental, séparés de leur famille ou devenus orphelins, sont également particulièrement vulnérables à la violence et à l'exploitation physique et sexuelle¹⁴. La présence tchadienne à Taparé implique l'augmentation de la population. Si au départ les terres distribuées aux réfugiés ne posent pas problèmes, au fur et à mesure que s'accroît la population, la question du foncier devient une préoccupation majeure.

Les migrations de manière générale au Nord-Cameroun sont source de nombreux conflits fonciers. Les conflits les plus médiatisés sont ceux qui opposent les autochtones aux migrants ; pourtant, les conflits intrafamiliaux, peu visibles, sont tout aussi nombreux. Les conflits fonciers sont généralement déclenchés par un faisceau de causes. Si la raréfaction des terres constitue une première tentative d'explication crédible, celle-ci cache

¹² C. Rodier, 2002, « La construction d'une politique européenne de l'asile entre discours et pratiques », *Hommes et Migrations*, n° 1240, P25.

¹³ HCR, 2005, *Réfugiés : tendances mondiales en 2005*. UNHCR, Genève, P.6.

¹⁴ C. Hankins, *et al*, 2002, "Transmission and prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections in war settings: implications for current and future armed conflict", *AIDS*, 16:2245–2252.

cependant d'autres raisons, notamment : l'interprétation divergente de la nature des anciennes transactions, le renouvellement des générations et l'émergence de la monétarisation¹⁵.

D'anciennes transactions ont été considérées comme des dons définitifs par les migrants tchadiens, alors que pour les populations locales il s'agissait uniquement de prêts, donc simplement un droit de jouissance. En plus, les descendants des réfugiés ont tendance à vouloir s'émanciper des obligations issues des ententes verbales de l'exploitation de la terre, pendant que les descendants des locaux remettent en cause ces conventions conclues par leurs parents. Enfin, les transactions foncières monétarisées sont généralement conclues avec ambiguïté. Il en résulte des divergences d'interprétation sur la nature même de la transaction : pour les vendeurs locaux, la transaction est assimilée à un simple prêt monétarisé à longue durée n'affranchissant nullement l'acquéreur de ses obligations coutumières ; pour les acheteurs migrants, la transaction confère la propriété définitive de la terre et par conséquent, les exempte désormais de toute obligation sociale vis-à-vis du vendeur. Le comportement du vendeur s'explique par le simple fait que pour les locaux, la vente d'une parcelle de terre à un migrant tchadien n'est jamais définitive car la présence de ce dernier en territoire camerounais n'est que provisoire. Le problème naît donc lorsque les réfugiés décident de s'installer définitivement dans la localité. Cette difficulté vécue par les réfugiés tchadiens au niveau foncier présage leur difficile insertion économique.

2- L'insertion économique des réfugiés

La concentration des réfugiés dans des camps ne facilite pas leur intégration. La survie quotidienne étant le leitmotiv, les réfugiés de Taparé, à peine quelques années passées dans la zone et au regard des difficultés vécues, cherchent des emplois à l'extérieur du site d'accueil. Trouver un travail pour satisfaire aux besoins les plus essentiels relève d'une véritable gageure. Cette situation a été amplifiée par la crise économique de la fin de la décennie 80 qui rendu inaccessible le marché de l'emploi. C'est la raison pour laquelle dans la majorité des cas, ces réfugiés n'ont pu avoir que des postes de gardiens de nuits chez des particuliers ou alors dans certains services. Cette difficulté d'insertion a entraîné la multiplication des petits métiers dans le secteur informel. C'est bien l'exemple des cordonniers, des cireurs, des vendeurs d'eau, des vendeurs de soja etc...

Les femmes quant à elles ont développé d'autres stratégies dans la perspective d'une réponse adéquate à leur situation de vie. Elles vont se tourner naturellement vers la fabrication du *bil-bil*¹⁶. Au regard des proximités linguistiques et culturelles de certains peuples du Sud Tchad et ceux du Nord-Cameroun, on peut dire que la fabrication de cette boisson n'était pas spécifique aux peuples du Nord-Cameroun. C'est pourquoi,

¹⁵ Mahamadou, Zongo, 2008, « Des fiches pédagogiques pour comprendre, se poser de bonnes questions et agir sur le foncier en Afrique de l'Ouest », *Foncier et migration*, P. 2.

¹⁶ Boisson traditionnelle faite à base de mil. Avant l'arrivée des colonisateurs, cette boisson faisait partie intégrante des cérémonies rituelles. A cet effet, cette boisson n'avait pas une valeur marchande. Sa consommation était limitée à la classe des vieux.

les Tchadiennes vont se lancer dans la fabrication du *bil-bil*, qui d'ailleurs n'exige pas un capital assez important. Leur implication dans le secteur de la brasserie locale est remarquable dans les grandes villes du Nord-Cameroun particulièrement celle de Maroua comme l'atteste l'extrait suivant :

Un tour dans les quartiers à *bil bil* de la ville de Maroua permet de mesurer le degré d'implication des femmes tchadiennes. Elles se sont mêlées aux brasseuses autochtones dans les principaux quartiers à *bil bil* de la ville. Elles sont ainsi présentes à Hardé, Fasaw, à Domayo pont baptisé « marché mondial » du fait de l'ampleur du phénomène *bil bil*. Elles ont introduit des innovations dans la façon de brasser le *bil bil* dans des touques métalliques¹⁷.

Au regard des bénéfices engrangés dans cette activité, les réfugiés tchadiennes ont pu subvenir aux besoins de leurs familles. L'achat de la matière première (mil, maïs) a influencé la quantité de production annuelle de la localité. Ce faisant, les réfugiés eux-mêmes se sont lancés dans l'activité agricole.

L'insertion dans le monde agricole a été la mieux réussie si on met de côté l'épineux problème du foncier. L'arrivée des migrants tchadiens à Taparé a boosté les quantités de céréales, de légumineuses et d'oléagineux produits. La preuve de cette augmentation de la production est l'importante place qu'occupe le marché de cette localité actuellement dans le département du Faro. Avant l'arrivée des réfugiés, ce marché de moindre importance, n'était pas connu des populations du chef lieu du département. Au fil des années, ce marché a été spécialisé dans la vente d'arachides produites en grande partie par les réfugiés. La présence des réfugiés tchadiens dans le département du Faro a des implications politiques.

3- Sur le plan politique

Après plusieurs années passées à Taparé, les réfugiés et surtout leurs descendants ont tendance à se confondre aux populations locales. L'acquisition des cartes d'identité nationale du pays d'accueil est pour eux une garantie de protection et de vie paisible. C'est bien ce qui ressort de ces propos :

Pour les populations riveraines, cette double nationalité consiste concrètement à chercher à avoir des pièces officielles (carte nationale d'identité) du pays de résidence pour échapper aux repréailles des forces de l'ordre, et celles du pays d'origine pour des visites éventuelles du système de parenté, avoir des droits sur les territoires étrangers. Par ailleurs, la recherche d'une double nationalité confère à

¹⁷ Gigla Garakchème, « Les tenancières des « circuits » et les « dada bil bil » tchadiennes dans la province de l'Extrême-Nord au Cameroun: entre stratégies d'adaptation et construction d'une citoyenneté « censitaire » transfrontalière », inédit, P.8.

ces derniers de nouveaux droits dans le pays d'adoption : droits fonciers, accès au marché du travail, droit à l'éducation, au même titre que les nationaux.¹⁸

Ce faisant, on assiste à l'apparition d'une identité nouvelle marquée par la double nationalité qui rend difficile et complexe le statut de ces « nouveaux citoyens ». Le phénomène de double nationalité ou de transnationalité s'impose comme une réalité implacable au regard de la multiplicité des conflits qui caractérisent l'Afrique. C'est le cas de la Côte d'Ivoire avec le concept de « l'ivoirité » comme le relève l'extrait suivant :

Il est aujourd'hui difficile d'analyser les processus et stratégies d'immigration dans le monde sans prendre en compte le développement des identités transnationales et des doubles nationalités. La crise ivoirienne et l'invention du concept « d'ivoirité » renseigne suffisamment sur ce propos qui, loin d'être une forme implicite de stigmatisation scientifique comme on nous l'a souvent relevé, est une réalité vivante.¹⁹

Au bénéfice des parentés linguistiques et culturelles, les anciens réfugiés vont facilement se diluer dans les communautés du Nord-Cameroun et profiter des mêmes avantages que les citoyens camerounais. C'est bien l'exemple des réfugiés toupouri, moundang, massa et sara qui ont utilisé ces avantages linguistiques et culturels pour mieux s'insérer dans leur nouvelle société. Ces intégrations resurgissent sur le plan politique en termes conflictuels lorsque ces anciens réfugiés et leurs descendants viennent à occuper des grands postes de responsabilité au niveau étatique.

Les « années de brises » au Cameroun qui ont enclenchées le processus démocratique ont mis à contribution la présence des réfugiés dans le champ politique. En effet, que ce soit pour les partis de l'opposition ou celui au pouvoir, le recours aux voix des réfugiés a été une astuce électorale. L'obtention des pièces officielles a été facilitée dans la perspective des gains politiques. Ce faisant, les réfugiés ont constitué un vivier électoral où se sont assouvis les intérêts égoïstes des politiques. La contribution des réfugiés de Taparé n'a pas été seulement politique, leurs actions ont eu des répercussions au niveau environnemental.

¹⁸ H. Mimché, 24-26 juillet 2006, « Circulations migratoires, pratiques sociales et déconstructions des cadres territoriaux autour des frontières camerounaises : trajectoires Nord-Sud », Actes du 1^{er} symposium international « Stratégies de population et stratégies de développement, convergences ou divergences ? », Dakar, Sénégal, P 60.

¹⁹ H. Mimché, 6-8 juin 2006 « Quand les immigrés se font autochtones. Immigration et dynamique d'appropriation de l'espace des réfugiés tchadiens au Nord Cameroun », communication présentée au Colloque international « L'asile au Sud. Afrique, Méditerranée... », Ouagadougou, disponible sur <http://www.ceped.org/cdrom/asile/cd/theme3/03.html>, P.8.

4- Impacts environnementaux

L'arrivée d'au moins 5 000 réfugiés à Taparé a eu des conséquences négatives sur l'environnement. Fort du constat selon lequel la présence des réfugiés dans un site a des impacts sur l'environnement, les questions environnementales y afférentes sont une préoccupation majeure et constante du HCR. Le rapport de la « Section Programme and Technical Support » publié en automne 1991, révèle trois conditions particulières aux déplacements massifs des réfugiés :

- La disproportion entre les fortes densités de population et les ressources disponibles dans les zones d'accueil des réfugiés ;
- La tendance à installer les camps de réfugiés dans des zones écologiquement fragiles ;
- Et, parmi les réfugiés, le manque de motivation à préserver l'environnement, dû au traumatisme de la guerre et du déplacement et au fait que « la terre qu'ils occupent ne leur appartient pas »,²⁰

Dans la zone d'étude, le constat est clair et prend en compte l'ensemble des conditions relevées par ce rapport. En effet, pour leur installation, les réfugiés ont abattu des arbres à grande échelle. Pour leurs besoins en bois d'œuvre, ils ont coupé des végétaux aux usages multiples. Il est évident qu'une telle charge dans un environnement écologique fragile entraîne inéluctablement la rupture de l'équilibre écologique. L'extrême pauvreté dans laquelle vivent les réfugiés les pousse à être moins regardant dans la préservation des ressources végétales disponibles. Ainsi, ils se sont spécialisés à Taparé dans la vente du bois et dans la fabrication du charbon qui nécessite des essences végétales denses, à la durabilité naturelle très élevées et au pouvoir calorifique élevé. Dans la même lancée, Jacobsen cité par Richard Black affirme :

Au fur et à mesure qu'augmente la demande pour le bois de feu, des marchés se créent et des forêts de plus en plus éloignées sont affectées; des lieux de troc naissent également pour d'autres ressources naturelles telles que l'eau ou le chaume; le bois de feu est vendu ou échangé pour des rations alimentaires aux époques d'insécurité alimentaire, c'est-à-dire aux "saisons de pénurie" après les récoltes, lorsque les réserves de nourriture sont épuisées.²¹

²⁰ HCR, 1991, «Some Environmental Considerations in Refugee Camps and Settlements», Rapport, 10, P. 2.

²¹ R, Black, 1998, « L'impact des réfugiés sur l'environnement écologique des pays d'accueil (Afrique subsaharienne) », *Autrepart* (7), P.32.

Cette course vers les essences aux potentialités multiples a pour conséquence la disparition de ces dernières dont le rôle dans les rites, la médecine traditionnelle est incontestable. Ce faisant, leur disparition entraîne dans leur sillage la perte des savoirs endogènes longtemps transmis de génération en génération.

La disparition de la couverture végétale sur un site est la cause de la détérioration des sols. Les sols sans couverture sont facilement érodés par les eaux de ruissellement. Une étude de Long et *al*s suggère que le déboisement lié à la présence des réfugiés a été responsable d'une érosion massive des sols à la suite des pluies torrentielles de 1989 «ayant emporté les sols des terres déboisées». ²² A long terme cette dégradation des sols et la disparition des végétaux peuvent avoir des incidences graves sur le climat et mêmes sur les productions agricoles et constitués ainsi d'autres causes de déplacements des populations.

Conclusion

L'étude des mouvements migratoires reste encore embryonnaire en Afrique Centrale en dépit des multiples conflits qui s'y déroulent. Les migrations dans cette région sont anciennes. Plusieurs motivations ont guidé celles-ci. Parlant de la présence tchadienne dans le département du Faro plus précisément à Taparé, les nombreux conflits politico-militaires qui ont secoués le Tchad l'expliquent amplement. Le choix de la zone d'accueil n'a pas été fortuit. La proximité géographique, linguistique et culturelle et la faible densité de la zone justifient le choix de la zone de Taparé. Ce village voit arriver une masse importante de réfugiés aux profils socioprofessionnels variés. Cette présence massive des réfugiés tchadiens a provoqué des mutations aussi bien sur le plan socioculturel et économique. Ainsi, assiste-t-on à l'intensification des conflits fonciers et l'augmentation des productions agricoles. Sur le plan politique et environnemental, les mutations sont tout aussi visibles et posent le problème de la double nationalité, de la disparition des essences végétales au point de menacer l'équilibre écologique.

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²² L, Long, L, Cецсарини, J, Мартин, 1990, "The Local Impact of Mozambican Refugees in Malawi, Lilongwe, Malawi", report to Usaid and the United States Embassy, P. 12.

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Forcing Flows of Migrants: European Externalization and Border-Induced Displacement

The European borders and the practices and technologies that constitute them are contested. This chapter examines the development of EU border control with a particular focus on its external dimension as it is manifested towards African countries.

At the outset it is argued that international negotiations, external governance and extra-territorialization are all aspects of externalization and they are illustrated through the examples of the European Neighbourhood Policy [ENP], the Tampere and Seville Presidency Conclusions and the Frontex Agency's HERA-operations. The notion of borderscapes is then suggested as a useful analytical tool for understanding the multiple abstractions of knowledge, practices and technologies at work in EU border control highlighting the fact that the EU borders change over time according to political and administrative processes. Since border control re-territorialises geographic spaces according to the mobility of the people through them it has substantial geopolitical aspects (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, Walters 2004). Such a perspective on European borderscapes, however, cannot stand alone, but must be complemented with the more governance and process-oriented analytical perspective of biopolitics (Balzacq 2009, Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007, Vaughan-Williams 2009). It is, however, argued that a critical focusing on sovereign power and black letter law bypasses the bureaucratic and political actors involved in the depoliticisation and securitisation of European asylum policies (van Munster 2009, Bigo 1996, Chimni 1998).

It is claimed that the geo- and biopolitical instrumentalizations reflect a power geometry (Massey 1993) realized through an infrastructure underpinned by continuous corporeal, financial, material and virtual flows designed to yield European hypermobility and non-European submobility (Hyndman 2000) and contain displaced people before

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they reach European territory. It is shown that these complex flows take different forms, such as European Commission [EC] donations to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] and programmes supporting third countries migration control (financial), the deployment of Immigration Liaison Officers [ILO's] and Frontex operations and bilateral military agreements (material). Moreover, it is pointed out that the funds underpinning the European borderscapes are not only flowing from European to third countries, but also to Private Security Companies [PSC's] (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2011, Lemberg-Pedersen forthcoming).

Finally, the chapter suggests that works on forced migration have tended to view border control as a reaction to the movement of already-displaced people, but that externalization in itself should be seen as a cause of displacement and forced migration. This allows us to appraise the overall consequences of the external EU borderscapes' decentralized functionality instead of particular border control events. Conceptualizing the EU borderscapes' external dimension as the sequencing of forced flows makes it possible to identify its production of border-induced displacement and highlights the interrelated functionality of the transnational European borderscape thereby providing a lense through which the extent of its humanitarian consequences can be grasped.

The External Dimension of the European Borderscapes

During the 2000's the concept of externalization has been invoked as a description of how European states has exported aspects of migration control to third countries (Boswell 2003, Betts and Milner 2007). To motivating the drive for external measures the EU's 'Strategy for the External Dimension of JHA: Global Freedom, Security and Justice' (Council of the European Union 2005) notes that in order to respond to the security threats of terrorism, organised crime, corruption and unmanaged migration flows, the 'development of the area of freedom, security and justice can only be succesful if it is underpinned by a partnership with third countries on these issues which includes strengthening the rule of law, and promoting the respect for human rights and international obligations.' Externalization, it seems, is realized in different ways.

The EU may, for instance, negotiate specific agreements related to migration control with third countries. Such negotiations can result in the union attempting to regulate, manage or control the asylum and migration policies of third countries through external governance. This, in turn, may then yield instances of extra-territorialization, where material conditions for controlling migratory movements are put in place beyond European territory (Balzacq 2009: 2-3). As such external governance can result from negotiations between the EU and African countries with the consequence that structures of migration control emerge where they did not exist before.

Examples of these forms of externalization abound, but I will here focus on the ENP, Seville's migration-development nexus and the operations of the Frontex Agency. Firstly, the ENP is manifested through negotiations of Action Plans and Association Agreements between the EU and its neighbours. African countries granted the ENP-status include Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria while Libya has special arrangements. Part of the ENP-agenda is to bolster these countries' capacities for migration control. For instance, the EU-Morocco ENP agreement meant that the EU committed €40 million to the construction of an advanced radar system to detect immigrants and drug trafficking along Moroccan northern coasts. While this radar system is operated by Morocco, it illustrates how EU-Morocco negotiations resulted in the creation of an extra-territorialized control structure. Secondly, the Migration-development nexus formulated by the Seville Council in 2002 can be seen as a case of external EU governance. This nexus makes the acceptance of the EU's priorities regarding asylum policies a necessary condition for non-EU states if they wish to continue cooperation with the union and receive its development support (Council of the European Union 2002). Its demand of acceptance therefore effectively regulates the available asylum policies of non-EU states according to EU interests.

Thirdly, Frontex operations also exemplify the extra-territorialization of control practices. Thus, between 2006-7 and following negotiations with Senegal, Mauritania and Cap Verde Frontex was allowed to conduct the HERA-operations on these countries territories. The HERA-operations targeted boatmigrants seeking to reach the Canary Islands, where they would be able to apply for asylum in Spain. To counter this movement Frontex deployed Spanish helicopters, naval vessels from Italy, Portugal and

Spain and aircrafts from Finland and Italy in the territorial waters of Senegal, Cap Verde and Mauritania. Moreover, two surveillance aircrafts from Italy and Finland were flown deep into African territory to monitor migration routes through the deserts. HERA combined interceptions in the territorial waters of these countries with desert-overflights. According to Frontex this was done as a way of 'preventing them to risk their lives on the dangerous journey' (Frontex website), but coincidentally also preventing the migrants from reaching Spanish territory and filing asylum claims. In total, the HERA-operations intercepted and diverted around 6,000 boatmigrants.

The negotiations facilitating external governance and extra-territorialization illustrate how EU externalization transcends the union's geographical borders and consists of multifaceted processes, which are integrated into the union's relations with third countries. As a form of geopolitics externalization effectively re-territorializes the spaces of third countries according to European interests (see also Walters: 678-9). The concept of borderscapes captures how the European border control is not a static, geographical phenomenon, but dynamic, consisting of political power, technological practices and knowledge-production.

Borderscapes can be defined as multidimensional abstractions of knowledge and technologies at territorial edges (Rajaram&Grundy-Warr 2007). It highlights the fact that borders are fluctuating landscapes always in the process of being constructed (Rancière 2004). Viewing EU externalization as a complex process of borderscaping therefore allows us to open up the border as a sociological space, underpinned by varying technologies, infrastructures and actors. As mechanisms of social regulation borders are thus landscapes of power controlling the mobility of people through territories via such practices as surveillance, interception, detention and deportation. This highlights how the external dimension of the European borderscapes has geopolitical and biopolitical components.

The Circulation, Exclusions and Processes of Externalization

Biopolitics can be defined as the instrumentalization of biological processes according to political interests and biopolitical analyses therefore enquire into the 'microphysics of

power' manifesting governmental power. Thus, while a geopolitical perspective asks 'why' power is manifested in certain ways, and what interests guide it, a biopolitical perspective asks 'how' this power is realized (Vaughan-Williams 2009). This brings to the foreground the many concrete instruments and practices through which the macro-perspective of geo-power is pursued. Accordingly, scholars have attempted to deconstruct the technological regimes behind European border and migration control (Balzacq 2009, Bigo and Guild 2005) building on the theorizing of biopolitical governmentality done by Michel Foucault (Foucault 2008, 2007).

According to Foucault (2008), governmentality is a distinct political economy whereby power is delegated and decentralized in order to facilitate the free circulation of people and goods. Both the EU's Schengen Area, with its free movement of EU-citizens and goods between union Member States, and externalization delegating control capacities to third countries, can be seen as functioning according to this rationale. Hence, governmentality is not a rationality of absolutely free movement, but functions through the regulation of individual freedom *vis a vis* the overall utility of circulations to the population (Foucault 2008: 42-3). The governmental ideal of free circulation of flows therefore requires the preemption, through security apparatuses, of other, risky, flows. From its inception in 1985, the Schengen Convention, too, has been premised on a link between the free movement of people and compensatory 'flanking measures' safeguarding the internal European space against threatening and risky flows (van Munster 2009, Boswell 2003).

The security apparatuses composing these flanking measures are grounded in both political, legal and technological practices, but in 2005 a brutal example of what consequences they may have occurred in Ceuta and Melilla, two Moroccan enclaves bordering Europe. Here, Moroccan and Spanish security forces fired upon migrants attempting to reach Spanish territory from both sides of the border-fence. The result was the deaths of 15 people from shots and falls and the wounding of a further 100 (Goldschmidt 2006: 1-2). Over the following weeks, and after considerable European pressure, the Moroccan authorities dumped 1000 irregular migrants in desert areas near the Algerian border and without food, water or medicine (Doctors Without Borders 2006). After this the geographical sites of Ceuta and Melilla were thoroughly

transformed into militarized zones with high-tech surveillance technologies, three lines of fences whose height were increased to 6 meters. Also, the €40 million Moroccan radar system funded by the EU was launched in this period. Ceuta and Melilla are therefore prime examples of how borderscapes can undergo change. The Ceuta and Mellila-incidents also open the door to the 'dark side of bio-politics' (Dean 1999: 139; Dean 2002: 41), showing that the differentiation of free from forced flows through security apparatuses can have tragic consequences.

A biopolitical framework complementing the notion of governmentality and casting further light on these dynamics of exclusion is that of Giorgio Agamben (Agamben 1995, 1998, 2005). Unlike Foucault's sub-legal analyses of power Agamben premises his biopolitics on states' juridico-institutional sovereignty in an attempt to call into question the fundamental categories of the nation-state (Agamben 1998: 9, 134) and since border control is a prime example of sovereign power, his work lends itself to analyses of asylum policy. Agamben defines sovereign power through its capacity to declare a state of exception whereby human existences are banned, or excluded, from societal status and protection (Agamben 1998: 181). He views the codification of lawful communities as fundamentally functioning through the exclusion of some existences, an exclusion he calls the biopolitical production of 'bare life'. As border control consigns asylum seekers to exist in zones of exception on the margins of communities they incarnate this bare life (Agamben 1995, 1998).

In the state of exception sovereign power is expanded to include those that it exclude, in what is termed inclusive exclusions (Agamben 1998: 104-11) and externalization may be seen as following this dynamic as it is externalized outwards to include those that it excludes under its mechanisms of control. Asylum seekers can therefore be seen as being placed in a relation of inclusive exclusion. Agamben finds the most paradigmatic example of this governance-through-exception in the technology of the camp, because camps by definition blur the relationship between the norm and the exception. In camps, exceptional biopolitics is realized as a normal condition and, accordingly, it functions as a 'line without extension' separating political existence from bare life (*Ibid*: 122; 148).

To be turned into bare life is an inherently vulnerable condition and the deplorable conditions in the migrant detention camps within and beyond European territory seem to lend relevance to this concept. For instance, Doctors Without Borders (2009) found 140 women and 70 children stoved into a 200 square meter room with only two toilets in the now closed Pagani-camp in Greece. Similarly, Human Rights Watch (2009: 74) assess the camp conditions in Libya as ranging from 'negligent to brutal' and according to an anonymous diplomatic source the duration of migrants' arbitrary detention in Libya varies 'from a few weeks to 20 years' (*Ibid*). In 2009, Ghedi, a 29-year-old Somali told Human Rights Watch about the conditions in Libyan camps:

The guards beat us for no reason. They would slap us all the time. Once I was beaten with a butt of a rifle. The guards especially came to beat us at night when they were high from smoking hashish. Some guards kicked with their boots, others hit with their hands or with a weapon. We would just be sleeping before the beatings. We didn't make any demands. We did nothing. I was beaten all over my body (Human Rights Watch 2009: 76).

The agambian biopolitics theorizes the separation of migrant flows through such conditions as relations of inclusive exclusion produced by sovereign decisions on the landscapes of power. However, such a perspective faces difficulties both when it comes to pinpointing the complex processes shaping the enforcement of border control as well as assessing migrant agency.

Conceptualising migrants as instances of bare life is problematic because it reifies the desire of states to reduce migrants to passive existences. Yet, although migrants may be exposed to exploitation and abuse in camps they are not passive existences to be molded in the hands of European or African authorities. Migrants employ various strategies to manouver within the border-networks, such as the bribing of border-guards, working irregularly, being employed by smugglers to sail migrants across seas and have staged numerous demonstrations protesting their detention conditions. Consequently, they are agents with the capacity to act in order to better their lives (Lucht 2011, Bakewell 2008). Furthermore, the notion of bare life is unable to distinguish between the different conditions migrants experience in different countries. Conceptually

speaking, their existence should therefore instead be seen as placed on a biopolitical continuum of inclusive exclusions where the degree of vulnerability depends on the degree of force applied to their mobility.

Moreover, conceptualising dynamics of exclusion as a binary relation between law and its suspension makes sovereign power an underdetermined abstractum and does not address the sub-legal processes and the actors involved in its manifestation (Lemke 2005: 8). Yet, borderscapes are comprised by multiple actors, technologies, and political interests. In other words, borderscapes undergo reconfigurations reflecting the shifting political paradigms guiding their rationalities. The development of the EU Dublin Convention exemplifies this.

European asylum policy can be seen as having shifted from the use of refugees as pawns in Cold War politics to their current containment in regions of origin (Chimni 1998: 350, Hyndman 2000, see also Bakewell 2008). The Refugee Convention was formulated within the larger political context of the Cold War where European states were eager to demonstrate the openness of liberal democracies to asylum seekers towards victims of communist totalitarianism. However, as flows of asylum seekers began to come from the decolonising regions during the 1960's and 1970's and the bipolar world order approached its end this attitude began to change. The European states reacted not by breaching the Refugee Convention, but by refusing to receive asylum claims. The result was the creation of 'refugees in orbit', that is, refugees without a country where they could seek asylum (Paludan 1981: 70-1). In 1990 the EU presented the codification of the Dublin Convention as a solution to this problem via the concept of 'country of first arrival'. It was framed as ensuring that 'applicants for asylum are not referred successively from one Member State to another without any of these states acknowledging themselves to be competent to examine the application for asylum.' (Dublin Convention 1990).

While the notion of country of first arrival did place responsibility for the asylum process on a specific country, it also relieved all subsequent countries of arrival from the obligation to review asylum claims. This division of responsibility was used by the EU's Northern Member States to systematise the use of administrative deportations of asylum seekers, since most asylum seekers could be found to have passed through the territory

of Southern Member States like Greece or Italy. Moreover, Dublin also created incentives for states to block refugees' access to asylum before they reached their territories. This was done through such practices as pre-arrival screening, visa-requirements and carrier sanctions and the result was the 'engineered regionalism' of refugee flows, that is, the re-territorialization of refugees' regions of origin in order to contain them outside European territory (Gibney 2007). Rather than solving the problem of refugees in orbit, then, the Dublin Convention ended up systematising it (van Munster 2009: 32).

Invoking essentializing concepts such as sovereign decisionism and states of exception to account for the emergence of Dublin-deportations bypass the webs of power and resistance involved in formulating borderscapes and end up reaffirming states' claims to be able to draw a line between norm and exception (Bigo 2007: 4, 12). Hence, several scholars have argued the need to factor in the bureaucratic processes through which the European borders were recoded (van Munster 2009, Huysmans 2006, Bigo 2007, 2001, 1996). van Munster argues that this reconfiguration of the European border politics was facilitated by processes of 'bureaucratic crowd-out' between the first and the second Schengen Conventions (in 1985 and 1990 respectively). These bureaucratic turf wars transferred border control competences from foreign affairs and transportation officials to officials from the justice and home affairs departments with internal security as their professional disposition resulting in the gradual 'colonisation' of the union's foreign policy by issues of internal security (Lavenex and Ucarer 2004)

Alongside this transfer, other structures, formal and informal, such as Trevi, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Immigration (AHWGI) and the Coordinators Group were also influential by framing Dublin as a tool to prevent abuse of asylum systems such as the so-called 'asylum shopping'. While both refugee scholars and NGO's contested this re-construction of the borders, Chimni (1998: 355) has been argued that the legal positivist perspective from which this critique was levelled meant that it was ill-equipped for countering the sub-legal processes through which the borderscapes were recoded. Viewing international law as objectively identifiable system of rules separated from the political sphere, refugee scholarship had, effectively, disarmed itself when it came to resisting the expansion of the containment agenda (*Ibid*).

Together, then, attention to the geopolitical, biopolitical and bureaucratic processes in the European borderscapes help nuance our understanding of the externalization agenda's development. Moreover, it sheds light over the kind of existences that borderscapes make out of migrants. Nonetheless, while such perspectives goes some way in untangling the processes underpinning borderscapes, we still need to ask about the processes realizing its instances of inclusive exclusion. More specifically, it is necessary to enquire into the roles played by transnational flows of capital, equipment and people in the European borderscapes and the actors facilitating them.

Transnational Flows I:

Funds underpinning the Externalised European Borderscapes

The EU's differentiation of circulatory flows exhibits a certain 'power-geometry' where different groups have different relationships to mobility: 'some are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it' (Massey 1993: 61). Following William Walters (2004: 678) we can see this differentiation as functioning according to a geostrategy of the networked border. While acknowledging that the EU borderscapes do not accord fully with any one geostrategy, but always has aspects of several in its rationality, the networked border nonetheless fits with Schengen's cancellation of fixed points of control within the EU and their replacement by a transnational network of flanking measures. Schengen's networked borderscape is therefore diffuse, decentred and de-territorialized (*Ibid*: 681) and its infrastructure therefore relies on the constant circulation of financial, material and corporeal flows. In the following I will consider four such flows, namely the dispersal of funds to UNHCR-operations and EU programmes of building third countries' control capacities, the transfers of personnel and equipment to Frontex-operations and third countries and the outsourcing of border control to PSC's.

Because the European migration control is diffused and deterritorialized, it can also take place in venues not normally considered border management. One of these venues is the UNHCR because it is grounded in an state-based structure making its

capacity dependent upon the political and economical priorities of its member states. This is illustrated by the fact that state-donations are voluntary and how the biggest donors earmark funds to specific projects in specific regions. In 1994, more than 95 percent of UNHCR's donations came from fourteen governments of industrialized countries and the EC (Hyndman 2000: 57). Two related implications follow from this: If the UNHCR prioritises areas conflicting with the interests of donor states it faces threats of decreased funding. Conversely, if the UNHCR pursues projects such as repatriation, resettlement or camps in refugees' regions of origin promoting European hypermobility and non-European submobility (*Ibid*: 37), it is likely to attract substantial funding (*Ibid*: 3-5). Although UNHCR-staff on the ground may not side with the actors attempting to engineer regionalism, its structural dynamics therefore opens it up to processes whereby powerful donors utilise the agency for purposes of migration control.

Earmarking of funds to specific regional projects therefore has the consequence of turning the agency's need for funding into a motivation for pursuing the geopolitical interests of donors. Realizing this, the European Commission (EC) has followed the US-strategy of earmarking *all* of its donations to specific priorities. Reflecting the growth of the UNHCR-budget, the EC has almost doubled its donations from 2001 (\$66 million) to 2009 (\$127 million) making it the second-largest donor in the world. Consequently, the flows of funds coming from the EU yield a powerful influence on the overall UNHCR-capacity. In 2004 the EC earmarked its donations to projects in those countries producing the most refugees, such as Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iran, Ukraine, Pakistan and Thailand, and in general the entire African continent. These projects typically involved assisted returns or voluntarily repatriation of refugees, consolidating or relocating of refugee camps, capacity-building for protecting returnees, building and strengthening of asylum systems in third countries, and the pre-screening of asylum seekers and migrants (UNHCR Global Report 2004). It can thus be said that the UNHCR plays an important indirect role in the EU's creation of 'space and distance' to displaced people in Africa illustrating how migration control may also be pursued through humanitarian venues.

Other example of transnational financial flows in the European borderscapes are the recent financial EU-programmes such as Odysseus, Argo, Aeneas, Meda, Cards, ENPI, DCI and the Border, Return, Refugee and Integration-Funds of the 'Solidarity and

Management of Migration Flows Programme'. These programmes focus especially on the issues of asylum, immigration and the cross-border movement in third countries experiencing large influxes of European-bound migration. The emergence of these programmes illustrate the EU's increased political focus on the external dimension of its borderscapes as does the fact that their budgets have all grown drastically. For instance, while Aeneas (Programme for financial assistance to third countries in the area of migration and asylum) distributed €20 million to projects between 2001-2003 the programme was allocated €250 million between 2004-6 before it was discontinued and replaced by the DCI which, between 2007-13, is tasked with distributing €387 million.

An example of an Aeneas-projects is the 'Across Sahara'-projects which ran from 2005-2009 and was implemented by the Italian Ministry of Interior and the Department of Public Security in collaboration with Niger and Libya. Their objective was to 'fight' and 'combat' irregular migrants from Sub Saharan Africa attempting to reach the coasts of Southern Italy (Aeneas 2006: 5). The EC covered €2.6 million out of the projects' overall budgets of €3.2 million. Other Aeneas-projects like 'Project Seahorse' and 'Seahorse Network' (2005-2008) in Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal and Cap Verde were supported with €4 million out of €5,1 million (*Ibid*: 12, 20).

Although some Aeneas-projects were concerned with protecting women's rights or strengthening protective measures for asylum seekers, the main focus of the programme accorded with the containment agenda. Thus, while Aeneas supported 14 projects with €14 million in the subsectors of legal migration and asylum and protection, this support was dwarfed by the programme's support to the subsectors of border management, irregular migration and migration management. Here, 24 projects were supported to the tune of €29 million. Out of these €14,4 million were allocated to the subsector for fighting irregular migration alone (Aeneas 2008). Moreover, the countries where most Aeneas-projects were implemented, namely Morocco (20 projects), Tunisia (10 projects), Libya (9 projects), Senegal (8 projects) and Egypt, Algeria and Mauritania (7 projects), are all located along the three main migratory-routes towards Europe; the Western African, the Mediterranean and the Eastern Mediterranean routes. The financial flows of the Aeneas Programme can be seen as complementing the EC-donations to the

UNHCR and exhibit a similar geographical asymmetry only focusing on transit-regions rather than regions of origin.

Both financial flows illustrate how transnational financial flows are vital for the networked EU borderscapes. Yet, European countries are not only countering migration flows by funding third countries' migration management and border control. They also circulate personnel and military equipment through the deployment of ILO's, Frontex-operations, and the donation or sale of military and surveillance equipment via bilateral deals.

Transnational Flows II: Personnel, Equipment and Private Actors underpinning the Externalised European Borderscapes

Council Regulation 377/2004 codified the creation of ILO-networks in third countries (Official Journal of the European Union 2004). ILO's exchange information with the authorities of these countries and make risk analyses about flows and routes of irregular migrants, their means of transports and the intermediaries facilitating such flows (Ibid: 2-3). The establishment of ILO-networks beyond European territory seems to fuse together the networked border with another geostrategy, namely that of the march placing Europe under siege (Bigo 2000: 68, Walters 2004: 686). While the figure of the march long predates the current technological practices of the networked EU borderscape, its reappearance is facilitated by the organisational possibilities offered by the decentralized network (*Ibid*). In the current European geostrategy the ILO-function is thus viewed as a first bullwark providing deflection measures against flows of migrants embarking onto Europe. The connected functionality of the different practices in the external European borderscape, like ILO's and the re-constructed borderscapes of Ceuta and Mellila illustrate how different geostrategies 'are not mutually exclusive' but complement each other in 'a shifting ensemble of heterogenous political rationalities and practices' (Walters 2004: 693).

The joint Frontex-operations at the EU's external borders or on third country territory instantiate another transnational flow as they depend on Member States'

temporary loans of naval vessels, helicopters and aircrafts. Thus, the HERA-operations, taking place in the territorial waters of Senegal, Mauritania and Cap Verde between 2006-8, involved the loans of helicopters, naval vessels and surveillance aircrafts from Italy, Spain, Portugal and Finland. Around 6.000 boatmigrants were intercepted while attempting to exit from the African territorial waters and diverted back without being able to access asylum procedures (Frontex-website).

On a bilateral level, individual Member States also transfer military equipment to third countries. Helmuth Dietrich (2004) explains the case of Germany:

The German government is also responsible for arming the North African coast. According to the German defence ministry, Tunisia will receive six Albatross speed boats from the German navy. Already two years ago, it was agreed to deliver five speed boats to Egypt. In 2002, Algeria received surveillance systems at a value of 10,5 mio €, Tunisia received communications and radar equipment for around 1 mio €, Morocco received military trucks worth 4,5 mio € (Dietrich 2004: 7).

Similarly, Italy donated 6 police patrol boats in 2009 and 2010, patrol vehicles and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), or drones, to Libya for monitoring the southern deserts for migrants (Corriere della Sera-website), Netherlands exported three SIGMA frigates from to Morocco in 2008, France supplied Algeria with 9 light helicopters in 2006 and the UK supplied four Super Lynx-300 helicopters to the same country between 2004-2007 (SIPRI 2009: 13, SIPRI 2010). The result of the Frontex-circulation and bilateral transfers of military hardware complements the financial flows to third countries is the localisation of physical power to those regions experiencing the most refugees and migration.

Another way in which the externalization-agenda is increasingly being pursued is through the privatisation of migration (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2011) reflecting the diverse ways in which the phenomenon of migration is increasingly being commodified. Thus, the Schengen Convention's codification of carrier sanctions in 1990 obliged transport companies to conduct pre-screening of travellers for visas, passports and other travel-documents displaced the location of border control from Europe's territorial boundaries

to airports across the globe. The carrier sanctions indirectly introduced private actors into the infrastructure of border control trading on their motivation to avoid substantial fines for facilitating irregular migration into Europe.

Yet, while border control may be an obstruction to the business interest of transport and travel agencies or the import of labour, it is also be an profitable emerging market for others. Thus, border control functions are increasingly outsourced to PSC's such as Finmeccanica and G4S. Some of these 'borderscape contracts' pertain to the construction of control facilities in third countries while others concern the operation of control facilities.

For instance, the UK Border Agency [UKBA] contracted G4S to conduct all circulation of asylum seekers between holding centres in the UK via its Transport PLUS Service. The operation of the removal and holding centres was also outsourced to a number of PSC's with the G4S managing centres like Brook House, Dungavel, Oakington and Tinsley House. Finally, G4S was also contracted by the UKBA to run all deportation flights for out of Great Britain². As such, G4S plays a vital role in the infrastructure of the UK borders. When it comes to the Finmeccanica-contracts these illustrate how PSC's may be activated in favour of the externalization agenda. Thus, in attempts to control the migration flows transiting Libya, the Commission and Frontex had conducted technical missions to the country with a view to establishing cooperative agreements on migration control in 2004 and 2007. In 2008, moreover, a Friendship Pact was made where Italy agreed to pay Libya 255 million dollars annually over twenty years (Gazzini 2009). Some of these funds were earmarked to the construction of border control infrastructure in Libya. This was outsourced to Italian companies, most notably Finmeccanica whose subsidiaries, like AugustaWestland, Alenia Aeronautica and SELEX Sistemi Integrati landed a range of contracts with Libya. Thus, AugustaWestland supplied Libya with 10 A109 Power helicopters for border control worth €80 million in 2006 and Alenia Aeronautica an ATR-42MP maritime patrol aircraft worth €31 million in 2008. Moreover, at the same time as the A109-deal Libya, Finmeccanica and AugustaWestland formed a joint venture called Libyan Italian Advanced Technology

² Following the death of an Angolan national during a deportation in late 2010, G4S's contract was not renewed. This, however, did not put a halt to the outsourcing of deportations since the UKBA immediately contracted another PSC, Reliance Security Task Management Ltd. to perform this border function.

Company [LIATEC] to provide know-how, training, technology and equipment thereby to Libya's military and border infrastructures (Finmeccanica website). In 2009, Finmeccanica-subsiidiary SELEX Sistemi Integrati entered a €300 million contract for the construction of C3 (Command, Conquer and Communication) border infrastructure along Libya's northern coastline (Lemberg-Pedersen forthcoming).

The geostrategy of the networked border and its introduction of diffused forms of border-regulation can facilitate processes of neoliberalization (Peck and Tickell 2002) and borderscape contracts shows how privatisation of border control reconstructs the financial flows in borderscapes from public to private actors. Comparable to the bureaucratic crowd-out where foreign policy and transportation officials were replaced by internal security officials during the formulation of the Dublin Convention, national and supranational European structures tasked with border politics are thus increasingly experiencing a 'privatised crowd-out'. Importantly, the transfer of border-activities from public to private hands does not signal the demise of borderscape-governance. Rather, the planning and operation of borderscapes are displaced from formal to informal techniques of government through the introduction of new actors (see also Lemke 2002: 11).

The reconfiguration of the power relations underpinning borderscapes through borderscape contracts illustrates how the transnational flows of funds in neoliberal processes can expand border control according to the agenda of containment. Taken together the transnational flows of funds, personnel, equipment and competences makes it relevant to examine the functionality of this decentralised border-infrastructure more in depth.

Border-Induced Displacement and the Sequencing of Forced Flows

A dominant description attached to EU border control has been that of 'Fortress Europe'. However, while this understanding fits well with some instances of border control, like the fences in Ceuta and Melilla, it does not capture the mobility going on within the borderscapes. Yet, the relation between Europe and Third World mobility in the European borderscapes is differentiated and the hypermobility of European border-

funds, -equipment and -personnel is crucial in bringing about the submobility of non-European migrants.

When we observe the coastal regions at the Atlantic and Mediterranean Seas it becomes clear that the very same islands and territorial waters which are specialised in luxury hotels and cruise-tours for European tourists are also the key infrastructural nodes of the networked European borderscape and veritable spider-webs for the surveillance, interception, detention and deportation of migrants from Africa and the Middle East. Most often, migrants reaching Europe territory through these regions have been intercepted numerous times and thus moved in and out of relations of inclusive exclusion. Border control should therefore not be understood only as a response to forced migration caused by other factors like conflict-induced displacement, development-induced displacement or environment-induced displacement but also as a cause of displacement and forced migration in itself. Consequently, the humanitarian consequences of externalization should make us realize that forced migration is increasingly caused by border-induced displacement.

Conceptually speaking, the difference between original and border-induced forced migration is one between first order and second order displacement. Natural disasters, civil wars, foreign occupations or forced resettlement due to construction projects can displace people resulting in their forced migration. However, when these same people are intercepted, detained or deported in instances of border control they once again experience displacement, only this time induced by the inclusive exclusions of the European borderscape. Accordingly, border-induced displacement is not equivalent to the original displacement of people which forced them to migrate, but instead functions as a second order-displacement imposed upon already-displaced people. The displacement occurring in the EU's border-system is therefore one where people are constantly being uprooted and transferred between control-elements, thus entering a state of quasi-permanent displacement.

Due to the dynamics of diffusion, decentralization and restructuring in the European borderscapes, border-induced displacement is brought about by different actors and in different ways. One example is the Frontex-interceptions followed by the transportation of migrants to, say, the camps in Lampedusa whereafter the migrants are

further dispersed to camps on the Italian mainland. Another example is thus the common practice of both European and African states to transfer asylum seekers between camps is one example and the Transport PLUS Service of G4S in Great Britain illustrate that both public police forces and private actors are involved in this activity. Moreover, as the case of Libya illustrate, cooperation between smugglers and police can also perpetuate border-induced displacement. As a 26-year old Eritrean, Daniel, explained Human Rights Watch:

Every two or three days, the manager of Kufra camp took 25 or 30 persons at night and sold them to Libyan transporters so he could get money from us. Other people were just thrown in the desert. Sometimes they would take people in the desert and run over their legs with a car and just leave them. He sold me with a group of 25 or 30 people to a Libyan man who put us in a big house in Kufra and told us we needed to have our families send 200 dollars to pay for our release (Human Rights Watch 2009: 72).

According to Human Rights Watch smugglers also operate detention facilities and wear military uniforms giving migrants a hard time distinguishing between the informal and formal actors involved in their forced movement (*Ibid*: 75) since they are constantly transferred back and forth between them in trucks and containers.

Moreover, border-induced displacement also occur as a result of readmission agreements between states, for instance, Libya deported around 200,000 persons to other countries between 2003 and 2006 (Fortress Europe 2007: 6). Following the networked rationality of externalization, however, the migrants' displacement often does not stop there as the countries they are deported to also have readmission agreements with other countries. The network of readmission agreements therefore form channels through which migrants are successively transferred from country to country illustrating the transnational character of the border-induced displacement created by externalization. Byrne and Shacknove have coined the apt term of 'chain deportations' to describe this forced traffic of migrants (Byrne&Shacknove 1996: 189-190). For instance, after the incidents at Ceuta and Melilla, for instance, several thousand migrants were rounded up and deported to other African countries, such

as Algeria and Mauritania with which Morocco had readmission agreements. These in turn deported the migrants yet again and in the end many ended up in the countries from which they had originally fled (Costello 2005: 47). Border-induced displacement is therefore a systemic feature of the European borderscapes and particularly obvious in the transnational bufferzone of externalised control.

Different from the walls of a fortress, the inclusive exclusions in the externalised European borderscapes does not preempt migration simply by halting it, but by transforming it into a different kind of mobility, namely border-induced displacement. Migrants are turned into various sequences of state-controlled forced flows. If we define a sequence as a series of element guided by a particular logic, the European borderscapes can be seen as relying on the construction of series of decentralized control-elements, placing migrants in various inclusive exclusions designed to contain and circulate their mobility outside Europe. The production of these sequences of forced corporeal movement then depend on other sequences, of funds, personnel, equipment and information created by security apparatuses like financial instruments, ILO's, Frontex and the SIS and EURODAC databases and circulated within the control-infrastructure. Externalization thus has an inherently dromopolitical dimension, that is, relying on politics of speed (Virillo 1977). The faster the circulation of information between the control-elements, the more rapid can instances of border control be directed against the 'threats' and 'risks' of migrants.

Seeing externalised border control as relying on a series of elements rather than specific control-points, such as a specific wall, camps or patrol-boats, highlights that it does not as a net accumulating migrants, but as a prism of control trafficking those intercepted between its many elements through practices like Moroccan flight-deportations, European train-transport between camps, Italian-Libyan push backs or day-long container transportations by military or smugglers in Libya. Understanding the transnational European borderscapes as a series of elements guided by a logic of sequential production of forced flows may therefore help capturing the dynamic and interrelated functionality of externalised control.

Conclusion

To conclude, as the ENP, Seville's migration-development nexus and Frontex' HERA-operations showed, externalization happens through multifaceted processes which may involve international negotiations, external governance or extra-territorialization. This made it possible to understand externalization as the construction of dynamic and fluctuating borderscapes outside Europe, guided by abstractions of knowledge and technologies, according with the EU agenda of containing migrants in regions of origin or transit. As a result of this, externalised borderscapes have both geopolitical and biopolitical aspects since they reterritorialise the geographic spaces of third countries in order to divide mobility into free and forced flows. Externalization is thus a flanking measure designed to safeguard the free circulation within Schengen by simultaneously excluding and subsuming migrants under the power of border control.

However, there were problems with the manner in which agambian biopolitics premised itself on the notion of sovereign power both because this reify states' selfunderstanding as capable of making exceptions out of migrants and also by conceptualising them as passive instances of bare life. Yet, although many migrants in the externalised European borderscape experience exploitation and abuse, they also attempt to manouver and resist the inclusive exclusions of border control by bribing border guards, seeking irregular work or demonstrating against their conditions showing that migrants are in possession of agency. Moreover, as the formulation of the Dublin Convention illustrated, state sovereignty needs to be differentiated in order to reflect both the bureaucratic and legal processes the precipitate border politics as well as the multiplicity of formal and informal, national and supranational involved in the external European borderscapes.

Exploring the transnational character of externalization, the chapter went on to identify four instances of transnational flows, crucial to the construction of externalised border-infrastructures, namely flows of funds, personnel, and equipment. These flows, it was argued, aid in the production of a power-geometry of European hypermobility and non-European submobility. It was argued that the existence of a fourth flow increasingly occuring, namely when border control is transferred from public hand to PSC's, further

problematise underdetermined notions of sovereignty since they can be seen as processes of neoliberalization.

Finally, the chapter suggested that externalised border control should not only be seen as a reaction to displacement and forced migration, but as itself causing these phenomena, which was conceptualised through the notion of border-induced displacement. It was argued that this kind of displacement is not an incidental feature, but in fact the underlying logic behind externalization. Conceptualising this logic as the sequencing of forced flows according to the containment-agenda made it possible to focus on the interrelated functionality of this decentralised border-infrastructure. At the end of the day, it was argued, this provides a lense capable of assessing the transnational and systematic production of vulnerable existences in the European borderscapes.

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Between Europe and Africa: smuggling, drug trafficking and money laundering at the Spanish-Moroccan frontier

Abstract: Against claims that, with globalisation, state borders are becoming increasingly obsolete, a growing number of academics have called for a return to the consideration of borders as the symbols of the power of the state, and of the state, in turn, as the principal agent in the configuration of territorial boundaries. For them, the question at issue in the study of borderlands is the investigation of the power of the state and the ways in which it is enforced, contested or negotiated. With this question in view, cross-border smuggling and other forms of underground economic activities are inevitably construed as movements of resistance and subversion which occur at the margins of and against the state. A different set of questions, however, may yield a very different answer.

Experience soon taught me that under these laboratory conditions one found out nothing at all except in answer to a question; and not a vague question either, but a definite one [...] so that a man who was asking questions of one kind learnt one kind of thing from a piece of digging which to another man revealed something different, to a third something illusory, and to a fourth nothing at all.

R.G. Collingwood

Introduction

Around 30,000 people cross the border between Melilla and Nador every day. Groups of women pushing through, carrying large, heavy bundles on their back, old men begging, children tapping on car windows with a pack of tissues or chewing gum to sell, a few men idling in the shade, waiting for a job opportunity to arise, men driving convoys of old Mercedes loaded with goods to be sold across the border, custom officers cruising around with a look of boredom in their eyes, occasionally yelling at the passerby who is too slow, or too tight in his bribe, thin young men waving a pen and a pack of custom documents and offering their services to the few foreigners crossing the border... Men and women, young and old, military and civilian, they all inhabit and make a living off the one-hundred-meter fenced passage that is the frontier. To the newcomer, the intense traffic of cars, people and goods, the heaps of rubble, discarded plastic wraps and empty cardboard boxes lying on the pavement, and the comings and goings of migrants, smugglers and beggars present an image of chaos and anarchy. Behind this apparent confusion, however, lies an order of things which is far from arbitrary.

Borderlands have become a growing political concern in Europe, and a common area of focus in academia. Recent times have seen the creation of numerous institutes, centres and organisations dedicated to the study of borders, migration and transnationalism, which have in turn generated a growing body of academic literature on the subject.¹ The last three decades have also witnessed a shift in academic discourse towards an emphasis on the fluid, the mobile and the ephemeral. This shift is part of a more general move in academia and in arts from a modernist to a

¹ See, for instance, the books edited by Baud and van Schendel (1997), Das and Poole (2003), Shapiro and Alker (1996), Dietz (2004) or the works of Ong (1999) or Appadurai (1991) among others.

supposedly postmodernist framework (Harvey 1989). The change is not without significance. The image of a borderless world so prevalent in academic literature at the turn of the 21st century responds precisely to this shift.

This has had an impact on anthropology, as growing numbers of academics emphasise the predominance of change, movement and flow in every aspect of social life. Globalisation, transnationalism and interconnectedness are said to be at the core of contemporary processes and relationships of all kinds, as metaphors of the ‘global village’, the ‘global ecumene’, a ‘borderless world’, ‘spaces of flow’ and even ‘non-places’ proliferate.² Diversity of metaphors aside, the picture presented in this literature remains by and large the same: globalisation has given rise to a new transnational reality in which groups are no longer bounded, identities no longer homogeneous, and space no longer an obstacle to movements and flows.³ The difficulties in sustaining this position are self-evident; if we are living in a world in which movement and flows are no longer restricted, why do borders continue to exist? In fact, little attention is paid in these narratives to the ways in which changes to the economic and political system over the past three decades, while resulting in an increased movement of capital, commodities and, *sometimes*, information, have also led to severe restrictions in the movement of people.⁴

Against the discourse of a ‘borderless world’, which some have dismissed as ‘neoliberal propaganda’ (Anderson, et al. 2002:9), a growing number of academics have called for a return to the consideration of the state as a powerful agent in the configuration and enforcement of territorial boundaries (Anderson 2001; Anderson, et al. 2003; Donnan and Wilson 1998; Donnan and Wilson 1999; O’Dowd 2002). The argument goes as follows: while it is true that the world in which we live is one in which flows of capital, information and commodities have increased dramatically, the emergence of more and often stronger states over the past decades points to the continued importance of ‘the old structure of the state’ (Donnan and Wilson 1998:1,2). Borders continue to be both testimony to and agents of state power and should therefore be studied in relation to the state and other forms of transnational governance (Anderson, et al. 2003).⁵ It is, in their words, ‘not a question in

² These phrases have been taken from MacLuhan (1994 [1964]), Hannerz (1996), Ohmae (1990), Castells (1996) and Augé (1995), in order of appearance.

³ Relevant examples include Appadurai (1991), Eriksen (1995), Hannerz (1996), Kearney (1995), Ong (1999), Tsing (2000) and Vertovec and Cohen (1999).

⁴ A number of scholars have argued vehemently against the postmodernist turn, and particularly against the image of a globalised, deterritorialised world. Harvey (1989) and Callinicos (1989) are perhaps the most renowned examples, but there are others. In anthropology, Sahlins (1999) has a wonderfully written piece against what he calls ‘afterological’ literature (which includes all the ‘post-isms’, i.e. postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism and the like), where he points to the structural amnesia that besets current anthropology and reminds us of all the things we once knew about culture. From a different standpoint, Friedman (2000) has argued that the ‘globalization discourse’ is neither a theoretical framework nor a model of reality or even the result of serious research, but simply a manifestation of a ‘growing awareness by intellectual and other elites that something has happened’ (2000:638-39). Strathern (1995) also writes a strong critique against the notion of a ‘globalised culture’ in *Shifting Contexts*, while Mintz’s (1998) piece on area studies and transnationalism can be cited as a perhaps less poignant but still relevant critique against the ‘transnationalism’ framework.

⁵ See also O’Dowd and Wilson (1996), Donnan and Wilson (1998, 1999) and Gupta and Sharma (2006). The emphasis these authors place on taking into consideration the role of ‘the State’ as an agent of power in the study of borders also comes at the expense of taking into account the simple fact that states do not exist in isolation. That is, states are defined in relation to other states, they are not ‘natural communities’. It thus follows that the analysis of ‘the State’ cannot be divorced from the analysis of the specific, historical relations established between states, in borders as much as elsewhere.

anthropology of positioning symbolic politics, or the politics of culture, against “real” politics, but one of returning to the proposition that all politics is by definition about the use of authority and power to direct the behaviour of others, thereby achieving an individual or group’s public goals’ (Donnan and Wilson 1998:2). This leads them to conclude that perhaps the principal anthropological task at borders is ‘the investigation and interpretation of the symbolic aspects of the state’ (Donnan and Wilson 1999:13).

There are, in my view, important problems with this approach. If territorial borders are taken to be both the symbols of state power and the sites for its contention, the informal economies which typically develop in border regions are logically conceived as a phenomenon independent from and opposed to state and mainstream economic interests and channels. It follows that any extra-legal activities occurring across the border are seen as a form of resistance or subversion against state power (cf. Donnan and Wilson 1999:87-106). The argument is spurious on two counts. First, more often than not, illegal cross-border activities occur not despite of, or against, state-control, but as a consequence of economic and governmental interests. Moreover, as Piliavski argues, neither smuggling nor any other economic activities around border areas are necessarily confined to trade across national boundaries, and in fact smuggling hubs are commonly found in the heartlands of states and not on their peripheries (Piliavski forthcoming). Secondly, there is little ground for assuming that the people involved in these activities see themselves as being engaged in anti-state resistance. This is a rather widespread misconception. Despite her insistence that the informal economy not be taken as an anti-state movement due to its connections with state power, Roitman (2004), for instance, takes fiscal disobedience to be a ‘moment of struggle’ (Ibid.: 8). While she criticises the use of the concept of ‘informal economy’ on the basis that these kinds of economic activities involve highly organised modalities of financing and labour recruitment (Ibid.: 19), her suggested alternative, ‘fiscal disobedience’, implies precisely the kind of subversive intention that she takes herself to be rejecting. Many others have followed a similar line of argument.⁶ Indeed, this is the logical consequence of taking a state-centric view, wherefrom economic activities outside the state’s control appear invariably subversive.

Perhaps the main challenge to the state-centric argument is that, in fact, the ‘old structure of the state’ has suffered important transformations over the last forty years which need to be accounted for. As Harvey has argued, the increased movement of capital, commodities and information that characterises the current economic system has to be understood in the context of the changes that traditional modes of production have undergone over the past four decades. The emergence of new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services and new markets, together the greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological and organisational innovation have generated a new, more flexible mode of production which relies strongly on spatial differentiation. Local differences in capital, technology, market taste, material resources, technical skills and labour markets have led to a

⁶ Donnan and Wilson endorse this view without regrets: ‘a subversive economy ... is one which exposes the weaknesses of the state and reveals the complicity of state agents in many illegal cross-border activities’ (Donnan and Wilson 1999: 105). MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) subscribe to the same assumption, though in more explicit ways: ‘the traders do not organise themselves into concerted political actions but they are a part of this general dissent, which can result in, or provide support for, political change’ (2000:172).

decentralisation of relations of production, as relative regional advantages acquire unprecedented significance in a system in which the strategic use of space in the administration of labour supplies, resources and infrastructures returns increased profits. A transformation in the structure of the state has been critical to this process. In most industrialised countries, traditional areas of state control have been yielded partially or wholly to the private sector through the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, the institution of public-private partnerships and the introduction of 'quasi-markets' in areas of the welfare state. The progressive liberalisation of trade barriers and the deregulation of financial and labour markets have allowed for a more flexible mode of production and an expansion of consumer markets, but have also entailed a reduction of the role of the state, whose intervention in the economic domain has been practically reduced to the correction of 'market failures'. If state actions respond, however partially, to the interests of the market, it is hard to see how the latter could be conceived as a 'free-standing' agent, as implied in Anderson, Donnan and Wilson's approach. Viewing the state as the sole agent of power in the configuration of territorial boundaries obscures the fact that border regulation is more often than not at the service of new forms of spatial organisation dependent on economic processes which transcend national boundaries.

Turning our attention to the wider economic system in which the modern state and its borders function permits us to ask different questions about the nature of cross-border transactions. Taking this framework as a point of departure, this paper explores the relationship between different forms of exchange across the Spanish-Moroccan border of Melilla. A gate to Europe in the African continent, this Spanish city of twelve square kilometres located on the north eastern coast of Morocco hosts a large-scale underground economy based on wide variety of cross-border activities, most commonly the smuggling of basic commodities and luxury goods, but also drug trafficking, money laundering and people smuggling. Thousands of people make a living smuggling items across the border each day and many others depend directly or indirectly on the frontier. This large-scale underground economy, which is to a great extent a byproduct of Spain's incorporation into the European Community (1986), bears little resemblance to past forms of commerce, and is a product of the modern economic and political order.

The setting

Situated on the north-eastern coast of Morocco, Melilla is a territory of twelve-square kilometres under Spanish sovereignty since 1497, and belonging to the European Union since 1986.⁷ Historically, Melilla has been a disputed land: the frontier between Spain and Morocco, Christianity and Islam, and, most recently, Europe and Africa. As a place, it has achieved a certain kind of permanence throughout the centuries, partly as a consequence of increased foreign interests in the area. Initially established as a military outpost and a penal settlement, Melilla became a regional and international trading centre in the wake of British and French imperialism, when the Spanish enclave was declared a free port (1863) and began serving as a key point of entry for British and French manufactured products in North Africa.

⁷ Note that the enclave Melilla is located in the Eastern Rif, a Berber region some 65 km from the border with Algeria. I therefore refer to this region as either 'the Moroccan hinterland', 'the Berber hinterland' or 'the Riffian hinterland'. Similarly, I refer to the population as 'Riffians', 'Berbers', 'Moroccans' or 'Muslims' depending on the context.

The establishment of the Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco (1912), and the consolidation of a Spanish mining industry in the colonised territories, led to a period of growth during which economic ties across the border were strengthened and new hierarchical relations between Christians of Spanish descent and Muslims of Riffian origin were established. Large numbers of Riffians who were employed in the mining industry and the construction sector settled in the peripheral quarters of the enclave, as migrants from southern Spain arrived in Melilla in search of employment. New transport infrastructures were developed to accommodate the mineral exports, and architects and engineers were shipped in from mainland Spain to design and oversee the urbanisation of the enclave. Within a few decades, the citadel had become a city and, by the time Morocco gained independence (1956), Melilla was effectively the economic capital of the eastern Rif.⁸

Across the border, the end of the Spanish Protectorate was followed by a severe economic crisis which led many Riffians to emigrate to Europe. The long-term effects of Riffian emigration on the economy of the frontier were critical. Migratory routes linking the Eastern Rif to the main European capitals provided the contacts and resources to establish new trading routes, as migrants themselves began to engage in small-scale contraband to supplement their income. Emigrant remittances represented an important influx of cash which contributed to the gradual urbanisation of the region, as migrants invested in building a house to relocate their families, usually of rural origin, in the city. This process of urbanisation led, in turn, to a higher demand for products (from foodstuff to housing tools and utensils) unavailable in the region, particularly for European goods. The increased purchasing power of migrants and their families back home led to the gradual emergence of a new market of consumers, and this, over time, attracted foreign commercial interests, contributing consolidation of commercial routes linking the Moroccan Rif to the Spanish enclave of Melilla, and Melilla, in turn, to a number of international centres.

Spain's incorporation into the European Community in 1986, and into the European Union after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, turned Melilla into a new gate to access European territory. At a time when the consolidation of the European Union's Free Trade Area had led to an increased concern with the control of Europe's external borders, the protection of the enclave became a political-economic project for a wide range of political and financial institutions both in Spain and in Europe. This set in motion two parallel and seemingly contradictory processes. On the one hand, Spain came under pressure to increase border control, secure the perimeter of the two enclaves and guarantee the impermeability of the frontier. The 1960s had been a time of economic growth in Europe, and countries like Germany, Belgium, France or Holland had signed labour recruitment agreements with Morocco in order to satisfy a growing demand for cheap labour. Thousands of Riffians, faced with endemic poverty and high rates of unemployment at home, had emigrated to Western Europe. As Europe prepared to enter a new period of economic recession, however, the porosity of the Spanish border posed a threat. In order to comply with the EEC membership standards, Spain was required to sign a new immigration law.⁹ A few years later, visa

⁸ A law passed in 1929 determined that any goods imported or exported to and from the port of the city were exempt from custom duties and, in 1955, the law was modified to include the totality of the enclave's territory, leading to a general exemption of custom duties and VAT (Value Added Tax) in Melilla (Planet, 1998:43-46). As a consequence, commerce from, through and to Melilla grew.

⁹ The new law, which determined that all foreign residents in Spanish territory were liable to be deported unless granted an official residence permit, was met with intense protests and demonstrations in the north African enclaves, where over a third of the population was of Moroccan origin. After

requirements were introduced for Moroccan citizens entering Spain (1991). The arrival of the first groups of Sub-Saharan migrants in the enclave in the early 1990s made apparent the need for policies and infrastructures to tackle illegal immigration in the enclave and, by the late 1990s, the construction of a fence to secure the perimeter had begun.¹⁰

On the other hand, and parallel to the gradual closure of the border, important measures were taken to ensure that the traffic of commodities across the border remained untouched. When Spain joined the EEC, a special clause determined that both Ceuta and Melilla would remain outside the European Free Trade Association and continue to be classified as free ports, thus guaranteeing their privileged position as points of access to a market otherwise hindered by Moroccan protectionist policies. Later, as visa requirements for Moroccan citizens were introduced, a formal agreement between Spain and Morocco established special privileges for residents of the enclave and the neighbouring territories, dictating that residents of the neighbouring Moroccan province of Nador would be exempt from visa requirements and free to access the Spanish enclave at will, while residents of the Spanish enclave would enjoy the same rights in the neighbouring Moroccan province. Partially exempt from the new immigration law, Riffians were able to continue trading across the border. Strict passport controls at the port of the city ensured that Riffian smugglers and cross-border workers did not make use of their privileged position to emigrate into the European mainland. In this way, commercial exchange across the border continued seemingly unaffected by the new geopolitical context, while Europe remained “protected” from unwanted labour.

The spatial configuration of Melilla’s frontier responds precisely to the conflict between these two contrary and often conflicting processes: the opening of the border to the movement of capital and goods, and its closure to the movement of people. Behind the image of Melilla as the gate of the European fortress, therefore, lie a number of more or less permeable borders which regulate the transit of capital, goods and people at different levels and in different ways. The fence which officially separates Moroccan from Spanish (and thus European) territory is only one of the boundaries to take into consideration. The unmarked boundary that separates the province of Nador from the rest of Morocco is equally important, establishing a distinction between those Moroccan citizens with almost unrestricted access to the Spanish enclave and those for whom the border of Melilla constitutes the gate to fortress Europe. Finally, strict controls at Melilla’s port generate a third spatial boundary which prevents Nadori residents from using the Spanish enclave as a transit point to access mainland Spain; for them, fortress Europe begins at the port. Three different boundaries thus preserve a frontier economy which benefits many without threatening the integrity of a frontier whose protection is equally important. Rather

months of violent protests and riots, Muslim citizens of Ceuta and Melilla were granted Spanish citizenship, and the new immigration law came into effect.

¹⁰ In the years to follow, the numbers of African migrants trying to reach the enclave grew dramatically and, in 1995, the government announced the construction of a new fence along the perimeter of the city, to be completed by 1998. It was a three-meter high double-wired fence equipped with optical and acoustic sensors, security cameras and control posts. The consolidation of human-trafficking networks in the region to cater for thousands of Sub-Saharan African and East Asian migrants trying to enter the EU followed shortly. After massive assaults by Sub-Saharan African migrants in August of 2004, and September and November of 2005, the building of a higher, safer and more solid fence began. This was the first step towards the installation of the six-meter high, double-wired triple-fence which secures Melilla’s perimeter since 2006.

than a border between Europe and Africa, the enclave constitutes a 'buffer zone', a space neither here nor there which is at the service of the regulation of different kinds of movement.

Today, the frontier is the main pillar of the region's economy. Spain's incorporation into the European Union saw not only an increase in cross-border smuggling, but also the emergence of other kinds of clandestine activities and criminal organisations, including drug trafficking, money laundering and people smuggling. This black market economy sustains the existence of a region with no industry or natural resources of its own, and reliant to a great extent on capital drawn from the outside. Emigration, drug trade and commercial smuggling are not the only sources of this capital. In recent years, European funds to secure the Euro-African border have been poured into the region, financing not only the building and maintenance of the fence that secures the perimeter of the enclave and the equipment and personnel for border control, but also myriad development projects to ensure economic growth and stability in the city. The frontier is therefore both a haven for illegal transactions of all kinds and a legal source of revenue for a city which benefits from the interest invested in controlling the inflow of labour into Europe.

Atypical commerce

A six-meter tall fence seals the perimeter of Melilla since 2005. First erected in the late 1990s in response to the first arrivals of Sub Saharan African migrants in the enclave, the fence brought about dramatic changes to the socio-political landscape of the region. For the first time in centuries, the Spanish enclave was physically enclosed, its borders regularly patrolled, and the traffic of people and goods restricted and regulated by police forces and custom officials. Paradoxically, the construction of the fence facilitated the development of a professional economy of contraband. Before it was built, the limits of the enclave were marked by a low fence which had been pierced in several places to allow for the passage of goats and smugglers carrying their merchandise on bicycles, mules or donkeys (Driessen 1992: 121). There were several paths and roads that connected Melilla to the Moroccan hinterland, and buses run from Melilla to the largest cities in the province on a daily basis. Traffic across the border was fluid, and smuggling a business accessible to everyone. With the construction of the new fence, however, border crossing became restricted to increasingly controlled crossing points. This, together with the interruption of all public transportation between the enclave and the Moroccan territories, complicated the logistics of contraband. Stricter controls at the border meant that contacts, financial resources and official documents proving residency in Nador or Melilla became necessary for smuggling. Soon the frontier attracted businessmen with the capital to start a smuggling business, and a cheap workforce looking for employment opportunities as couriers of the merchandise.

Known amongst smugglers as *trabando* (from the Spanish '*contrabando*'), commercial smuggling can be defined as the trade of goods bought in Melilla and taken across the border clandestinely (in order to avoid paying custom duties) to be sold at a higher price in Morocco. Melilla's status as a free port means that goods imported into the enclave are exempt from paying custom duties; this, together with the fact that products for sale are exempt from VAT, means that goods purchased in Melilla are significantly cheaper. The range of products smuggled across the border is wide, including foodstuffs, perfumes, toiletries, electronic commodities, tyres and other car replacement parts, home utensils, clothes and blankets, shoes, watches, and even locally discarded goods such as used furniture, plastic bottles or metal scraps.

Everything can be sold across the border, from imported Nike shoes to, as an informant reminded me, the empty bottles of Heineken that an old man used to collect and sell to the *nouveau riches Marocains* (i.e. emigrants) who would use the shattered green glass to decorate the façade of their new houses. The sale of these products is not illegal, and all major cities in Morocco have a *suq* exclusively stocked with products from the Spanish enclave, known as *suqayyāt Melilia*.¹¹

Every day, in the early morning hours, thousands of people gather outside Melilla's main checking points. Some travel up to six hours, from cities like Fez, to smuggle items of all kinds across the Spanish-Moroccan border. Long lines of cars form on either side of the border while a few meters away, in Melilla's industrial park, couriers meet with their suppliers to collect the merchandise and begin a long journey of smuggling. Price differentials across the border make smuggling a profitable business and, in a region haunted by an endemic lack of employment, this kind of trade constitutes a fundamental source of income for many households; around 45,000 people make a living directly from smuggling, and a further 400,000 are indirectly involved in the business through the distribution and sale of smuggled products throughout Morocco.

People of all ages and conditions participate in this underground economy; from the wealthy *entrepreneurs* who control the large-scale smuggling of clothes, alcohol and tobacco, to the thousands of couriers who work carrying heavy bundles on their back for a few dirhams a trip. Earnings as a courier are meagre, and the job is generally taken up by widows, divorcees, old men and the physically disabled as a last resort for subsistence. As the capital derived from emigration in the Rif grows, Riffian smugglers come increasingly to belong to the first group, while the latter role attracts unemployed Moroccans from poorer regions of the country. Large numbers of Riffians, however, continue to engage in what we could call 'medium-scale' smuggling. They work with a specific product (for instance, car tyres or tiles) and participate in regional networks of distribution, but do not generally work with couriers. Instead, they employ about half a dozen people, generally relatives or friends, to help with the passage of goods by car. They are often former emigrants themselves, or have relatives living abroad who are willing to invest in their business. This kind of smuggling must thus be distinguished both from large-scale professional smuggling and from that carried out by couriers working on foot, bound to their employers through exploitative, volatile and highly impersonal relations.

In Melilla, cross-border smuggling employs a large percentage of the Muslim population of Riffian origin. Historically disadvantaged vis-à-vis their Christian counterparts, Muslims in Melilla are still paying the price of a political system which favoured residents of Spanish origin for centuries. Although Muslims acquired full rights as Spanish citizens in 1985, the effects of centuries of Christian hegemony are still felt, and unemployment and illiteracy rates among Muslims are the highest in the city. Long-standing networks of patronage continue to work to the advantage of Christians, who are educated to a higher level and in a better position to obtain white-collar jobs. Thus, while Christians are mainly employed in the public sector (as teachers, nurses, doctors or clerks), Muslims tend to work in the construction industry

¹¹ It is important to note, however, that Melilla is in fact only one of a number of smuggling centres in Morocco -others include the Spanish enclave of Ceuta and the border with Algeria. Several kinds of goods are smuggled in from Algeria, most notably petrol, sold in all major roads across Morocco.

or in the smuggling business.¹² Of course this is not to say that Christians do not benefit from this frontier economy. In Melilla, where commerce represents 80% of the local economy, the sales generated in the context of commercial smuggling benefit the city as a whole. In 2006, to give an approximate idea, Spanish authorities estimated the volume of illegal commerce in Melilla at around 440 million euros per year (*El País*, 04/01/2009).

We should not be misled into believing that smuggling is a marginal economic activity, peripheral to legal channels and mainstream commercial interests. The kinds of products imported into Melilla to be smuggled across the border are not illegal or 'fake-branded' products; rather, they are mainstream commercial goods, often well-known international brands available across Europe and America. Most of these products follow legal commercial channels; they are *legally* imported to Melilla through the city's main port, and *legally* sold across the border in one of the numerous Moroccan street markets. The Spanish-Moroccan frontier clearly provides a rentable way to access an otherwise highly protectionist market, but companies supplying the goods are exempt from legal responsibility given that, technically, the exports are legal. Melilla's local authorities also benefit from the legal ambiguity which surrounds the smuggling trade, for the city as a whole depends on this commercial economy which in the Spanish enclave is revealingly known not as smuggling or contraband, but as *comercio atípico* ('atypical commerce'). Indeed, from the point of view of Spanish custom authorities, taking goods out of Melilla (for sale or otherwise) is not illegal; technically, the traffic of goods out of the enclave and into Morocco is the exclusive concern of the Moroccan custom authorities.¹³ This, in turn, works to the advantage of smugglers, who are therefore free to organise their trade in plain view throughout the city without fearing legal sanctions, and must only concern themselves with the transit of smuggling goods *through* the border. Informal agreements with the Moroccan officers on duty, who supplement their meagre incomes with the bribes they receive from smugglers, guarantee the unproblematic passage of goods across the border.¹⁴ The interests invested in the continuation of this trade are therefore significant, and there is little evidence to conclude that this economy is in any way generated or maintained *against* or despite the state, its agents, or the commercial sector at large.

In fact, most Riffians think of smuggling as a legitimate means of livelihood. For them, smuggling is neither a subversive nor an illicit activity; rather, it is a

¹² In a report on the underground economy of Melilla for instance, it was estimated that 70% of clandestine employment in the city concentrates amongst Muslim families (Gómez Rodilla 2007). In part, the predominance of Muslim traders can be traced back to the mid-19th century, when a treaty determined that no Christian was allowed to set foot outside of the Spanish enclave. It would be inaccurate, however, to assert that this is the sole reason for this division of labour, for the causes behind the social, political and economic segregation between the two groups are far more complex.

¹³ Concerning this kind of traffic, there are two legal ways in which goods can be taken into Morocco: either as private goods (not for sale), in which case one is allowed to take as many personal goods as one can carry, or for commercial purposes in which case custom duties must be paid and the kind and quantity of goods is subject to restrictions. The decision on whether the merchandise carried is considered 'personal goods' or 'commercial goods' is left to the officer on duty, and here is where bribery comes in.

¹⁴ Bribes are pre-arranged with officers on duty according to the number of trips across the border and the volume of goods, and rumour has it that Moroccan officials in the main Moroccan capitals pay large sums of money to be assigned to the Spanish-Moroccan frontier in order to benefit from this underground economy.

standard, almost ‘middle-class’ way to earn a living. A member of my host family in Nador who work smuggling tiles put it in the following way:

For me, smuggling was not about survival, but about making money. When you are twenty, the money and the access to women that contraband gives you are very tempting, and as you get older you realise that, even though it is unstable, it is also a good way of making a living, and once you know the people and how the system works it’s easy. If I worked as an electrician [he was trained as an electrician], I could not afford to live in Melilla like I do now, and I would not be able to give my wife and son the life they have.

An key aspect of the widespread acceptance of smuggling as an ordinary means of livelihood is the contrast drawn between commercial smuggling and drug trafficking. While commodity smuggling is regarded as a morally legitimate means to earn a living, drug trafficking is a morally objectionable activity and may not be discussed or practiced with the same openness; the first is considered a licit form of employment, the second an illicit means of rapid enrichment.¹⁵ The distinction between licit and illicit smuggling, clearly distinct from questions about the legality of both trades, is grounded on moral principles and invoked in connection with religious precepts. Rifians invariably related this to the harm that comes from drug consumption, so that when asked about why drug trafficking was a reproachable trade they would say something like ‘because it harms other people, and Allah does not want us to cause harm to others’. Licit smuggling is defined as any kind of smuggling that does not cause harm to others, while illicit smuggling is that which is liable to be harmful and because it is harmful it is *harām* (prohibited).

The forbidden trade

Commercial smuggling may be one of the most important sources of revenue for the enclave of Melilla, but it represents merely a fraction of the capital generated across the border. Drug smuggling, money laundering and, to a lesser degree, people smuggling account for the largest economic transactions across the border. It is impossible to determine exactly the size of these clandestine operations, but the available data indicate the presence of a firmly consolidated black market economy which extends far beyond the commercial trade described earlier. Sustained on webs of corruption which trespass national boundaries, this invisible, underground economy relies on a global financial system which makes no distinction between legal and illegal transactions, and benefits from the different legal frameworks found across the border. Its existence is an open secret among locals, who see this parallel underworld as the true illegitimate underground economy across the border.

There are clear historical and geographical reasons why a large-scale underground economy of this kind emerged in this particular region. The province of Nador is located 50 km east of the central Rif, a mountainous region of northern Morocco which hosts one of the world’s largest cannabis plantations. Since the mid-1980s, the hashish produced in the central Rif has supplied European markets, with the area of Nador playing a key role in the distribution and sale of the drug. A key

¹⁵ Parallels can be drawn here with the situation described by Judith Scheele (2008) for Al-Khalil in Northern Mali. In Al-Khalil, a key trading and smuggling hub in Northern Mali, ‘rapid accumulation of wealth by people of a formerly lesser status is directly blamed on the drug trade, whether there is any evidence to back such a claim or not, while also being associated with intra-communal violence, moral failure and religious transgression: in short, with asocial behaviour’ (Scheele, 2008:7)

trading hub since the mid-nineteenth century, the eastern Rif offered existing trade routes and networks which could be easily exploited. In addition, the more recent migratory routes linking the eastern Rif to the main European capitals provided the contacts necessary for the development of a sustainable drug trafficking industry between northern Morocco and Europe. In recent years, increased controls at European airports and ports have forced South American mafias to redirect cocaine distribution routes through Africa, and the eastern Rif has also become a centre for the distribution of cocaine into Europe. The assimilation of the South American cocaine trade greatly increased the volume of revenues generated by the drug business and, today, drug trafficking is one of the most important 'industries' in the region.

Largely dependent on migratory networks linking the province of Nador to Spain, Germany, Holland, Belgium and France, the drug trafficking industry is generally run by Riffian emigrants or former emigrants, both locally and internationally. A small percentage of the drug is taken across the border with Melilla to be smuggled in the ferries that connect the enclave with mainland Spain on a daily basis.¹⁶ By and large, however, the hashish is sailed on speedboats directly from the beaches of Nador to the Mediterranean coast of Spain. Once in Europe, distribution routes follow those traced by Rifian emigration, and Rifian emigrants themselves are often in charge of the sale of the drug in their host countries (Chouvy 2005). Many believe that without the involvement of local and regional authorities the transit across the Mediterranean would not be possible, and it is often assumed that drug lords bribe military and police officers both at origin and destination. According to M., a Melillan involved in drug trafficking who became my informant in the field,

you must bribe the police both at the origin and the destination. You can see it, if you go to the areas where the speedboats are based there will be police officers and they will tell you that you cannot be there. This is because they do not want people to see what is happening. And the same happens across the border, on the Spanish coast. The problem here is that some of the officers are young and senseless and as soon as you pay them they start changing their lifestyle and buying expensive things and they raise suspicion [...] The best officers are the older ones, the ones who have been in the loop for many years and don't lose their mind with the easy money.

Being a centre of operations for drug trafficking networks, Nador is also a key hub for the money laundering industry. The high numbers of banks operating in the region, together with the volume of bank deposits, are revealing of the large sums of capital that circulate in the province of Nador.¹⁷ With a rate of 26,4% unemployment and being one of the least developed regions of the country in terms of infrastructure and industry, the city is, according to the Central Bank (*Bank al-Maghrib*), one of the

¹⁶ This route, however, is only used by amateur occasional smugglers who have no links to professional organisations. They purchase the drug from local drug lords, who often use them as a bait to distract the local authorities while a larger shipment takes place elsewhere.

¹⁷ Nador is the city with the most banks per inhabitant in Morocco - with 3,906 inhabitants per branch versus a national average of 10,000, according to data from 1994 collected by Berriane and Hopfinger (1999). It is important to note that this capital does not generate wealth or economic growth, for it is rarely reinvested in the region. Only 10% of that money is given away in credits to the province; the rest (around 2,000 million euros) is redirected towards other regions of the country, especially Casablanca, where the deficit is of 4,000 million euros. It is because of this that Nador constitutes a key element in the national financial system, and a strict enforcement of the current laws against money laundering could have grave financial repercussions beyond the region.

main financial strongholds of the country (Berriane and Hopfinger 1999:163). In fact, and contrary to the commonly held view that the Rif is one of the poorest regions of Morocco, the large amounts of capital derived from emigration, money laundering and contraband make it only second to Rabat and Casablanca in the volume of bank deposits. It is important to note, however, that this capital does not generate economic growth, for it is rarely reinvested in the region. Only 10% of that money is given away in credits to the province; the rest (around 2,000 million euros) is redirected towards other regions of the country, especially Casablanca, where the deficit is of 4,000 million euros. There are therefore interests invested in the continued inflow of these deposits in the administrative and financial strongholds of Morocco. According to the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, Nador concentrates 45% of the GDP of Morocco (Cembrero 2006), with local banks holding up to 2,500 million euros.¹⁸

The proximity of the Spanish enclave of Melilla has contributed to the configuration and maintenance of the money laundering industry in more than one way; here, the frontier, rather than being an obstacle, works to the advantage of organised crime. The Spanish enclave serves as an offshore facility where the money generated through drug-trafficking can be exchanged, transferred or invested in real estate. In 1999, 2002 and 2005, for instance, the Spanish authorities carried out a number of raids against the money laundering industry in the enclave; bank branches, supermarkets, consultancies and a number of other commercial establishments were found to conduct illegal operations of currency exchange.¹⁹ At the same time, the money laundering industry relies on the different legal frameworks found on either side of the border. According to M., a common practice amongst drug lords in Nador is, for instance, to pay poor Rifian peasants to open a non-resident bank account in Melilla and make them authorised users of this account. The peasant is paid a small fee for setting up the account, which drug lords then use to carry out transactions which can never be traced back to them. Paradoxically, the frontier would seem to work to the advantage of organised crime. According to M., other, more sophisticated methods for money laundering include forging invoices by using information from real companies abroad to justify large deposits of money, setting up a cover business and inflating the costs, or arranging international transfers via a third party. According to M., in fact, this last method was the most popular now that police investigations had become more frequent and effective. The idea that the deregulation of the financial system on a global scale has facilitated the absorption of illegal capital into mainstream financial channels is certainly not new²⁰, but it is a point that bears repetition.

Both Nador and Melilla bear the clear traces of this underground economy. The dramatic growth of the construction sector over the past few years are perhaps the

¹⁸ There are two main sources for this capital: on the one hand, the remittances sent in by Rifian emigrants in Europe and, on the other hand, the money laundering industry generated as a consequence of drug-trafficking. Regarding remittances, data presented by Berriane and Hopfinger (1999) in 1994 shows that 88.8% of bank accounts in Nador were owned by emigrants (compared, for instance, with 15.6 % in Casablanca), holding a total of 3,574,885 dirhams. As for the money laundering industry, though no official data are available, the high volume in currency trade –considering the lack of international tourism in the area– points to the existence of a well-established money laundering industry. Indeed, as Berriane suggests, it is not implausible to think that a large number of ‘emigrant accounts’ correspond in fact to the accounts generated in the context of drug trafficking.

¹⁹ Before Spain adopted the euro as its official currency, Melilla was –after Madrid– the city where most currency exchanges occurred. Today, around 10% of currency exchanges in Spain take place in Melilla.

²⁰ See, for instance, Hampton (1996) or Palan (1998 and 2003).

most evident indication.²¹ But there are other, more subtle signs, including, for instance, the existence of commercial establishments which remain open despite having no customers and being evidently unprofitable or, in Nador, the clear inconsistency between the high unemployment and low income rates prevalent in the region, and the evidently extravagant lifestyle of some of its residents. None of these signs have gone unnoticed by the local population, who are aware and deeply suspicious of the rapid enrichment some of their neighbours have undergone over the past few years. In Nador, people often drew my attention to one of the many wealthy-looking houses in the outskirts of the city and dutifully informed me that the owner of that house trafficked in heroine, cocaine or hashish. This was always said matter-of-factly (there was no doubt as to the truth of the matter) and with a slight condescending frown (the money -they understood- was tempting, but the act was nevertheless reproachable). The following remark, made by a young Rifian emigrant in Nador, condenses Riffian attitudes toward the 'prohibited' trade:

If I wanted to traffic with cocaine, it would be very easy for me, I know the people and the system. Actually, many people think I am a trafficker because of my car, you see. And I've had young boys approach me in Tarragona [Spain] to work with me [selling the drug]. It would be very easy for me to take 100 grams across the border and make lots of money! But I don't do it. Because of my family, you see. Cocaine kills people, and Allah does not want that. The money that comes from drugs is made by killing people and harming them, and that is against Islam. This is why I don't do it. But I have thought about it many times, it would be so easy... Now I am thinking of going to Romania to buy gold, so I can sell it back in Morocco. They tell me gold is very cheap there.

A similar distrust towards the rapid enrichment of neighbours and acquaintances was prevalent in Melilla. Although amongst Christians the condemnation of drug trafficking did not take religious overtones, attitudes towards drug trafficking and money laundering betrayed a similar rejection of an underground economy invariably seen as illegitimate. For instance, a Christian woman in Melilla said to me the following:

Where do all those expensive cars come from? [...] There are many businesses that you wonder, how can they still be open? Sometimes they open for a couple of months and then close again, or maybe they start selling pens and then switch to sell plates or clothes, and you think, but what's going on with these people? That is all money laundering. [...] Like some poor people and suddenly you see them with these amazing houses. I know some of them. There was this boy, he used to sell potatoes, onions and peppers at the market with his father. And now he owns the building, and I recognised him when we went there to sign our contract for the rent [...] I used to work as a hairdresser and I had some customers, a woman and her daughters. And they didn't have a penny, they didn't have anything. And then her

²¹ Investing in property and building is one of the preferred methods for laundering money. In Nador, the money laundering industry is, together with emigration, the driving force behind the dramatic growth of the city and its satellite towns over the last two decades. Similarly, the construction sector in Melilla is one of the strongest in the city, second only to commerce. It is worth noting, for instance, that the price of a house in Melilla is about the same as the price of a house in cities like Barcelona or Madrid. Despite the limited surface of the enclave, this cannot be explained by a scarcity of houses or land, for, over the last decade, the number of new houses and apartment buildings under construction has grown steadily.

husband opened a shoe store. And mother of God that shoe store was profitable! In a year he had a house that you can't imagine, you couldn't dream of it.

Far from being a parallel underworld unknown to those who do not belong in it, Melilla's shadow economy thus has an unavoidable presence in people's everyday lives. Many were aware of the numerous police operations which regularly dismantled money-laundering networks in Melilla and occasionally revealed the participation of financial and political elites in the business. Although there was no clear knowledge of where the shadow economy lay or what it entailed, the perception of a generalised system of corruption benefitting only those at the top and a few of their acolytes was widespread. The rapid enrichment of neighbours, acquaintances or relatives was thus perceived as the visible face of a deeply entrenched structure of corruption which remained hidden. Indeed, as Van Schendell has noted, at the geographical limits of the state, where the public violation of law can be particularly acute, 'what cannot be seen must be imagined, and what can be seen might only be the tip of the iceberg' (van Schendell and Abraham 2005:23). This, in fact, is the *truly* subversive economy in the eyes of ordinary Nadoris and Melillans; a subversive economy which works not against the state but *with* the state and *against* the people.

Conclusion

Placed on opposite sides of the conceptual divide between Islam and Christianity, the Arab and the Western World and, most recently, Europe and Africa, the Spanish enclave of Melilla and the neighbouring Moroccan province of Nador have been shaped by large-scale political and economic processes of international reach in which they play no part. The forthcoming incorporation of Morocco into the Euro-Mediterranean partnership will once again change the geopolitical landscape of the region.²² As Morocco becomes integrated in the European Free Trade Area (2012) and the Spanish enclave ceases to be in a privileged position to offer lower prices, commercial smuggling will cease to be a lucrative form of trade across the border. The enclave will have to find new forms to incentivise local commerce or alternative sources of revenue, but trade between Europe and North Africa will proceed unaffected. In fact, commercial routes across the Mediterranean will greatly benefit from an agreement which eliminates custom duties between Europe and Morocco while ensuring the protection of the European border; as a precondition to enter the Euro-Med partnership Morocco will have to adopt new security measures to deter Sub-Saharan African migration, effectively becoming Europe's new 'buffer zone'.

As the end of contraband draws near, Riffians have little to worry about. The Moroccan government has already made provision for the development of the necessary infrastructures to absorb the new commercial routes that, until now, made use of the Spanish enclave.²³ The development of an alternative commercial

²² In 2012 Morocco is due to enter the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, a Free Trade Union including the 27 countries of the EU, plus 16 countries in the southern and eastern Mediterranean and adjoining areas.

²³ The Moroccan government has several projects in place that will equip the province of Nador to take over as the industrial and commercial centre of the region. The Nador West Med project will see the construction of an industrial port and a storage platform for petrol and petrol-derived products in the Mediterranean Botoya Bay, 30 km west of Nador city. Nador West Med will cover an area of 850 hectares, comprising a deep-water port, an industrial park open to local and foreign investors, and a site for the storage, transshipment, import and export of unpackaged products. Furthermore, a new 72 hectares industrial park is being built in Selouan to lodge light industry, commercial establishments,

infrastructure in the region will integrate former smuggling businesses into the legal system. The family-based networks that sustain smuggling today will continue to sustain trade tomorrow, as ‘the legal’ and ‘the legitimate’ coalesce. The losses for local merchants in Melilla will be significant, and petty smugglers and couriers will suffer the most, but in that regard little will have changed.

What effect these changes may have on the drug trade and money laundering industry remains to be seen, although the projected development of a tourist industry in Nador may also provide new means to invest illegal capital in legal ventures.²⁴ As for the ways in which people on either side of the border may respond to these new developments, the answer will certainly not be found through an investigation of the symbolic power of the state. As Collingwood noted, the questions we ask of the material determine the kinds of answers we get. If we turn to borders in search for an insight into the workings of the state, we may well find ourselves limited by our own question. This would certainly be the case across the Spanish-Moroccan frontier, where underground economic activities cannot be abstracted from large-scale economic processes which transcend inter-state boundaries, and where questions of meaning and legitimacy fall a long way away from the supposedly subversive attitude which some see as characteristic of border regions and border people, and which naturally derives from adopting the state’s point of view. Understanding the point of view of those who, in fact, inhabit border regions may require a different kind of question and a different addressee. The answer would hardly be ‘illusory’. If we were to ask a Riffian about the prospects of Melilla’s underground economy, he would probably tell us that little, if anything, will change; when it comes to transactions of such scale, borders cease to be barriers.

warehouses and offices for logistical support. New possibilities thus open up for large-scale professional smuggling to be absorbed into legal commercial transactions.

²⁴ The Moroccan government has set up an ambitious programme for the development of a luxurious tourist industry in Nador, in part with an eye to securing the continued inflow of migrant remittances in the region. Long-needed basic infrastructures are finally being built, and the city is now connected by train to the main financial and administrative centres of Morocco and by plane to the main emigrant destinations in Europe. The construction of the Marchica-Med project, a network of mini-cities and tourist resorts surrounding the lagoon of Marchica which will make provision for over 100,000 visitors, is underway, as are numerous hotels, leisure resorts, restaurants, cinemas and all sorts of other amenities.

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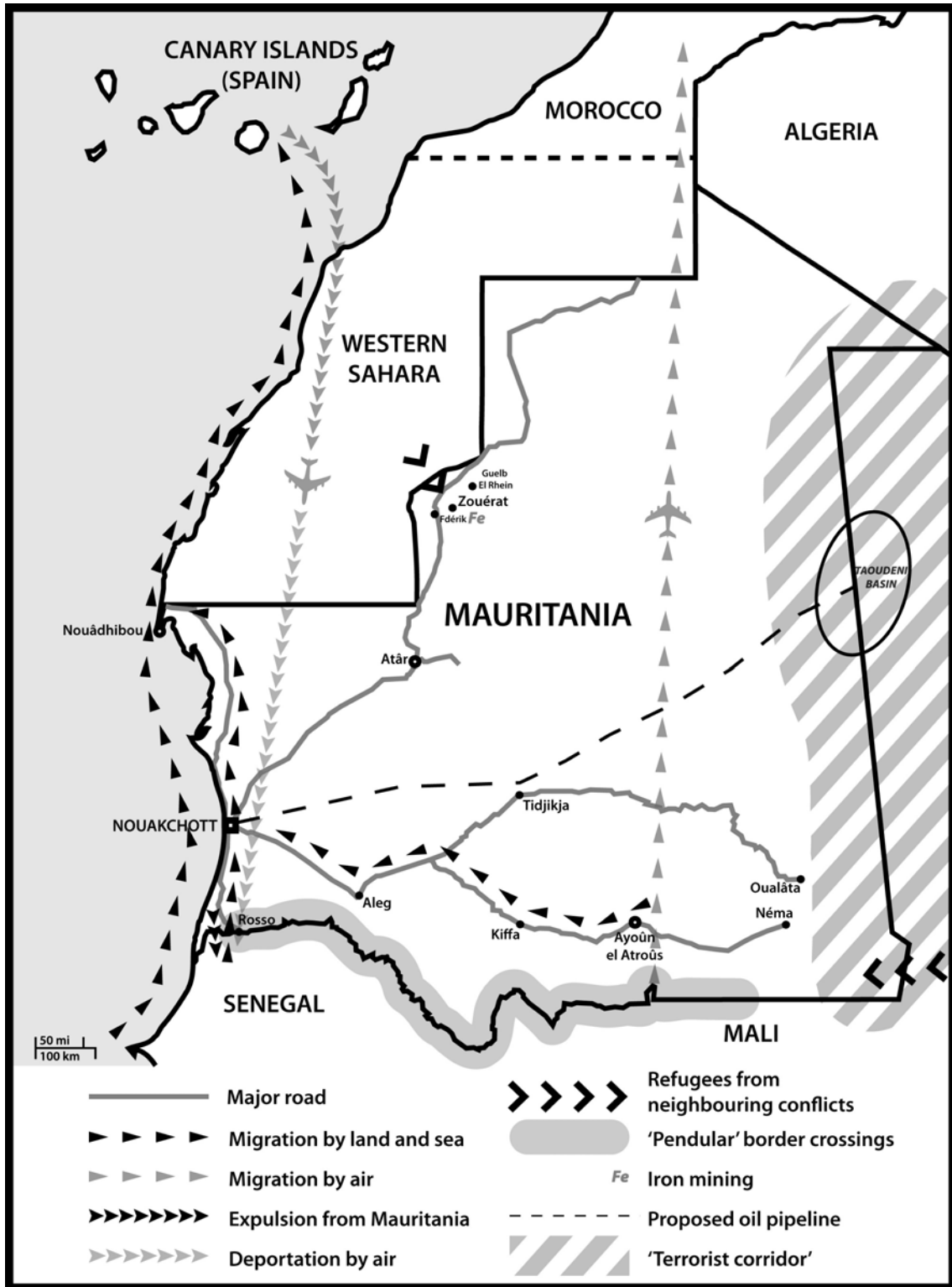
Migrants, borders and labour regimes in Mauritania: between militarisation and mobility

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Migration into Mauritania from the south is composed of the following highly volatile and confluent channels: 1) pendular border crossings of the Senegal River from neighbouring regions in Senegal and Mali, which may be daily or itinerant for traders, and seasonal or longer-term for those seeking employment; these migrations also incorporate southern Mauritians from the ‘sahel’ zone; 2) labour migration from further afield in West Africa, linked historically to fishing and other natural resources; 3) intended migration to Europe from West and Central Africa, including people who head directly to the coast to depart for the Canary Islands, or ‘step-wise’ migrants who will seek informal employment to fund the onward journey; 4) refugees. This paper will firstly examine how and why labour moves from one place to another in the West African context. Secondly, it will show how Mauritania’s boundaries regulate these flows. It will consider the outcomes of opposing agendas of mobility and restriction for migrants at the local level.

South – north migration patterns are often considered to be beneficial for development and to offer a cosmopolitan experience for migrants (Addy et al. 2003; Kothari 2008). At the same time, there are an unprecedented number of checkpoints and frontiers, as well as institutional boundaries that enforce the ‘global life-chance divide’ with efforts to contain people in Africa (Duffield 2010; Traoré 2007). Along with the other Maghreb countries, Mauritanian territory plays a critical role in enforcing this divide. This focus on migrants from households to the south of the Sahara does not connote the treatment of Mauritania as a ‘void’ territory. On the contrary, its status as a transit country, formalised by the EU, will be connected to and compared with its own evolving migrant labour regimes.

Migrations, the terrorist frontier and natural resources in Mauritania



(Alex van Zomerplaa)

Mobility and Mauritania

Migration is often viewed as the “mere displacement of a labour force”, with a surplus labour force on one hand, and no questions asked as to the reasons for this surplus; and then jobs that are available on the other hand, with no questions asked about the reasons for this availability (Sayad 2004: 3). This section considers the causes of this displacement. In aggregate terms, human mobility is astonishingly low for the ‘global’ era. Excluding the 27 million people who had formerly lived in the Soviet Union and were recorded as international migrants at independence, the international migrant percentage in 2005 stood at 2.7 percent; only 0.5 percent higher than in 1970 (UNDP 2009: 146; UN DESA 2009a). Migration patterns from the global south to the north continue to be important despite Western Asian countries’ claims to the highest proportions of migrant labourers. Overall, Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean are net sending regions, while Europe, North America and Oceania have a positive net balance of migrants. Combined with a higher share of international migrants among the ‘very high development’ countries, these twenty-first century patterns of mobility reflect the persistence of regional inequalities. Just over a third of African emigrants are in ‘very high’ development countries, followed by 30 percent in countries of low human development, 25.7 percent in medium-development countries (in Southern Africa), and 8.3 percent in high-development countries (UN DESA 2009b; UNDP 2009: 150). The informal and clandestine nature of many African migrations presents difficulty in gaining statistics so these figures are an indication. Our best estimate of annual sub-Saharan migrations into the Maghreb countries is between 65,000 and 120,000 people, of which between 20 and 38 percent proceed to Europe (de Haas 2008: 9).

The principal driving force of West African migration towards Europe is neither inequality of income, poverty nor the “globalisation of the everyday Western life model” (Reyneri 2003: 119), or there would be higher numbers emigrating. It is more the case that “the geographical mobility of capital permits it to dominate a global labour force whose own geographical mobility is constrained” (Harvey 2005: 168-9). Because labour-power is a commodity (human capital), it is subjected by global capitalism to patterns of

trade that resemble other commodities, thus economically concentrated and unequal (Cooper 2008: 182). 'Irregular' mobility is predominantly concentrated between sending households that are dispossessed of the means of subsistence, and areas of transit or recruitment such as the ports in Mauritania or the farms in Spain among other places of convergence in the Maghreb and Southern Europe. Africa has been included in accounts of a culturally globalised world but is excluded from discussion of global capital flows (Ferguson 2006: 30-4). West African migration, however, continues to be strongly linked with ongoing capital accumulation, by which land, labour and natural resources are commodified. This binds the causes and consequences of migration with the process of working across borders. A brief historical account of labour mobility will provide some background to contemporary displacements.

The violent and socially divisive appropriation of slaves as a commodity heralded Europe's primitive accumulation in Africa. The divergence in development trajectories between the previously equivalent Sahara-Sahel and European entities has been linked historically with the latter's development of the Atlantic trade (Amin 1972: 511). Prior to the French delimitation of Mauritania's borders, Portuguese entry to the Ile d'Arguin placed the focus of European competition on the coast in the 15th century. Further along the West African coasts, the Atlantic trade strengthened the port towns of Abidjan, Bissau, Banjul, Dakar and Saint-Louis, weakening inland trade structures sometimes by force. Coastal states, previously peripheral, embedded themselves in merchant capitalism and preserved their power with military assistance (Findley et al. 1995: 471; *L'Humanité* 2008). It is argued, however, that historiography has been shaped by the colonial reality, thus directing knowledge, as well as merchant capitalism, to the coast and to sub-Saharan regions. In contrast to accounts of the successful and damaging realignment of trade, "there was a thriving desert-side commerce in which gold, grain and slaves from the Sahel were traded for salt from the desert and the interregional networks buttressing this economy ... were so strongly entrenched that the Europeans could not successfully penetrate" (McDougall 2007: 19). This has contemporary relevance to our examination of migrations, which are heavily managed by Europe and the US whilst particular routes run alongside these interventions.

The Atlantic trade was followed by a strategy to keep labourers at home for the development of a colonial economy that in West Africa would constitute “the exchange of agricultural products against imported manufactured goods” (Amin 1972: 511). Migrant labour, more than an epiphenomenon, was ‘manipulated’ as a separate but related process to the restructuring of the economy (Riddell 1981: 372-3). The coercion lay in the underdevelopment of communities, where production was hampered by trade monopolies and subsistence had to be paid for with wages, leading dispossessed producers to enter the labour reserve. It is widely accepted that colonial labour lacked freedom of circulation. There were, however, different forms of colonial labour, some of them ‘free’, reflecting the complexity of interactions between workers, local authorities and government regimes. In Senegal, early patterns of ‘step-wise’ migration provided the choice of a few destinations and opportunities for social mobility (Conway 1980), but this mobility was necessitated by a stringent taxation policy. To escape forced labour, some workers were driven to Mauritania and the Gambia, including a large-scale desertion by Senegalese Fulani (Fall and Mbodj 1989: 266).

Before colonial conquest, Mauritania was organised into emirates. It was most densely populated in the sub-Saharan region to the south of the Senegal River, where Tukolor and Fulani (both Pulaar-speaking, or Halpulaar’en), Soninké and Wolof groups constituted sedentary village communities. They would pay tribute to chieftains representing the emirs. The Saharan tribes, speaking Hassaniya Arabic, were hierarchically divided into Bidan tribes of Arab and Berber descent, black haratin (freedmen) and domestic slaves. Administrators would install ‘native henchmen’ at the apex of this hierarchy and accountability shifted from local councils to distant administrators, exacerbating divisions in the traditional order (Bennoune 1978; Seddon 2000; Bonté 1981). As a protectorate in French West Africa from 1903, Mauritania had its capital in Saint-Louis, Senegal. Sub-Saharan living here had to pay a head tax on every person over the age of ten and joined the reserve of labour to groundnut plantations. Saharan groups had to contribute a proportion of their herds and crops to the colonial administration. The imposition of colonial taxes and the opening of the market to French manufactured products launched

the population into the international order (Bennoune 1978: 35-8; Seddon 2000: 209).

The Saharan population primarily engaged in agriculture and herding up to the time of independence, with wage labour of secondary importance. Substantial mining activity, which began after independence, changed this. A railway from Zouérat to Nouadhibou was constructed to support a 2 kilometre-long train, which would carry iron ore to the coast for shipment to Europe and the United States. The combination of drought and heavy state taxes produced a labour reserve for the mines (Bonté 1975: 105; Bennoune 1978: 46). As well as incorporating black citizens from the south in production, Mauritania also attracted cross-border migrants. Senegalese, Malian, Guinean and Beninese labourers were employed at the time of independence in 1960. By 1970, the population in Nouadhibou was composed of 11,500 Mauritians, 3000 sub-Saharan Africans, 1800 French and 1000 Spanish immigrants, mainly from the Canary Islands (Choplin 2008: 75). Senegalese migrants entered the fishing zone, followed by Ghanaians from 1980 onwards. The latter began to salt and dry fish for export to the Gulf of Guinea.

In the ‘glorious years’ between the mid-1940s and the mid-1970s, northern Europe drew on its ‘labour reservoir’ north and south of the Mediterranean to complete its postwar reconstruction (Amin and El Kenz 2005: 107). After recruitment in the French army during World War II, Soninké labourers, in a region that straddles Mauritania, Mali and Senegal, could subsequently visit France and work, chiefly in automobile factories, before returning home (Dussauze-Ingrand 1973: 243). Postcolonial African states were broadly understood to be disastrous. The ‘nation-statism’ that appeared as a liberation did not proceed in this way. It reflected British and French models rather than the “restoration of Africa” (Davidson 1992: 10). As well as the sheer destruction caused by the Atlantic slave trade and colonial development, changes to structures of governance are a key factor in the continuing accumulation of resources and labour. This is reflected in migrants’ histories, for example by the comment from a Nigerian migrant that “all the minerals are not meant for everybody, they are meant for those people at the top” (Interview No. 24, Nouakchott, 20 May 2008). Development was regressive in the 1970s,

which witnessed the OPEC petroleum price hikes, drought and the application of a cash crop industrialisation model.

This era of migration can be linked with economic collapse and subsequent structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and 1990s. As former labour regimes diminished, migrant workers were increasingly distanced from employers. They would enter a greater range of countries in 'step-wise' patterns while Europe closed down its borders. This era was also punctuated by expulsions. In 1982, Ghana closed its borders with Togo and Sierra Leone expelled Fula community members. In 1983, Nigeria expelled roughly 2 million people and there were further expulsions from Liberia and Ghana. Conflict between Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1990 produced half a million refugees (Mafukidze 2006; Arthur 1991). In Mauritania, the traditional system of land management was abolished under structural adjustment programmes. Land was distributed according to clientelistic relations. Peri-urban settlements accelerated and financial speculation governed land transfer. A clandestine market grew and prices reached more than ten times the official amount. Land reform also affected the Halpulaar, Wolof and Soninké groups along the Senegal River. Abolishment of the system of collective land ownership led to dispossession by ruling factions. The land was passed over to *haratin* for cultivation (Crousse and Hesselting 1994: 89-90). The resulting disputes precipitated conflict between Mauritania and Senegal, and within Mauritania between the Bidan and black citizens, including the *haratin*. From April to May 1989 and in the months that followed, villages in the Trarza-Est region were cleared out by the Mauritanian army. Residents, mainly Halpulaar and Wolof, were expelled to Senegal and Mali. In February 1989, almost half of the fishermen in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott were Senegalese. By August, Senegalese migrants did not appear in the registers and were replaced by Mauritians, Nigerians and Ghanaians (Choplin 2008: 76). By 1991, five hundred black officers in the armed forces were executed in response to a fake coup and hundreds of civilians were killed. Senegal also expelled Mauritians, mainly traders, as a result of the same conflict (Jourde 2007: 80; Charmes 1994: 77).

New labour reserves developed as well as the established ones, reflecting the dual

characteristic of labour: producers needed to sell their labour power as a result of the collapse of commodities and political crisis; and the ‘commodity’ of labour-power from underdeveloped communities also faced political and economic change. The slave trade converted producers into commodities, followed by the period of colonisation during which land was transformed to meet the needs of European markets. The step-wise labourers who are ‘left behind’ by globalisation are also built into patterns of accumulation. Migrants’ high-risk venture aims to put an end to the danger, criminalisation and destitution that precedes sending remittances. The system of migrant labour is however reproduced because new territory is continually opened up. In Senegalese coastal communities, for example, new forms of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey 2003) have led to new migrations. These processes have included the development of international fishing agreements, the suppression of local forms of production and consumption, and neo-colonial appropriation of assets. They have led young fishermen to sell their boats and abandon their activities. A young man who failed his attempt to go to Spain explains, “There are buildings in this district that were constructed by our grandparents. How do we build now when we don’t have the means to do it?” (Interview No. 27, Rufisque, 18 June 2008). Also reflective of accumulation, the mother of an emigrant in Spain explains that his father sold an inherited plot of land to fund the journey. Presently, her son’s remittances were supporting his brothers’ family, who would not otherwise eat breakfast (Interview 26, Thiaroye-sur-Mer, 6 June 2008). Remittances in these communities do not exceed basic household needs.

It is considered that migration supports development. The 2009 World Development Report proposed a large increase in international financial assistance for social services and other infrastructure aimed at “raising living standards and creating portable human capital in lagging countries” in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2009: 282). However, legal and safe options for African migration fail the youth who need them. For the 31,000 migrants who reached the Canary Islands from the West African coasts in 2006, their entry to Spain represents *unfree* labour mobility, which has great human and economic cost. It is linked with political and legal constraints that proscribe free circulation in the labour market, for example by indentured labour or by the prevention of entry to

particular sectors (Miles 1987). Spain's growth before the 2008 financial crisis was the result of "increased labour utilisation and capital accumulation" (OECD 2009: 104). Its comparative advantage in labour costs signifies a large and growing pressure to pay the labour force at a lower rate than the cost of reproduction and subsistence (Bush 2007: 57). Migrants become adversely incorporated because they are excluded from receiving 'indirect wages' in the form of family allowance, pensions, unemployment benefits and sickness cover; thus sending communities cover these costs. Furthermore, foreign workers can be reproduced, nourished, housed, trained and habituated without extra cost to the state (Cohen 1987; Meillassoux 1975: 120-2).

The structural conditions of dispossession that have been sketched in this section do not, however, predict migrants' trajectories. See the appended table for an indication of varied backgrounds and histories of mobility. Mauritania's role in the migration regime is contradictorily to help determine that migrants towards Europe are unfree, whilst also revealing a Saharan economy that provides a lifeline to famished and dispossessed men and women and their households, often with freer movement and higher returns than Europe can offer. It became the first African country to adopt a national refugee law, following three years of capacity-building with UNHCR (UNHCR 2004). In Nouakchott, the Cinquième District is populated by migrants from Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Gambia and Mali (labour-sending countries); and refugees from Mali, Sierra Leone and Liberia, amongst other nationalities. As provisions for refugees in Mauritania are limited, refugees ultimately become labour migrants.

Women from Gambia, Senegal, Mali and southern Mauritanian villages gather outside the church in the Tevragh-Zeina district of Nouakchott and seek recruitment as domestic workers. They explain that it is easier to find work and the wages are better than where they live. A Gambian migrant sends home 20,000 UM (€54.70) every three months via her ambassador, and plans to start a clothing business (Interview no. 1, Nouakchott, 7 May 2007). A migrant from Podor, a Senegalese town along the Senegal River that has experienced severe environmental degradation, explains: "We go and come back...when we have the money we want, we go back". In Senegal, "it's not difficult to find work but

the wages are very low compared to here in Mauritania” (Interview no. 4, Nouakchott, 7 May 2007). It is part of a process that is also known as ‘straddling’, by which different family members move back and forth between local agriculture, urban wage labour and overseas jobs, contributing to village social resources. This does not reflect “an outdated culture that values collectivity over individual achievement, but rather strategies to preserve social ties vital to communities whose historical experiences include the slave trade, colonial depressions and the ups and downs of government programmes and export markets” (Cooper 2008: 188).

Furthermore, the port in Nouadhibou continues to offer work to migrants, where there is high demand in the fishing and mechanical sectors (Ministère de l’Emploi, de l’Insertion et de la Formation Professionnelle 2008). A Ghanaian migrant explains that it is easy to save because the cost of living is lower (Interview no. 18, Nouakchott, 20 May 2008). These informal possibilities are connected with displacement and migrants lack citizenship rights, but their modes of migrating and remitting reflect the superficial nature of capitalist transformation, particularly in this supposed ‘vacuum territory’ within which Europe would separate the two continents by military means (Baldwin-Edwards 2005; Bennoune 1978: 36).

A frontier country?

Whether or not Mauritania is ‘naturally’ a transit country has been challenged. It is argued that its “Saharo-Sahelian identity is no ideological fiction”, but it has historical roots in a double Maghrebi and West African identity (Ahmed-Salem 2005: 492). An additional argument is that the ‘Saharan frontier’ that separates Arabs and Berbers from black Africans is “artificial” as cross-cultural interactions transcend this boundary (Lydon 2005: 293). These statements are not contradictory but signify a constructed divide between strongly interlinked regions. We will see in the contemporary outcomes of the border regime that there are contrasting realities: one of continued exchange of goods and labour between the Sahara and regions to the south, and another of progressively

hardened border controls. The border crossing between Senegal and Mauritania must be one of Africa's most strikingly 'natural' boundaries as the environment rapidly changes to desert landscape and livelihoods. This should not, however, be confused with the ideological boundaries that separate Mauritania, a West African country itself, from 'Africa'. It is usual for large countries, let alone continents, to encompass dramatic geological and climatic differences, so this does not account for the separation. It is instead a continuous process in representations of knowledge that disengage the Sahara from the historical development of Africa (McDougall 2007: 23).

As well as the EU's efforts to limit migration, the US also includes border security and the control of human mobility in its regional strategy. Particularly in 2005, after West and Central Africans were confronted with bullets in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco, Mauritania became the stepping-stone for step-wise migrants. Pirogues carried roughly 20,000 clandestine emigrants from Nouadhibou in 2006, with human losses ranging from 20 percent up to 40 percent in February and March (Choplin 2008: 85). Mauritania therefore linked with the 'buffer zone' that includes Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco (Baldwin-Edwards 2005: 4). It joined the arrangement that is now known as the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean in 2007, partnering Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and more recently, Balkan states with the EU. Senegalese President Wade contested that "Europe's strategy is crystal clear. It consists, through the establishment of the Union ... of cutting off North Africa from the rest of sub-Saharan Africa" (Pana 2009).

Mauritania's incorporation in European border management sets it apart from its sub-Saharan neighbours, which are engaged less militarily in the policy of restricting 'unwanted' migration. In Mauritania's post-independence trajectory, foreign rents have defined the state and its borders. Characteristic of a rentier state, the receipt of substantial revenues from iron ore and fisheries is combined with economic stagnation and political authoritarianism (Bush 2007: 133). With neoliberal reform guided by the IMF and the World Bank, the *ouguiya* currency was devalued by over 500 percent per US dollar between 1980 and 2002. Food prices more than doubled in this period without

proportionate salary and wage rises and unemployment reached almost half of the population (Ould-Mey 2006: 349-351; Charmes 1994: 76). Oil-based speculation stimulated a surge in growth in 2006, but indebtedness also grew with the import of exploration equipment for the remote and diffuse deposits (EIU 2009: 6). However, lessons from the past reveal that these hard statistics obscure the everyday exchanges and social relationships that have endured waves of accumulation.

The state is distant from society, which has been under military governance for much of its post-independence history. The War on Terror has usurped the political development that was hoped for after the country's first democratic election in 2007. In Mauritania's ongoing but modest participation in the Arab Spring, protesters have demanded the retreat of the military from politics and to address the appalling hikes in food prices (Ekine 2011; Ahmed Salem and Samuel 2011; Bush 2010). In addition to iron and oil rents, migration rents have provided military aid and, in a converging fund, 'terrorism rents' (Keenan 2009: 206). The latter is not a new phenomenon. The use of anti-terrorist discourse enabled President Ould Sidi-Ahmed Taya's neo-authoritarian regime to gain external Western support in the early 1990s and to crack down on opponents (Jourde 2007: 87). Oil is an explicit component of US policy in North and West Africa despite its labelling as the 'War on Terror'. The famous Cheney Report from the former US Vice-President defined African oil as a strategic national interest. Published in May 2001, it forecast that a quarter of imported oil would come from the Gulf of Guinea by 2015. In 2004, a meeting in Stuttgart with chiefs of staff from Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal and Tunisia reflected US interests in establishing a military presence in the Sahara and the Sahel (Koch 2005: 25).

The upshot was that poverty, weak governments and unmonitored borders were declared as dangerous, and control of African territory, "both urban and rural, and its land, sea and aerial borders" would make African countries and American targets safe (Cilliers 2003: 102). The US strategy of establishing bases to be maintained by local troops, combined with an offshore naval armada, has been compared to military operations in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea region, when they were declared as national security interests

(Klare and Volman 2006: 302). There has also been comparison with the Cold War on the basis of US support to authoritarian dictatorships and the broadening of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) into a quasi-security agency (Hills 2006: 632).

This undermines the EU's 'Global Approach to Migration', which aims to manage immigration by 'holistic' and 'integrated' means. Yet its Member States' relationship with the US is one of cooperation. French nationals were ordered to exit rapidly a 'zone of exclusion' in May 2011, in a vast area to the east of Choum, Chinguetti, Tidjikdja, Ayoun el-Atrous and Bou Steile (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et Européennes 2011). This was attributed to terrorism and it was claimed that the army is ordered to open fire on 'suspect vehicles' in this territory that borders Western Sahara, Algeria and Mali, reaching the oil-producing Taoudeni Basin. The US Navy and sea patrols have also cooperated on the West African coast, with the stated aims to combat terrorism, illegal migration to the Canary Islands and drug trafficking, as well as securing oil interests from the Gulf of Guinea (Flynn 2007).

The significance of this buffer zone for migrants is that the management of their mobility lacks the normative framework of EU partnerships that are practiced in Senegal or Mali, as unbalanced as these partnerships are (Cross 2011). Aminata Traoré, former Malian Minister for Culture and Tourism, has argued that Africa is becoming a prison in which violence is subcontracted to countries of origin and transit (2007). Mauritania's partial integration into 'Fortress Europe' gives it a double role of receiving 'returned' migrants and also expelling sub-Saharan Africans who may attempt to go to Europe (see map). The European Council definition of return is "the process of going back to one's country of origin, transit or another third country" (Cassarino 2006: 2). In other words, European states can 'return' migrants of any African nationality to Mauritania, and also Mauritania can 'return' sub-Saharans just outside its borders. Spanish authorities and the Mauritanian government installed a detention centre in Nouadhibou for migrants who attempt to leave Mauritania's shores, which came to be known as 'Guantánamito', in 2006. A fisherman explained: "I know people who have left this beach but now it's forbidden and if

someone is caught, they are imprisoned” (Interview no. 12, Nouakchott, 7 May 2007). Furthermore, Mauritania signed an agreement with Spain in July 2003 that concerned not only readmission of its nationals but also of those who are presumed to have transited in the country. As boats leaving the West African coast pass Mauritania en route to the Canary Islands, the agreement reinforces the constructed divide with ‘Africa’ as it becomes a European frontier. It takes roughly four days to reach Nouadhibou by *pirogue* from the Cap Vert peninsula in Senegal and it is common for boats to break down or run out of supplies.

In Mauritania’s role as a returner of migrants, foreign workers can be arrested or directed to the southern border by suspicion of irregularity (Samy 2008; Yessa 2008: 1). In 2003, fifty migrants were sent back to the border, rising to 11,637 in 2006 (Ndah Mohammed-Saleh 2008: 2). The International Organisation for Migration, the Mauritanian Ministry of the Interior, Post and Telecommunications and the French International Service of Technical Police Cooperation (SCTIP) arranged visits for Mauritanian officials to French posts in Modan, Lille, Strasbourg and Perpignan (Confidential document, anonymous international organisation). Border posts were established in 2010 at the frontiers with Senegal, Mali and Western Sahara. At the same time, a border economy between Senegal and Mauritania continues, in which currencies are easily interchangeable, taxi drivers ferry cash and goods from migrant workers to their families, and traders benefit from the different political economies. These ‘border rents’ are gained as a result of arbitrary state divides (Gregoire and Labazée 1993: 10). However, it is not an entirely parallel political economy because migrations are highly volatile and intersect in unexpected moments.

Conclusion

“They cannot stop people. They will try to control it but they cannot stop it, it’s impossible. Before, there was nobody in Mauritania taking that risk, they’d go from Morocco. But when they blocked Morocco, people started in Mauritania, and if

they block Mauritania, people will start from Libya, and when they block Libya, the people will travel to Tunis, and when they block Tunis, the people will start from Algeria” (Interview no. 18, Nouadhibou, 17 May 2008).

The historical account of labour mobility in this paper has raised the importance of explaining how and why migrants continue to confront increasingly dangerous border regimes. It has examined separately the opposing agendas of mobility and militarisation that circumscribe migration into and out of Mauritania. It raises questions about which trajectories truly challenge West Africa’s established role in global capitalism, and which ones further entrench its underdevelopment. Local contexts enrich this enquiry because they show that the global labour market in its institutional form does not predict localised outcomes.

The securitisation agenda, we have seen in Mauritania, challenges democracy and the aims of normative and institutional development. This is in the dual sense that it provides rent to a state that is autonomous from society; and that this rent is also directed at repressive apparatus, which target particular groups and reinforce the military style of leadership. Sub-Saharan migrants, as well as entering a key frontier in imperial struggle, are also integrated in its strategy. The paradox of this paper is that the highly securitised territory in which Europe has externalised its border restrictions is also one that sometimes offers migrants the most ‘freedom’ – by means of circulation in the labour market, and of the retention of existing social structures. A historical examination of the Mauritanian state helps to unravel this mystery: its populations have developed in divergence from the state’s boundaries, its political economy, and external constructions of the Sahara. This analysis illustrates the importance of reimagining the autonomy of migrants beyond the successful crossing of borders. This is a complex question that needs further enquiry of ever-changing dynamics in their historical context.

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Interviews

Interview No.	Date	Location of interview	Male/ Female	Country of birth (hometown/ region)	Occupation/ position of respondent	Remittances/ household	Migration notes
1	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	F	Gambia (Serekunda)	Housemaid, seeking work	Sends 20,000 UM to mother every 3 months via ambassador - used for food and other expenses.	In Mauritania for 1 year 9 months and plans to return to Gambia by the end of the year; has work permit.
2	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Mauritania (Kaedi)	Farmer/ seeking work as housemaid	Sends to parents, depending on income, via acquaintances. Does not know how the money is used; more important income to parents than farming. Parents also dye textiles.	In Nouakchott for 6 years. Has attempted clandestine migration to Spain twice – was stopped both times by patrols (Nouadhibou and Morocco).
3	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	F	Senegal (near Richard Toll)	Housemaid, seeing work	No remittances (parents deceased).	Has migrated more than once to Nouakchott.
4	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	F	Senegal (Podor)	Housemaid, seeking work	Occasionally sends remittances to mother via acquaintances. Used for food and rent; farming does not bring enough income.	Migrates to Nouakchott for periods of 3 – 9 months.
5	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	F	Senegal (Louga)	Housemaid, seeking work.	Sends remittances to parents via people who are going through Rosso. Does not know how they are spent. Father: retired local government worker.	Has migrated to Mauritania a few times.
6	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	Fisherman	No remittances – most family in Nouakchott.	Has friends who have migrated clandestinely; plans to attempt this from

Interview No.	Date	Location of interview	Male/Female	Country of birth (hometown/region)	Occupation/position of respondent	Remittances/ household	Migration notes
)					Nouadhibou.
7	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	F	Mauritania (Maghama)	Housemaid, seeking work (plans to be trader)	Sends 5000 – 10,000 UM to mother whenever possible via taxi drivers. Household grows rice but relies on her income to buy rice.	Moved to Nouakchott when young and is the only family member to be working and remitting.
8	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Senegal (Rosso)	Fisherman	Carries remittance money or sends children to carry it. Meets basic consumption needs. Household has market gardens but no tools.	Is staying in Nouakchott with his wife.
9	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Mauritania (Bogué)	Trader (shoes)	Sends remittances every 1 or 2 months via acquaintances, or if need arises.	Has family in Nouakchott.
10	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Mauritania (Bogué)	Fish trader	Sometimes sends money to family through relatives; used for food. Parents are in Nouakchott.	Has attempted clandestine migration once.
11	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Mauritania (Bogué)	Fisherman	Sends 8000-15,000 UM to family every 2 months via relatives. Has family members in business and government.	Has lived in Nouakchott for almost 25 years. Tried to go to Europe through Libya. Is considering trafficking people to the Canary Islands.
12	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Senegal (St Louis)	Fisherman, formerly traded fish	Was sending 5000 – 6000 UM per month but now is making less profit. Parents both work in fishing. Wages are used for school fees for children.	Has lived in Mauritania for 27 years. Has family who migrated clandestinely to Europe but he is not interested.
13	07.05.07	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	F	Senegal	Fish trader	Sends oil and rice to parents.	Has lived in Nouakchott for 6 years with husband. Sends oil and food to family.

Interview No.	Date	Location of interview	Male/ Female	Country of birth (hometown/ region)	Occupation/ position of respondent	Remittances/ household	Migration notes
	7	(Nouakchott)		(St Louis)			husband. Sends oil and food to family.
14	15.05.07	Senegal (St Louis)	M	Senegal (St Louis)	Fisherman	-	Occasionally goes to Mauritania.
15	20.05.07	Mauritania (border post, Senegal River)	M	Mauritania	Customs officer	-	Observes movement of people and goods between Mauritania and Senegal.
16	26.02.08	Spain (Barcelona)	M	Ivory Coast (Tingréla)	Factory work	Unable to send remittances.	In Barcelona for 1 month. Was targeted by military for supporting former Ivorian prime minister (Rassemblement de Républicains). Travelled through Mali and Mauritania; pirogue journey to Spain.
17	14.05.08	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	F	Senegal	Is seeking kitchen work. Profession on passport: trader.	Sends money to mother.	Has been in Mauritania for 9 years. Is trying to go to Europe to find work in trade or open a restaurant but will not go by pirogue.
18	17.05.08	Mauritania (Nouadhibou)	M	Nigeria (South)	Preacher	Parents are farmers; grandfather has land; no machinery.	In Nouadhibou for 12 years – abandoned attempt to go to Europe. Travelled to Niger, Algeria and Mali before Mauritania.
19	17.05.08	Mauritania (Nouadhibou)	M	Ghana (Cape Coast)	Disability worker; opening restaurant; humanitarian worker	Grandparents: farmers; father: seaman. Family still has land; brothers at university.	Has been in Mauritania for 7 years. Went through Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal. Aimed to go to Europe.

Interview No.	Date	Location of interview	Male/ Female	Country of birth (hometown/ region)	Occupation/ position of respondent	Remittances/ household	Migration notes
20	17.05.08	Mauritania (Nouadhibou)	M	Nigeria (West)	Barber – wants to work in fish transporting	Sends money every month, between \$60 and \$100, via Western Union and sometimes through acquaintances. Brings fish and rice when he returns to household. Mother had bars and restaurants; family has land. Household relies on income from him and brother.	Does not plan to go to Europe because cost of living/ phonecalls is high. Has brother in the UK.
21	18.05.08	Mauritania (Nouadhibou)	M	Nigeria (Imo state)	Barber/ factory work	Unable to send remittances.	In Mauritania for 2 years. May attempt a clandestine journey to Europe – needs to gather passengers and then can go without paying.
22	20.05.08	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Ghana	Formerly worked for shipping company	Unable to send remittances. Mother has land; has siblings who teach/ manage hotel.	Entered Mauritania 6 years ago after being repatriated to Senegal from Spain.
23	20.05.08	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Ghana	Preacher	-	Has no intention to go to Europe
24	20.05.08	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	M	Nigeria (Delta)	Businessman	Sends money to daughter - \$200 - \$500 every 1-2 months through Western Union. Household – engineering/ business. Family has land and some tools for farming. They need income from remittances.	Has been in Mauritania for 2 years – flew from Benin. Will go to Europe if he has the opportunity.

Interview No.	Date	Location of interview	Male/Female	Country of birth (hometown/region)	Occupation/position of respondent	Remittances/ household	Migration notes
25	20.05.08	Mauritania (Nouakchott)	F	Nigeria (Rivers)	Works in nursery school; formerly worked in restaurant	No remittances – wants to finish studies. Family grows yam/ cassava; house was built when parents were young; water is collected from village.	In Mauritania for 5 years; formerly in Senegal for 3 years. Will go on to other countries if she has the opportunity.
26	06.06.08	Senegal (Thiaroye-sur-Mer)	F	Senegal (Thiaroye-sur-Mer)	Association member	Rents house. 1 son is fisherman. Son in Spain sends 200,000 F CFA per month, of which she receives half; his father and brother receive the rest.	Son in Spain. Other son was rescued on first pirogue attempt; repatriated on second attempt. Has other sons in Touba and Kaolack. Nephews are lost at sea and have had funerals.
27	18.06.08	Senegal (Rufisque)	M	Senegal (Rufisque)	Fisherman and fish trader	Household: father worked in factory (closed down)	Has formerly migrated to Rosso and Mauritania to trade. 5 clandestine attempts to go to Spain; reached Spain twice and was repatriated. Friends who he travelled with are still there.
28	18.06.08	Senegal (Rufisque)	M	Senegal (Rufisque)	Builder	Father: Sonatel agent Mother: fishmonger	Failed attempt to go to Spain from Mauritania: problem with pirogue. There are as many legal as illegal emigrants in the district.
29	24.06.08	Senegal (Rufisque)	F	Senegal (Rufisque)	Trader. Member of women's association.	Daughter worked in factory but left to work as trader. Gained contract for Spain, 2-3 years agricultural work. Has generously contributed to household but now out of work and	Goes to Mauritania for trade. Daughter in Spain. No other emigrants.

Interview No.	Date	Location of interview	Male/ Female	Country of birth (hometown/ region)	Occupation/ position of respondent	Remittances/ household	Migration notes
						learning Spanish.	
30	24.06.08	Senegal (Rufisque)	M	Senegal (Rufisque)	Fisherman	Household: mechanics and fishermen. Not yet receiving remittances.	Has brother who went to Spain clandestinely, firstly working as fisherman in Mauritania. Has a friend who reached Spain by <i>piroque</i> days before interview.
31	02.07.08	Senegal (Rufisque)	F	Senegal (Rufisque)	Trader	Husband worked as builder. Son in Mauritania is trader and sends remittances or merchandise for his wife to sell; son in France is rarely able to send money.	Has travelled to Gambia and Mauritania to buy stock. Has son who was repatriated from Spain on first migration attempt and is now in France. Other son is in Mauritania.

**Profiling Ethiopian Migration:
*A Comparison of Ethiopian Migrant Characteristics to
Africa, the Middle East and the North***

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Abstract:

The face of Ethiopian migration has been changing, from large refugee flows in the 1980s and 1990s to different forms of labour migration in the present decade as people seek employment opportunities abroad. This paper provides an overview of the different characteristics of migrants from Ethiopia to three different migration destinations: (1) Northern countries, (2) other African countries, and (3) to the Middle-East. The paper is based on a recently conducted household survey with 1286 migrant, non-migrant and return migrant households in Ethiopia. The results show that the characteristics of the migrants and their origin households differ depending on migration destination, and the increased migration flows to Africa and the Middle-East in recent decades has played an important role in reshaping the profile of the Ethiopian migrants. Furthermore, the results show that the current Ethiopian migration flows coincide with some of the current global migration trends but at the same time contrast some of the overall migration figures representing Africa.

1. Introduction

Migration dynamics are continually evolving to meet changes in the global environment. New migration flows develop in response to economic, social and political structures in host and sending countries, often referred to as the push and pull factors of migration. The current environment in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has led to increasing migration movements from countries in the region in recent decades as people are pulled towards other countries and regions in search of better opportunities. Africa is a region that has strong migration dynamics stemming from a mix of conflicts, income inequality and poverty, and environmental factors such as droughts (IOM, 2010). A large portion of the migratory movements in SSA can be characterized as internal African migration between countries. Limited data is available, however, on migration dynamics in and from SSA, particularly to other regions of the South. According to the World Migration Report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there was an estimated 19 million international migrants in Africa in 2010, an increase of 1.5 million international migrants from 2005. It is estimated that Africa accommodates 9 percent of global immigrants, although this is considered to be an underestimate due to the lack of data in the region (IOM, 2010). Furthermore, SSA is an extremely large and diverse continent, and flows differ within each region and each country.

This paper provides an overview of the different characteristics of migrants from Ethiopia to the three different migration destinations: (1) Northern countries, (2) other African countries, and (3) to the Middle-East. The results show that the characteristics of the migrants and their origin households differ depending on the migration destination, and the increased migration flows to Africa and the Middle-East in recent decades have played an important role in reshaping the profile of Ethiopian migrants. This paper is based on the *IS Academy: A World in Motion*¹ Ethiopia data collection. An in-depth household survey was administered with 1286 households in Ethiopia across five different regions of the country from March to May 2011. Surveys were conducted with households who currently had a household member living abroad, households who had a member who had lived abroad and returned, and households that had no experience with international migration. The focus of this paper is on the households who currently had a member living abroad, and more

¹ The *IS Academy: A World in Motion* Project is a five year study funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Migration and Development in Afghanistan, Burundi, Ethiopia, Morocco and the Netherlands.

specifically on the information the household provided on the household member living abroad, that is the *migrant*. It is important to stress that the migrant themselves were not interviewed. A migrant was defined in this study as any member of the household who had been living in another country for a minimum of three consecutive months.

The surveys were conducted in five regions of Ethiopia: Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), Tigray, and Addis Ababa, which together account for 96% of the population. In each region, three different *Woreda's* (districts) were selected for sampling, totalling 15 data collection sites. The sampling strategy was based on a two-stage approach. First a listing was conducted at each site to identify households as a migrant, return migrant, or non-migrant household. Based on this identification, households were randomly selected for enumeration in each site with an equal proportion of migrant or return migrant households to non-migrant households. The data is not nationally representative and cannot be generalized to be representative of all Ethiopian migration. The analysis seeks to compare the differences between the different migrant groups surveyed based on their region of destination.

The first section of the paper provides an overview of current trends in international migration with a focus on how these trends are manifesting in Africa. The second section provides a brief introduction to the migration patterns from Ethiopia. The third section presents the results of the survey with a focus on the demographic characteristics of the migrants, their household characteristics, and their migration experiences. The fourth section of the paper provides a discussion of how the Ethiopian case fits within the current international migration flows and the final section provides a conclusion.

2. Global Migration Routes and Trends: A Focus on Sub-Saharan Africa

Castles and Miller have labelled the current era the "age of migration" arguing that there is both an unprecedented volume of international migration and a global reach of international migration that is affecting more countries than ever before (2009). De Haas (2005) argues that the number of people migrating internationally has not increased (the percentage of the population that is an international migrant has stayed relatively stable at around 3 percent), but the direction of flows has changed with the post-WWII era seeing previously unprecedented movements of South-North migration. South- North migration

flows from Africa have also changed in the recent decade. Previously, the major flows from Africa to Europe were from North African countries, but since the 1990s and the impositions of increasing migration restrictions in Europe these flows have changed (de Haas, 2008). Since 2000, the largest flows of irregular migration from Africa to Europe are from Sub-Saharan Africans, not North Africans (de Haas, 2008).

Recent data from the World Bank also suggests that the current decades are seeing rising flows of South-South migration with the South accounting for 47 percent of all migration from the South (Ratha and Shaw, 2007: 5). Bakewell (2009), however, highlights that there are conceptual issues within defining South-South migration. In order to define South-South migration, one must define what is “the South”. The country of Saudi Arabia presents a challenge in this classification as the World Bank’s definition of developing countries based on income places Saudi Arabia in the North, whereas if defined as per the Human Development Index of the UNDP, Saudi Arabia is included in the global South (Bakewell, 2009). This is problematic in defining South-South migration as Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Middle East attract large flows of labour migrants. Thus the three categories of the North, the Middle East, and the South, will be used in this paper in an effort to avoid these categorical challenges. South-South migration in this paper will be used to refer to migration within Africa; migration to the Middle East will include the Arab countries of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Lebanon, and Syria; and migration to the North will include North America, Europe, and Australia.

South-South migration within Africa has long existed and included large migration flows such as: labour migrants to South Africa, refugee flows in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, and many different seasonal migration streams. Currently, Africa as whole hosts just under 10 percent of the international migrant population, with much of this being internal African migration. The average number of migrants in East and Central Africa has remained steady since 2005, while South Africa and West Africa have seen a rise in the migrant population of 1.8 and 7.3 percent respectively (IOM, 2010). While much of the migration in Southern Africa is destined for South Africa, migration in Eastern and Central Africa is mainly within the region and increasingly to the Middle East, which was relatively undeterred during the recent global economic crisis (IOM, 2010).

Ratha and Shaw (2007) suggest that income differentials, proximity, and networks drive South-South migration. Bakewell (2009) argues that South-South migration, like South-North migration, can be driven and shaped by a number of factors including livelihoods, political conditions, social factors including education and marriage, and environmental factors including drought and famines. From a general perspective, De Haas (2005) argues that the key driver of migration is relative deprivation, and typically those from the poorest countries do not migrate, as they also do not have the resources to migrate. Adepaju (2008) suggests that spiralling population growth in SSA has increased the impetus of people to move in recent decades and that families invest in funding the migration of one member as a livelihood strategy with the expectation of remittances. Overall, questions remain as to if and how South-South migration can or should be compared to South-North migration and if the drivers for these different migration streams are or are not different.

In addition to an increase in South-South migration flows, recent decades have seen a feminization of migration (Castles and Miller, 2003). The term feminization of migration reflects the fact that: 1) today women make-up nearly half of all international migrants (49 percent in 2010 (IOM, 2010a)), and 2) their reasons for migration have changed over time. The largest change in the data on female migration can be seen from the difference in the rate of female migration in 1960 and 2005. Data from the United Nations shows that there has been a 3 percent increase in female migration during this period from 46.7 percent to 49.6 percent of the migrant population (United Nations, 2006). From 1960 to 2010, the shift has been even stronger, from 42 to 47 percent (Morrison, Schiff & Sjöblom, 2008). In Africa, women are cited to account for 46.8 percent of migrants in 2010, a slight increase from 46.2 percent in 1990 (Giovannelli, 2009).

The second factor in the feminization of migration is the changing roles of females in international migration flows. Formerly, females were viewed as 'passive reactors to male's migration decisions' and as migrating solely for family reasons or family reunification (Cerrutti and Massey, 2001). It is now recognized that females migrate increasingly as labour migrants and can be active decision makers in the process. The increasing prevalence of women in international migration is attributed to "factors such as immigration legislation, gender-selective demand for foreign labour, and changing gender relations in countries of origin" (Carling, 2005). The last decades have also led to female

specific forms of female migration which includes the commercialization of domestic workers, trafficking of women in the sex industry, and the organization of women for marriage (Carling, 2005). In addition, certain countries have developed strong gendered migration trends. In Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines women comprise 62-75% of migrant workers, whereas women account for only 45% of migrant workers in Asia overall (Piper, 2008).

The final trend that will be discussed in this paper is in the increasing barriers to migration to the North for the low skilled and the temporary nature of low skilled migration. The majority of migrants from Africa are low skilled, which creates increasing challenges for migration as “barriers to mobility are especially high for people with low skills, despite the demand for labour in many rich countries” (UNDP, 2009). The North has generally cut itself off to low-skilled workers (IOM, 2010), with the exception of allowing some migrants to come as temporary workers on certain agricultural, construction, or care worker programmes, but these are generally not migrants from SSA. Northern countries generally work to ensure that low skilled jobs and migrants are temporary, as low-skilled workers are not viewed as desirable by states and are often recruited to fill jobs that locals are unwilling to do (Martin, Abella, and Kuptsch, 2006). As an example, the oil rich countries of the Middle East do not allow for permanent residency or citizenship to migrants, ensuring that their status as workers is always temporary.

This section has sought to highlight some of the key trends currently occurring in international migration with a focus on how these trends are manifesting in Africa. It is evident that there is a general increase in migration from African countries and that a large portion of the migration is to other African countries. Secondly, a feminization of migration is occurring, although female migrants from Africa are less numerous than the international average. Thirdly, low skilled migrants, which predominate in SSA, experience more barriers to entry and are generally only employed in temporary positions in countries of destination (IOM, 2010; Adepoju, 2010). These trends are in no way representative of all current dynamics in international migration, but highlight some of the key developments in the field and will be returned to later in the paper. The next section will provide an introduction to migration from Ethiopia.

3. Overview of Ethiopian Migration Patterns

Ethiopia is one of the largest and poorest countries in SSA. Although Ethiopia, in comparison to other SSA countries, has a low emigration rate estimated at 0.7 percent (World Bank, 2011), due to its sheer population size of approximately 80 million people, in absolute numbers it has a large diaspora community. The exact size of the diaspora is unknown, but is estimated to be 1-2 million people with large populations in the Middle East, North America and Europe. In comparison to other SSA countries, Ethiopians are the second largest group in the United States (after Nigeria) and the fifteenth largest in Europe (AFTCD-AFTQK, 2007).

Emigration movements from Ethiopia have been concentrated in the last thirty years and can be characterized in four waves (Tasse, 2004 in Lyons, 2007). The first wave was pre-1974 with the emigration and return of Ethiopian elite, who primarily went abroad for education and then returned. In 1974, the military *Dergue* regime took over the monarchy imposing a state of fear. Refugees fleeing the *Dergue* regime from 1974-82, characterized the second wave. The third wave was primarily migration for family reunification schemes from 1982-1991 as families previously left behind joined those who had initially fled the *Dergue* regime. In 1991, the *Dergue* regime was defeated and in 1994 Ethiopia held its first democratic elections. The primary migration flow in the 1990s was the repatriation and return of refugees from neighbouring countries to Ethiopia. The final wave of Ethiopian emigration can be characterized by the post-1991 flows that continue today.

There is a limited availability of data on current migration stocks and flows from Ethiopia. The majority of data currently available is at the macro level. The World Bank cites the 2010 stock of Ethiopian emigrants to be at 620,000 and the stock of emigrants as a percentage of the population to be 0.7 percent (2011). Further, the World Bank sites the top destination countries to be: Sudan, the United States, Israel, Djibouti, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Sweden (2011). At the micro level, in a recent survey of 2,042 individuals, the World Bank found that 39% of respondents currently have family members or relatives living in another country (2010).

Current migration from Ethiopia can be characterized into three primary destinations: the North (North America, Europe, and Australia), the Middle East, and within Africa. Migration

to the North is generally characterized by either highly skilled emigration, or irregular migration of those trying to reach the European Union. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ethiopia, migrants try to get to the EU going through Sudan to Libya, or through Yemen to Egypt in an attempt to access Eastern Europe (2010b).

According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), 21,256 employment contracts were issued by MOLSA for Ethiopians to work in the Middle East from July 2008 to July 2009 (2010). Eighty-two percent of these work permits were for females. The primary countries the work permits were issued for were Saudi Arabia (61.9 percent), Kuwait (33.16 percent), and Bahrain (3.22 percent). In an attempt to regularize irregular migration flows to the Middle East, employment agencies involved in migration between Ethiopia and the Middle East officially require a licence issued by MOLSA to provide employment contracts, however, the majority of migration to the Middle East continues to be irregular. According to a forthcoming study commissioned by the UNDP, it is estimated that up to half a million females migrate from Ethiopia to the Middle East each year². A large industry of informal labour brokers has been established in Ethiopia with both legal and illegal agencies offering to place women in domestic work in the Middle East (ILO, 2011).

Regional migration from Ethiopia to other African countries has the two primary destinations of Sudan and South Africa. Based on World Bank data Ratha et al. (2011) cite migration from Ethiopia to Sudan as the only major Ethiopian migration corridor within Africa. Circular migration from Ethiopia to Sudan has existed for the past few decades, and recently females have begun to migrate to Sudan in search of domestic work. In a study of irregular migration from the Horn of Africa to South Africa, Horwood (2009) estimates that 11,000-13,000 Ethiopian men entered South Africa in 2008. The Ethiopian Embassy in South Africa estimates that there are currently 45,000 to 50,000 Ethiopians residing in South Africa (Horwood, 2009: 32). According to the IOM, migrants travel from Ethiopia to Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi in route to South Africa (2010b). Migrants are frequently detained in transit countries, such as Tanzania, as they are in the country without proper documentation.

² Forthcoming. UNDP. 2011. *The Push and Pull Factors of Migration of Women in the Middle East*.

4. Results from the IS Academy Survey

There are a total of 531 current migrants in the *IS Academy* sample. When examining the destination choice of all migrants in the sample it is apparent that the most popular destination country is Saudi Arabia, followed by the United States, as is shown in Figure 1. Almost 24 percent of the migrants reside in Saudi Arabia, while a little over 20 percent of the migrants reside in the United States. Other popular destinations include the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the neighbouring country of Sudan, which attracted approximately 11 percent of the sample respectively.

Figure 1: Destination Countries of Migrants

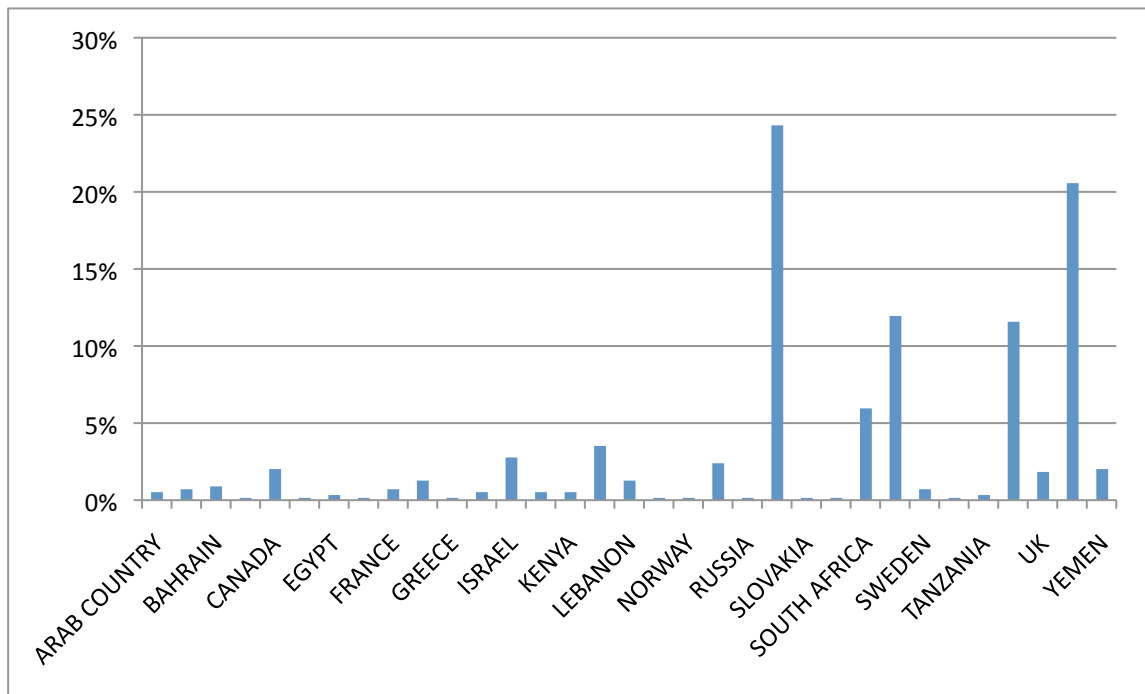


Table 1 illustrates the destination regions of the migrants. An examination of how the migrants are distributed across different regions reveals that the Middle East is the most common migration destination among the migrants at 44 percent. Almost 30 percent of the migrants are located in Europe, North America or Australia (here defined as North), while approximately 21 percent of the sample migrated to other African countries.

Table 1: Destination Regions, frequency and percent

Destination regions			
Region	Frequency	%	>60 months (%)
North*	162	30.3	61.3
Africa	105	19.7	4.4
Middle East	251	47.0	30.0
Total	534	97.0**	95.7**

* North includes USA, Canada, Australia, and all European countries except Russia

** All countries but Russia and Israel are classified into the three regions and constitute 97% and 95.7% of the sample respectively

The results have been presented in the following three sections that compare and contrast the characteristics of the migrants to the North, African countries, and the Middle East. The first section will examine the demographics and background on the migrants themselves. The second section will discuss the household characteristics of the migrant's households. The third section will describe the differences in the migration experiences of the three migrant groups.

4.1 Demographics and Background of Ethiopian Migrants

Table 2 provides an overview of the characteristics of the migrants. It is noteworthy, that over 60 percent of all migrants are female, which illustrates a feminization in the migration flows from Ethiopia. Migrants in the Middle East are 68 percent females, which coincides with the recent sentiments in Ethiopia that emigration is dominated by female migration to the Middle East. It is worth mentioning that migration within Africa is also dominated by females at 53 percent, which appears contrary to the common perception in Ethiopia that migration to African countries is male-dominated. When this is examined further by country of migration in Africa, however, it is evident that the majority of migrants to South Africa are males at 82 percent, and the majority of migrants to Sudan are females at 75 percent. These findings are in line with the figures reported by the IOM and the current sentiments in Ethiopia.

Table 2: Characteristics of Migrants, whole sample and by destination region

Variable	Overall sample	North	Africa	Middle East
Age	30.42	36.71	26.2	28.14
Male	39.70	43.21	46.67	32.00
Passport	80.30	96.27	64.76	77.60
Years of Education	9.88	13.12	8.80	8.06
Absent (months)	64.69	108.91	27.76	50.49
Parent of child in hh	13.86	11.72	6.67	18.40
Single	0.60	59.74	80.95	65.60
Relationship to household head				
Child	78.28	76.54	87.62	74.80
Head	4.49	4.94	0.95	6.00
Spouse	4.31	2.47	1.90	6.80
Brother/Sister	7.12	8.02	7.62	6.00
Occupation in Country of Migration (most common categories)				
In paid work	75.28	64.20	76.19	84.80
Self employed, business	5.06	9.26	7.62	0.80
Doing housework	5.24	8.02	0.95	5.20
In education	3.93	8.64	6.67	0.80
Unemployed, looking for job	2.25	8.02	0.95	1.20

Source: Authors own calculations

The second key point from the migrant's demographics is that in general the migrants are fairly young. The average age of the migrants in the overall sample is 30 years old. According to the last Ethiopian census, Ethiopia has a young population with 45 percent of the population being under 15 years of age, 51.2 percent of the population being within working age of 15-64, and only 3.4 percent of the population being 65 years of age and older (CSA, 2008). The results thus coincide with the Ethiopian demographics that migrants are a relatively young group overall. Migrants in Northern countries are older than the overall average (37 years old), while those migrating to the Middle East (28 years old) or African countries (about 26 years old) are younger. This might partly be explained by the fact that migrants residing in Northern countries have on average been away considerably longer than migrants in other regions. The average number of months abroad for the overall sample is 5.4 years (65 months), while migrants in the Northern countries have been away for almost 9 years (109 months) on average. Migrants in African and Middle East countries

have on average been abroad for 2.5 years (28 months) and 4 years (50 months) respectively.

In addition to being older, the migrants in the North are more likely to be married, whereas the migrants to African countries are the least likely to be married or a parent of a child in the households. It is important to note that it is possible that migrants in the North may have more children than is identified in this variable as this variable only identifies children currently living within the household and the migrants may have children that live in another household. Migrants to the Middle East are the most likely to be a parent of a child in the household (18 percent). Migrants to the North are also the most likely to have a passport at 96 percent, whereas migrants to African countries are the least likely to have a passport at 65 percent.

The educational background of the migrants also varies by destination. As expected the most educated migrants are found in Northern countries. The average number of years of education of a migrant in Northern countries is 13 years, while migrants in the Middle East are the least educated of the three groups with on average 8 years of education. There are a total of 44 migrants in the sample who have completed tertiary education (Bachelors Degree or higher) and would thus be classified as the highly-skilled. Of these 44 migrants, 37 (84 percent) are in the North.

In terms of the migrant's positions within their households, the majority of migrants are children of the household head (78 percent). This is most predominant with the African migrants (87 percent). Migrants to the Middle East are the most likely to be their own head of household or the spouse of the head of household, although both of these are low at 6 percent and 6.8 percent respectively.

Finally, being employed in paid work is the most common occupation across all three migration regions. About 75 percent of the migrants are employed in their destination country. Of the migrants in the Middle East 85 percent are in paid work and very few run their own business, while migrants in Northern countries to a larger extent run their own business or study in the country of destination. About 64 percent of the migrants in the

Northern countries are employed; around 9 percent of the migrants run their own business and almost 9 percent are in education.

4.2 Migrant Households Characteristics

This section aims to provide an overview and context of the households from which migrants are emigrating. Characteristics of the overall household as well as the household head are thus detailed in Table 3.

Overall, there is little variation in the size of the households from which migrants are emigrating. African migrants come from slightly larger households at 6.9 members, while migrants to the North come from slightly smaller households at 6.1 household members. Migrants to the North are more likely to be from urban areas at 77 percent, while migrants to African countries are more likely to be from rural areas; only 24 percent of the households with a migrant in Sudan live in urban areas. This coincides with migrants to the North being more educated and seemingly from more of an upper-class background.

The education of the household head also corresponds to the educational level of the migrants. Migrants to the North are the most likely to come from a household where the head has some education, with 11 percent having completed secondary education and 8.9 percent having a graduate degree. The household heads of migrants to the Middle East have the lowest levels of education with more than half (53 percent) having no formal education and only 15 percent of household heads having any form of education beyond primary school.

The education of the household head, however, slightly differs from the occupation of the household head, especially when comparing the Middle East and African migrant groups. Unsurprisingly, the household heads of migrants to the North are the least likely to be involved in agriculture (3.8 percent), and are primarily retired (38.6 percent) or involved in doing housework (33.5 percent). The household head of migrants to African countries are the most likely to be involved in agriculture (62 percent), whereas only 35 percent of household heads of migrants to the Middle East are involved in agriculture. Heads of household of migrants in the Middle East are most likely to be involved in doing housework (21 percent), in paid work (15 percent), or self-employed (12 percent).

Table 3: Household characteristics

Variable	Overall sample	North	Africa	Middle East
Household Size	6.426966	6.092593	6.819048	6.52
Urban	47.75	76.54	23.81	39.60
Education Level of Household Head				
No formal education	47.91	38.61	47.57	53.23
Incomplete pre-school	0.38	-	-	0.81
Incomplete primary	23.00	11.39	27.18	28.63
Primary	5.13	12.03	1.94	2.42
Incomplete secondary	4.94	5.70	8.74	2.82
Secondary	7.22	11.39	7.77	4.44
Special secondary/preliminary profession	5.32	10.13	3.88	2.82
Incomplete graduate (bachelor)	1.52	1.27	0.97	2.02
Graduate (bachelor)	3.42	8.86	-	1.61
Other non-traditional education	0.57	-	-	1.21
Do not know	0.57	0.63	1.94	-
Occupation of Household Head				
In paid work	11.79	10.76	5.83	14.92
Self employed: business	10.27	10.76	4.85	11.69
Agricultural/herding	30.42	3.80	62.14	35.08
Unemployed, actively looking	0.38	0.63		0.40
Unemployed not looking	0.95	-		1.61
Sick/disabled	1.52	-	1.94	2.42
Retired	19.01	38.61	9.71	10.48
Community/military service	0.38		0.97	0.40
Housework	23.57	33.54	14.56	20.97
Family worker/helper	0.57	1.90		
Main Respondents Perspective on Household's Subjective Wealth				
Finding it very difficult	9.49	6.29	9.49	10.12
Finding it difficult	16.51	8.18	16.51	21.05
Coping (neutral)	40.23	38.36	40.23	41.30
Living comfortably	28.46	40.25	28.46	21.05
Living very comfortably	5.31	6.92	5.31	6.48
Household Received Food Aid in the Past 12 months	13.29	5.03	19.23	15.42

Source: Authors own calculations

The main respondent to the survey was asked to describe their household's current economic situation. Nearly half of the households with a migrant in the North responded that their household was living comfortably or very comfortably (47 percent), compared with 34 percent of households with a migrant in an African country, and 28 percent with migrants in a Middle Eastern country. Households with a migrant in the Middle East were most likely to report that they were finding it difficult or very difficult to cope at 31 percent, compared to 26 percent of households with a migrant in an African country and 14 percent of households with a migrant in the North. A final question that also provides an indication of the household's well-being was to ask how frequently the household had received food aid in the past 12 months. The most frequent recipients of food aid were households with an African migrant at an average of 19 times in the past twelve months, followed by households with a migrant in the Middle East at an average of 15 times in the past twelve months.

4.3 Migrants Migration Experiences

This section provides an overview of the migration process experienced by the migrants. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables summarizing the migration experiences of the migrants.

As expected, the primary motivation for migration is employment opportunities across all three migrant destinations. This is however far more pronounced for African and Middle East migrants at 94 percent and 93 percent respectively, as compared to migrants to the North at 35 percent. Migrants to the North are more likely to migrate for education (15 percent), family reunification (11 percent) or as refugees for security and political reasons (9 percent).

In addition to the reason for migration, the questionnaire asked the reason that the destination choice country was chosen. There is more variation here amongst the migration destination groups. The reason for choosing a Northern country was primarily due to network effects of having family or friends in the country of destination (26 percent). Network effects were a more unlikely reason for destination choice between the Africa (9 percent) and Middle East group (7 percent).

Table 4: Migrants Migration Experiences

	Overall sample	North	Africa	Middle East
Reason For Migration (Most Important)				
Employment	74.13	35.03	94.12	92.53
Family reunion	3.86	10.83	0.98	0.41
Security/political	3.86	8.92	-	1.66
Education	5.41	15.29	0.98	0.83
Reason for Destination Choice (Most Important)				
Easy Country to Access/ Gain Entry	11.41	4.46	32.67	7.47
Could Find Employment	19.92	6.37	22.77	25.73
Working Conditions are Better	22.05	15.29	14.85	31.12
Payment is Better	14.70	4.46	13.86	22.82
Living Conditions are Better	5.80	17.20	-	1.24
Family/ Friends There	13.73	26.11	8.91	7.05
Study	3.68	9.55	0.99	0.83
Involved in Decision to Migrate (Most Important)				
Only Migrant	43.24	38.85	45.10	43.57
Friends	6.76	5.10	12.75	5.81
Father	14.48	13.38	11.76	16.18
Mother	10.81	8.92	12.75	12.03
Spouse	6.95	10.19	4.90	5.91*
Sibling	8.88	8.92	8.82	9.13
Child	1.93	6.37	-	-
Means of Financing Migration				
Savings	12.74	8.28	20.59	12.45
Informal loans from family/ friends	26.45	14.65	15.69	38.59
Gift from family/ friends	38.42	51.59	38.24	31.95
Sold assets	3.86	0.64	5.88	5.39
Migrate Alone	66.28	67.09	60.78	68.46
Transit Experience	17.12	23.46	17.14	10.76
Documents				
Work visa	47.98	32.28	40.20	64.32
Tourist visa	5.78	11.39	1.96	4.15
Student visa	3.47	10.13	0.98	-
Refugee status	3.85	10.13	-	0.83
No documents	26.78	13.92	47.06	25.31

Source: Authors own calculations

The second most likely reason for destination country choice for migrants to the North was that the living conditions are better there (15 percent), which was a negligible response for migrants in the Africa and Middle East Group.

The most common response for destination choice among migrants to African countries was 'easy to gain access of entry' (33 percent), which most likely is predicated on geographic closeness to Ethiopia and the fact that only 65 percent of migrants to an African country had a passport. The most common response for destination choice for the Middle East group was that working conditions are better (31 percent). Here it is essential to remember that the migrant did not answer these questions themselves and responses may have been different if the migrant was the respondent as the authors research findings demonstrates that working conditions in the Middle East are quite poor³.

Across all three-destination groups, the majority of migrants migrated alone and most frequently they were the only person involved in their decision to migrate. Of those migrating to the North, 13 percent migrated with their spouse, and the spouse's were more involved in the decision making process (10 percent) compared to African or Middle East migrants, but this is also probably because more migrants in the North were married than migrants in Africa or the Middle East. Migrants in African countries primarily consulted their friends in their decision to migrate (13 percent), which is also reflected in the fact that 28 percent of migrants to African destinations migrated with their friends. Migrants to the Middle East, primarily consulted their parents in their decision making process, but 14 percent of migrants to the Middle East also migrated with friends. In addition, 10 percent of migrants to the Middle East and 8 percent of migrants to African countries migrated with a broker or smuggler.

On the whole, the most common method utilized to finance the migration was through a gift from family or friends (38 percent). This was particularly most frequent among migrants to the North (52 percent) and to African countries (38 percent). Migrants to the Middle East, on the other hand, most frequently utilized informal loans from family and friends (39

³ Based on interviews conducted by Kuschminder with 45 female return migrants from the Middle East.

percent), which was far less likely among migrants to the North (15 percent) or African countries (16 percent).

The majority of migrants did not transit through another country in their migration (83 percent). A transit experience was defined in this survey as a stay in another country for a minimum of three months on the way to the final destination. Migrants to the North were the most frequent to have a transit experience (23 percent) followed by migrants to African countries (17 percent). The two most common countries for a transit experience for both the North and African countries were Sudan (18 percent and 72 percent respectively) and Kenya (16 percent and 22 percent respectively). The majority of other transit countries for migrants to the North were a variety of different European countries. The primary country of transit for migrants to the Middle East was Saudi Arabia (37 percent).

Finally, in order to migrate people generally have to acquire documents. Most frequently migrants to all destinations acquired a work visa (48 percent), which was the most likely for migrants to the Middle East (64 percent). Migrants to the North also acquired tourist visas (11 percent), student visas (10 percent) or refugee status (10 percent). Migrants to African countries most commonly did not acquire any documents (47 percent), which was also a frequent option in migration to the Middle East (25 percent), and slightly less frequent for migration to the North (14 percent).

5. Discussion: Profiling Ethiopian Migrants and Situating within Global Migration Trends

This paper has sought to provide an overview of the different characteristics of migrants from Ethiopia to the three destination groups of the North, Africa, and the Middle East. Based on the results, a profile begins to emerge of the characteristics of migrants and their households to the different regions.

Ethiopian migrants to the North are more educated, from more educated households in urban areas, and are more likely to be married (although the majority are still single). They are most likely to have a passport and migrate for a variety of reasons including employment, family reunification, as UNHCR sponsored refugees, and for education. Migrants to the North are the most likely to have a network in the country of migration,

which influences their decision in choosing their destination choice. They are also more likely to make their decision to migrate in consultation with their family and their migrations are primarily funded through gifts from their family or friends. Finally, they are absent from the household for the longest average duration and are the least likely to be employed in the country of migration.

Migrants from Ethiopia in African countries present a different picture than migrants to the North. Ethiopian migrants engaging in these South-South migration channels are primarily from rural areas where the household is involved in agricultural or herding for their livelihoods and are the most frequent recipients of food aid. These migrants and their head of household have low levels of education. Ethiopians migrating within Africa frequently do not have a passport or any formal entry documents. Nearly all South-South migrants migrate for employment and they generally migrate to countries that are easy to access and where they can find employment. This group is the most likely to migrate with friends as a part of a group. Finally, the majority are employed in paid employment in the country of migration; however, they are most likely to migrate for the shortest duration abroad.

In the final group, Ethiopian migrants to the Middle East are predominately young and female, from a mixture of rural and urban areas with low levels of education of the migrant and the household head. The household heads are in a variety of occupations including agriculture, paid work, housework, self-employment, or retired. These households are the most likely to report, however, that they are finding it difficult to cope. The primary motivation for migration is employment and the vast majority are employed in paid work in the country of migration. They chose the destination choice country based on working conditions, payment, and finding employment. In order to finance their migration, they most frequently take informal loans from family or friends. Ethiopia migrants in the Middle East tend to migrate alone (although some migrate with a broker/smuggler), and have been abroad for an average of four years.

These regional migration profiles can also be compared to the trends in international migration discussed at the beginning of the paper. It is evident that migration from Ethiopia is increasing in volume, as the majority of migrants to the Middle East and Africa are recent migrants, whereas the majority of migrants to the North had been there much longer. The

primary destination, however, is not other African countries, but the Middle East. The strongest corridor of migration from Ethiopia reflected in this data is clearly Middle Eastern migration, which should not be considered South-South migration due to the vast differences in wealth between these countries.

In returning to the beginning of the paper on the debate regarding if the drivers of North-South and South-South migration are different, this analysis suggests that in the Ethiopian context the North-South and South-South/South-Middle East migration flows do have different drivers. The drivers of Ethiopian migration to Africa and the Middle East are clearly economically motivated as the migrants seek employment opportunities abroad. In comparison, however, the drivers of migration to the North are multiple (including family reunification, security reasons, and educational opportunities) and are not solely motivated by employment opportunities. This supports the argument that different migration flows have different drivers and suggests the need for further comparative data between drivers of different migration streams.

The feminization of migration is also highly evident in the Ethiopian case as sixty percent of the total migrants are female. Migration to the Middle East is most significantly a female phenomenon and is motivated by the gender specific labour opportunities of domestic work in the Middle East. The results also indicate that the females are active decision makers exercising their agency in the process as 43 percent make the decision to migrate without consulting anyone else, as opposed to historical migration trends wherein women were classified as passive reactors to migration processes. The feminization of the Middle Eastern migration flow in Ethiopia is comparable to countries in Asia such as the Philippines, Indonesia, or Sri Lanka, wherein migration is primarily female dominated for domestic work.

Finally, the third trend of barriers to movement of the low skilled are reflected in the data. Firstly, migrants to the North are higher educated, reflecting the global preference for skilled migration. Secondly, the reasons for the migration to the North are much more diverse reflecting a variety of legal migration channels, than the reasons for migration to Africa and the Middle East. Thirdly, the majority of migrants to the North have passports and proper forms of documentation, whereas one third of migrants to African countries do

not have a passport and nearly half do not have any official entry documents. This illustrates the impact of barriers to movement imposed by states and how differences in entry requirements and border management affect migration flows.

6. Conclusion

This paper has presented an in-depth overview of the characteristics of migrants from Ethiopia with a comparison of the three different flows of migrants to the North, Africa, and the Middle East based on the *IS Academy Survey*. As stated previously, it is important to stress that this data is not nationally representative; however, it does provide a picture of the different characteristics of migrants to the different regions. This picture has been further elaborated into profiles of the different migration streams that can be compared and contrasted. These profiles elicit the different ways that the different migration streams appear in global migration trends or contrast these trends as they are represented in Africa.

The comparison highlights that migration from Ethiopia contrasts some of the overall migration figures representing Africa. First, the most prevalent migration stream is to the Middle East, which thus contrasts the overall figure that 47 percent of migration from Africa is to other African countries, as migration to other African countries is the smallest flow from Ethiopia (21 percent). Secondly, the UN DESA states that 46.8 percent of migrants from Africa are females, whereas in Ethiopia, 60 percent of migrants are females.

In conclusion, this analysis suggests that the current migration streams from Ethiopia are unique within the African context. It also illustrates that caution must be exercised when drawing conclusions across the African context as each country and region is unique. Further research is required to understand the different streams within particular countries and how these countries factor into the wider picture of global international migration flows and trends.

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Introduction

This article is about the ways people strengthen and maintain their sense of belonging to concrete or imagined places or groups via communication networks¹. It focuses on the flow of things and news through transnational networks between Cape Verdean émigrés and their relatives at home. It is an intense and diversified network involving kinship ties in a context of prolonged physical distance in both space and time. To think about social relations from the vantage point of material objects leads us to ponder about the importance of materiality for understanding who we are. The discussion that follows also challenges common sense that opposes persons to things.

The flows in question consolidate social, cultural, and family networks between émigrés and their home communities in a complex system of exchange and circulation of gifts, requests, money, and information that mobilize those who leave and those who stay. My argument is based on the dialogue between my ethnographic data and works that have explored transnational flows of people, capital, and goods within the globalization framework. In establishing this dialogue I intend to contribute to the position according to which local communities, families, and individuals creatively interpret, negotiate, and interact in the context of global processes, often reproducing a system of traditional and conservative relationships.

I do not analyze money orders² for, although they are important in terms of circulation, here I am interested in two kinds of flows: the circulation of objects and of news. Both are crucial for maintaining family bonds when members are physically separated; they make up a complex exchange network within family circuits, reaching out to friends and neighbors. About the circulation of news, I shall focus on the role of the new communications technologies to uphold relations of “proximity at a distance” as well as in propagating rumors³. About requests of goods, I analyze the process of

¹ An earlier version of this text was presented at the Seminar “Places, People, and Groups: The politics of belonging in international perspective,” Universidade de Brasília, 25-26 November 2009. I thank the participants for their valuable suggestions. I am also grateful to my colleagues Wilson Trajano Filho and Alcida Rita Ramos for their reading of an earlier version and for their valuable comments and contributions on this paper.

² On this topic see Dias 2010; Carling 2008.

³ See Trajano Filho (1993).

(re)signification of circulating objects, the reciprocal character of the exchanges and their importance to keep alive the sentiment of “being remembered.”

My analysis is based on data collected in 2004 and early 2005, when I carried out fieldwork among the people of Vila de Sal-Rei on migratory flows and their weight on the transformations in the organization of local families. Boa Vista is one of ten islands that make up the Cape Verde archipelago about 500 kilometers off the Atlantic coast of Africa. It is the third largest island in size, but the least populated with 4,209 people (1,872 women and 2,334 men) spread out in eight settlements. The largest of these is Vila de Sal-Rei that comprises over half of the total island population. Boa Vista was one of the first islands to be discovered, but was settled belatedly. It has always been thinly populated and today it represents one of the peripheral islands in Cape Verde national scenario.

People in flux

In order to understand the dynamics of sending and receiving objects and information, it is important to know the local forms of organizing the circulation of people in the context of emigration. Elsewhere (Lobo 2006, 2007, 2008) I have argued that the Cape Verde migratory context can be understood as a family strategy. As it exports some of its members, it actually reproduces itself. Gender and generation solidarity is crucial to transform situations seemingly disruptive into continuity. In a world of flux and displacement due to migration, family continuity is preserved with the creation of spaces where the sense of belonging is reconstructed.

A unique feature of Cape Verde social structure is the ejection of its members far beyond its limits. It has made the country a Diaspora society from colonial times (that created the figure of the “ejected” [*lançados*]⁴ to the African coast) to the emigrants who are now driven out in search of a better life. We might say that people migrate because they need to be connected to those who stay home as a way to constitute themselves. Cape Verdeans leave in order to construct their lives, their homes, and a better future. Money orders, the sending of goods, visits, and the flow of things in general would represent a sort of material contextualization of affective ties, a

⁴ From the sixteenth century on, these appellations were given to both Portuguese and Cape Verdeans who ventured on the Guinea rivers to trade with the local peoples and became Africanized. See Carreira (1977), Trajano Filho (2006).

fundamental strategy to maintain the sense of belonging and to construct “intimacy at a distance,” both for those who are away and for those at home.

Mobility is a value in Cape Verde society. It works at various levels. There is mobility between houses as people circulate freely among their relatives’ homes, and it is rare to find someone who has never moved. Marriage mobility as change of partners is very common and even expected of both men and women. There is also a certain socio-economic and professional mobility as people can change their economic condition through jobs on another island (moving about the various islands is also an important matter on the archipelago).

Like these various forms of circulation, emigration poses challenges and is a source of insecurity even though it is expected, approved, and reproduced. In Boa Vista, the locus of my research, these aspects of emigration are even more critical, because most emigrants are women. One might expect this to create situations of instability and, presumably, have a tendency to erode basic family ties.

For most people, especially young women, to have a better quality of life means to emigrate, a desire shared by the whole family. Going abroad is seen as the best way to achieve a qualitative change in their lives. Hence, the decision to emigrate is a collective rather than an individual affair. As a family strategy, it is as important for those who stay as for those who leave.

Families share this dream and help the émigré by creating networks, aiding with documentation such as visa requirements, and establishing contacts that might help the migrant find work and support in Italy (the destiny of most Boa Vista women). The closest relatives in general supply the air ticket and money to start out abroad. When there are children, negotiations have to be made about who will be responsible for them. If the maternal grandmother is alive and well, she will be the natural choice. Otherwise, the mother turns to other relatives of her own, or to those of the children’s father. Since child mobility is quite common in Boa Vista, to find someone who cares for a child is not really a problem, at least at the beginning.

When she finds a regular job abroad, the émigré is expected to start *helping* her relatives by means of money orders, *encomendas*, clothes, shoes, household utensils, etc. Besides increasing the family’s income and raising their standard of living, the émigré’s purpose is to save enough money to build a house where she can live and manage a small business from which to draw her monthly expenses. To them having a

house of their own is of utmost importance, and makes the effort of emigrating worthwhile.

My data indicate that spatial distance does not necessarily slacken kinship ties. I argue that proximity or intimacy within the family in Boa Vista is less a matter of time and space than of communication and reciprocity, care, and the fulfilling of duties among its members. What really matters is that they all play out their roles as expected.

Relationships between kin in Boa Vista must be acted out with solidarity and mutual aid, otherwise, relatives have nothing in common and kinship ties weaken. Thus, physical distance in itself does not loosen the ties between mothers and children, fathers and sons, or comrades, but rather neglecting to share. Even in the context of emigration, if relatives succeed in creating and recreating interactive relationships, providing care and affection through mutual exchanges, that is, if they build a common base, their relationship is kept strong. There are various strategies to maintain these relationships even at a distance. Let us see what they are.

The flow of things

The economic importance of flows of goods, money, and news between migrants and their communities of origin is evident. However, this is not the only reason why anthropologists have been studying them more frequently, perceiving them as apt instruments for the analysis of cooperative relations and the construction of identities and belonging. Here the concepts of reciprocity and responsibility are basic to understand the various timings, rhythms, and meanings of the present-day worldwide migratory circuit (Rosaldo and Ina 2008). In sharing these authors' arguments, I wish to demonstrate that, together with the flow of objects and news that move relations between migrants and their Boa Vista kith and kin, are significant values such as reciprocity, solidarity, and responsibility. Equally important are the spaces of tensions, negotiations, and decision-making generated by these exchanges and nourish feelings of belonging in the participants. All these spaces, mediated by increasingly efficient technologies of communication, play a central role in "shortening" the physical and temporal distance between the migrants and those on the island.

Migrants, relatives, and friends invest in their social networks via the frequent exchange of objects and gifts called *encomendas* in Boa Vista. *Encomenda* exchanges are, therefore, an effective means to be in touch. Given its importance, there are various

strategies for circulating them, generating not only mutual recognition between those who give and those who receive, but also a set of tensions and expectations.

Long distance exchanges can occur via the regular mail service, an option regarded as costly and restricted in terms of how much can be sent at a time. Its use is limited. Ship travel between Italy and the Island of Boa Vista increasingly common due to growing tourism has become a frequent alternative.⁵ Migrants prefer it because it allows them to send large quantities of *encomendas* packed in barrels (called *bidões*) filled with clothes, shoes, non-perishable foods, cleaning products, toiletry, and house utensils. These goods are sent periodically to relatives and friends. While I was in the field, I observed on several occasions the arrival of these vessels at Vila de Sal-Rei and the commotion of those who had been told in advance of the incoming *encomendas*.

The most frequent form of sending *encomendas*, however, is that which takes advantage of the comings and goings of people between the foreign country and the archipelago. Trips of friends and relatives are always excellent opportunities to send money or gifts. Indeed, to miss these opportunities is a serious blunder and can be interpreted as lack of interest, neglect, or ingratitude if not immediately justified.

Both money orders and gift exchange are signs that the giver continues to remember the receiver, that is, those who left have not severed family bonds with those who stayed. Having no cost to the donor, the common practice of sending things via a traveler is also a chance for the émigré to express this feeling of “remembering” to someone who is far away.

As expected, the intensity of the flow of *encomendas* follows the rhythm of circulation of people with its peak during the northern hemisphere summer school vacation, between July and September. The news of a migrant’s arrival creates expectations in relatives and close friends. Likewise, at vacation’s end, the imminent return to Italy also provokes a rush to the emigrants’ house with packages to be added to their luggage. To ask someone to be the carrier of an *encomenda*, even of large sums of money, does not generate any embarrassment in Boa Vista. On the contrary, denials can provoke malicious comments.

Encomenda exchange, although quite common and even expected, is a constant source of tensions in the family. Conflicts can start with expectations. What the émigrés

⁵ In the last ten years, Italian entrepreneurs have invested in the construction of hotels and resorts on Boa Vista Island, which has intensified the transit between Italy and Cape Verde.

send is as important as the sending itself. To be remembered is a central value expressed in the act of sending a gift, but not only. The quality and quantity of what is sent is a sign of status for both donors and receivers.⁶ I frequently observed unfulfilled demands, generating accusations of stinginess and ingratitude. By way of illustration, let us see one such case.

In one of my late afternoon visits, I stopped at Nhá Tina's.⁷ While we talked, the phone rang. It was her daughter Julinha. She was calling from Italy to say she had sent some boxes on a boat scheduled to arrive in Boa Vista the following week. The news rapidly spread out to the whole family. Fifteen years earlier, Julinha left for Italy and put her two daughters (Diana and Rô) in Nhá Tina's care. They too were eager to hear from their mother. Two weeks later, I heard that a boat had just arrived from Italy and went back to Nhá Tina's house, curious to know about the *encomendas*. Julinha had sent clothes, mostly second-hand, some non-perishable foods (coffee, chocolate, canned items), cleaning products for the house, and toiletry. Diana and Rô were disappointed with what they got, showed me the clothes and perfumes, and said: "Just look at this, Julinha always sends *chalalá* (poor quality) things. We find this stuff in the Chinese store, right here in Boa Vista; she didn't have to send it all the way from Italy!"

Thus, the value put on the material aspect of the exchanges is important to establish the quality of relationships. The way émigrés relate to their family is described in terms of who gives what to whom in what circumstances. Material exchanges are mandatory in such contexts and women are in part evaluated for how much, what, and how often they send gifts to their relatives. When Julinha sent her daughters articles regarded as poor, she caused a general disappointment, because these exchanges are important devices to maintain kinship ties in situations of prolonged distance; it is a way to compensate for the physical absence and to express an emotional support. Therefore, the émigrés usually try to reach a balance that preserves family relationships.

Nevertheless, the constant exchange of *encomendas* collides with yet another source of tensions, namely, the need to involve a third party, the messenger. A relative or friend who travels is always in the delicate position of not refusing to carry an *encomenda*. When going to Boa Vista, they have to take responsibility for carrying large sums of money. I heard stories about people who claimed they had lost the money

⁶ It is worth contrasting the Cape Verde case with that studied by Lisa Cligget (2005) focusing on the exchange of goods in Zambia migrations in which value is placed on the exchange process rather than on the quality of the gift.

⁷ People's names in this paper are fictitious.

in transit or been robbed to justify the fact the money had never reached its destination. Such episodes can lead to serious conflicts between the families involved. However, the worst problem is with excess baggage. During my stay in the field, I followed cases of people travelling to Europe or elsewhere who underwent intense demands from neighbors and relatives to carry their *encomendas*. My field diary has the following entry:

Chy leaves tomorrow morning for Italy and is extremely annoyed with the amount of *encomendas* she has to take, “only people’s things!” Jars of sweets, São Vicente cookies, ground corn, goat’s cheese, punch and grog bottles, plus an assortment of local products the families send to those in Italy when someone leaves, those *encomendas*! This is a serious problem, as Chy defines so well. “If you take all they ask you to give to others, you risk leaving behind your own things to make room for theirs. If you say you can’t do it, people get angry and stop talking to you for the rest of their lives. If you agree to take everything, you pay a lot of excess luggage!”

Such tensions are constant. Those who leave are burdened with the obligation to take large quantities of *encomendas*, thus risking being caught at customs in the country of destination for carrying many bottles of alcoholic drinks, seafood, cans of tuna fish, among other things. I call attention to the fact that, although the position of messenger is disagreeable, a traveler rarely refuses the demands. Reciprocity takes its toll, but one must observe it, for a messenger today can be a giver or receiver tomorrow. Therefore, the network cannot be broken, even though it causes tensions and long negotiations at airports.

These issues must be constantly negotiated within the family, as the very occurrence of conflicts reveals proximity. One only expects something from someone who is close; those far away are hardly remembered and, hence, are not part of the reciprocity network that links Boa Vista and Italy.

Phone calls: how far apart are we?

Regarding news circulation, phone calls are a recurring and efficient means to maintain proximity in Cape Verde and elsewhere (Sargent *et al.* 2007). For decades, Cape Verdeans have exchanged greetings and news in letters, messages, and the circulation of people. The novel modernization of the means of communication in the country and the resulting increase in contact has rendered them an apt instrument to shorten the distance between Cape Verde and other countries.

Cape Verdeans greatly stress the importance of phone calls, limited as they still are due to high costs, especially in Boa Vista. All reports from émigrés point out their importance even among those who have been abroad for years. I witnessed many long-distance conversations, their tenor, and the kinds of information conveyed. Phone calls are not restricted to general talks. The émigré gets to know past and present details about her family and the Island in general. She says little about herself, eager as she is for news from home, and her interlocutors are very skilled in providing information.

Besides telling the latest local news, the islanders seize the opportunity to report their needs and frustrations in Boa Vista, to ask for money or anything else they want. They also express their wish to get away and ask for the émigré's assistance to help them with it. For those abroad phone calls are moments to show their sacrifice, to explain that life abroad is an illusion. They are mainly moments to nourish the sentiment of belonging to their family and homeland.

Telephone contacts are also opportunities to participate in the network of rumors that are crucial in Boa Vista's everyday life. It is common to hear that the *talianas*⁸ in Italy know about what happens on the Island before the locals do. Some people joke by saying that Telecom (the local telephone company) has a direct line between Boa Vista and Italy, the only explanation for such a speed. To be part of rumor networks means to be intimate, because only insiders have access to them. To give an example, I mention my own case. I lived for many years in Boa Vista and was, to a certain extent, part of a Cape Verdean family through marriage. Even so, I seldom had direct access to family rumors because I continued to be an outsider, and as such, not allowed to enter a world that, as they say it themselves, is typically Creole.

Circulation of rumors is so important that the émigrés in Italy found ways to get together every week to exchange updated information. These gatherings happen on days off work in plazas or in the migrant community's meeting centers. They are moments of effervescence when rumors spread widely and people find out who did what, on amorous affairs, on crises and news from the Island. Émigrés say these weekly gatherings renew their energy for yet another week of labor. In these occasions they try to recreate the Boa Vista ambience as a way to endure distance and longing.

Another significant role of phone calls is to help those abroad to participate in family decision-making, especially when the subject matter is parental care. Any family

⁸ This is the way émigrés in Italy are called. Similarly, there are *francesas*, *mericanas*, and so on.

negotiation related to health problems, house renovation, or travel must involve those who are away via telephone conversations. Those who stayed in Boa Vista consider the émigrés to have open minds, for they have seen the wide world, and, therefore, must be thoughtful about important decisions. Moreover, to consult them is essential to maintain their sense of belonging even at a distance.

There has been an increasing interest in studying the impact of new communication technologies on migration (Miller and Slater 2002; Sargent *et al.* 2007). Undoubtedly, the technological advance in this area is relevant to redefine social distance and help migrants keep a steady involvement in the affairs of their home communities. These studies give much attention to both economic access to these technologies and to how they are valued and represented in local discourses.

While I was in Cape Verde (between 1999 and 2005), I noticed a considerable growth in the use of modern technologies such as cell phones, internet, as well as in the circulation of electronic goods, increasingly requested as *encomendas* from the émigrés. The popular use of cell phones in particular, and the possibility of prepaid credit from Europe to Cape Verde have intensified contacts and commitment.

If, on the one hand, the facility to make long-distance phone calls, a highly valued asset, brings the possibility of immediate access to one's family, especially to the children of émigré mothers, on the other, it increases the demands for *encomendas* and financial resources, which widens considerably the space for the negotiation of debts and duties.

Therefore, this ethnographic case demonstrates that using these new means of communication can carry immediate benefits in terms of emotional satisfaction, access to daily news and various transactions, as well as enlarging the field of influence in family matters for those who are away. But, let us not forget that these technologies also amplify the range of demands which can produce uneasiness and oppression in the émigré charged with supplying or negotiating them. Increasingly sophisticated means of communication and transportation play the important role of decreasing physical distance, thus promoting social reproduction amidst apparent ruptures in space and time due to migration.

To give, to receive, to redistribute: things and relationships

Dia que bô bá pa Cabo Verde bô perguntam
 O quê cum cria dalá pa bô trazem
 Oiá um pergunta que bô ta fazem
 Bô crê sabê o quê cum crê pa bô trazem
 Oiá um pergunta que bô ta fazem
 Bô crê sabê o quê cum crê de nha terra
 Trazem só um cartinha
 Pa ca pesá na bô mala
 Trazem só um cartinha
 Ma dôs regrinha
 Ma naquel cartinha trazem Morabeza
 Naquel cartinha trazem um Serenata
 Ma naquel cartinha trazem nha crêtcheu
 Naquel cartinha trazem tude quel Mar Azul⁹

Só um Cartinha (lyrics and tune by Lura)

Oh Náia
 Kuse ki'n fazeu
 Só pamodi n'ba Lisboa
 Ma nada n'ka trazeu
 A mi n'cumpra tlivison
 Ku video ku DVD
 Computador pa nha fidjo
 Boneca pa nha côdé
 Nha dona pidim kelí
 Nha pai dja pidim kelá
 Nha guenti mó ki'n ta fazi
 Sem dinheiro ka ta da
 Na frontera: "Senhora tem muito
 peso
 Tem que pagar este excesso"
 Dinheiro gó kem ki fla?
 N'papia kuel sô na badiu
 Minina n'dal sô pa dôdu
 Ê fla: "Senhora já viu que
 Não tenho o dia todo?"
 Oh Náia
 Kuse ki'n fazeu
 Só pamodi n'ba Lisboa
 Ma nada n'ka trazeu¹⁰

Oh Naia (Lyrics and tune by Lura)

Popular culture in and about the archipelago gives us a proper dimension of what emigration means to Cape Verdeans and the storm of ambivalent feelings it triggers: longing, sadness, adventure, hope, sacrifice, joy. A recurring theme in Cape Verde

⁹ "The day you went to Cape Verde you asked me/ what I wanted you to bring me from there/ what a question to ask/you want to know what I want you to bring me /what a question to ask/do you want to know what I want from home/ just bring me a little letter/ so as not to weigh in your suitcase/just bring me a little letter/and some news/but in this little letter bring me *morabeza*/in this little letter bring me a serenade/but in this little letter bring me my love/in this little letter bring me all that blue sea."

¹⁰ "Oh Naia/What have I done to you?/ Just because I went to Lisbon/ And brought you nothing/ I bought a TV set/ With video and DVD/ A computer for my son/ A doll for my youngest/ My grandma asked me this/ My father asked me that/ Oh dear, what shall I do?/ With no money, no way!/ On the border: "lady, you have too much weight. Have to pay excess"/ Money, Who says I have it?/ I spoke to him only in *badiu*/ Baby, I pretended I didn't understand/ He said: "lady, can you see I don't have all day?"/ Oh Naia/ What have I done to you/ Just because I went to Lisbon/ And brought you nothing."

music¹¹ and literary genres is the dilemma between leaving and staying. The lyrics above synthesize and strengthen some of the aspects analyzed here based on ethnographic data on which I would like to comment.

Taken together, the songs point at the direction of the flows. From the émigré's point of view, the first lyrics focus on the yearning she feels for her home country and the opportunity to ease this feeling through a messenger who offers to take an *encomenda*, a little letter. In the second song we have a dialogue between Náia and a hypothetical émigré. It is about the predicament of someone who returns to Cape Verde from Europe, demands for goods, and the practical problems of meeting all of them. Náia's frustration for not having been contemplated with the goods brought home from Lisbon illustrates the expectations of those back home with regard to the consumption of symbols of modernity through those who circulate between two worlds.

The song also addresses the issue of quality. If, on the one hand, all the émigré wants is "just a little letter" talking about *morabeza*, her love, serenades and blue sea, on the other, she must send home a DVD, a computer, a TV set. The flow of goods is a two-way affair conveying specific things, symbols, and signs of two worlds connect by the migrants as mediators between Cape Verde and the outside world. They reinvent not only the vision of the Islanders about that world, but also promote Cape Verde vis-à-vis other places.

Both sides send *encomendas*, which justifies my use of the category exchange. Unlike what we know from reports on flows in migratory contexts, in Cape Verde sending *encomendas*, rather than a unilateral obligation on the part of the émigré, is also a duty on the part of relatives and friends on the Island, thus, generating a circular movement fed by reciprocity between people who are apart. For those who stay, sending *encomendas* is also part of the catalog of actions that confer reciprocity. The difference is in what is exchanged from either side of the relationship.

There is the expectation that those who are away, usually in European or American cities, should send money and goods from these places: clothes, shoes, fashionable ornaments, medicines, non-perishable foods, and electronic gadgets. They ask for items that are lacking in Cape Verde and are typical of the much prized modernity and fashion of the world at large. Particularly in the case of émigrés'

¹¹ Dias (2004) analyses the Morna and Coladeira music genres and their connections with the theme of emigration and Cape Verdean identity formation.

children, the most valued items are cell phones, electronic games, computers, clothes and shoes by famous makers.

In turn, local people are expected to send the so-called “things of the land:” goat cheese, grog (sugarcane liquor), punch (an Island traditional drink), cookies, bread, dried fish, seafood (especially lobsters), canned tuna, and traditional sweets. Whenever possible, family and friends makes small (not always so) packages with notes that identify the sender and the receiver, and a few words saying how they miss the person and how they look forward to an encounter.

Those who are away attribute to these *encomendas* the function of soothing their yearning and always receive them warmly. Any sign that connects them to their home country is welcome to nourish their sense of belonging and maintain proximity. This is why *encomendas* are so crucial for them. In receiving them émigrés know people back in Boa Vista remember them, an important component in long-distance relations. The constant exchange of goods and news keeps these relationships alive and shortens the distance between people. To maintain this circular movement it is important that people remember each other. Here we are clearly in the realm of reciprocity with the sender expecting to receive back.

The interest of anthropology in exchange is no novelty. A dialogue with classics, such as Malinowski’s study of the *kula* and Mauss’ extraordinary analysis of the gift, comes easily to our minds. My argument about how goods exchange creates social relations has long been part of our discipline. Hence, the obligation of giving, receiving, and giving back *encomendas* between local people and émigrés does not make of Cape Verde a special or exotic case.

Such categories as flows, circulation, and movement around a world that is globalized with porous borders are attracting the attention of an increasing number of anthropologists who seek to understand the implications of neoliberalism and globalization. In this context, it is worth going back to the discipline’s classical debates and add on our modern analyses of what is modern, lest we commit the blunder of inventing the wheel.

On the other hand, anthropology is neither concluded nor conclusive. As possible constructions of social realities, ethnographic analyses can always elicit new discussions and theoretical perspectives. If, on the one hand, it is true that global flows and relations between things and people are much earlier than contemporary times, on the other, it is also true that neoliberalism – with its emphasis on consumption,

individualism, and fast circulation of goods, services, and people – has its own specificities.

It is in this sense that my analysis of long-distance relations mediated by the exchange of things and news in Cape Verde brings new aspects to the debate. Kinship ties lived at a distance make things circulate along vast and interlinked networks that minimize distances. As I have argued, the feeling of being near or afar turns complex due to the flow of things that, in this case, does not represent, but rather *makes* relationships, creates affect, and sets up interaction (Miller 2010). DVDs, TV sets, clothes, phone calls, and little letters globally interchanged produce and/or maintain social relations that link people to social places, thus creating a sense of belonging. As I show in the songs above, the important thing to consider is the intensity and quality of what is exchanged.

However, another level of relations deserves attention, namely, those between Cape Verdeans at home and the global world. The consumption of modernity, through exchange with émigrés who have physical access¹² to that world, seems to minimize the gap between their universe and the world at large with its multiple possibilities, aspired by those who, apparently, do not move in a transnational space.

The place of Cape Verde in the “global world” puts us face to face with the inequalities and exclusions the world system produces. If, on the one hand, economic factors are not the only ones responsible for the decision to emigrate, on the other, we cannot deny its importance. To emigrate is also a possible strategy to overcome economic constraints. This is true both for those who leave as for those who stay. The exchange of *encomendas* and gifts brings us to the threshold of inclusion/exclusion dynamics of the neoliberal world (Weiss 2009).

Nevertheless, I believe the present ethnographic case allows us to depart from recurrent analyses on oppression and resistance. When Cape Verdeans (especially the children of émigrés) consume worldly things without leaving home, in my opinion, we should not take their position as an attempt to reproduce the values or seek recognition in a global society. As they consume western things, they strive to transform the world and their own place in it.

¹² I am not disregarding the kind of access migrants have to the Western modern world strongly molded by extreme inequality. However, from the perspective of those who stay on the Islands, this access is fully constructed and imagined. This construction is nourished everyday by the émigrés in their actions and discourses.

Therefore, what we take as value and belonging the social actors define as part of relationship strategies. In this sense, the exchanges analyzed here are strategies to produce multiple belongings, as they encompass both the émigrés inserted in their family groups and those who stay put, circulating neither in Cape Verde nor in the world.

Innovation and conservation, two sides of the same phenomenon?

We regularly find the non-critical acceptance of the notion that what motivates people to emigrate is simply the wish to have a more comfortable life and a higher social status. There are, however, some alternative theoretical positions that emphasize different aspects of social life and have enriched the debate on this subject. Recent studies about transnationality, among others, are good examples of a more complex outlook on migrations.

For some scholars (Ribeiro 1997; Hannerz 1997), to speak of transnationality is to question the correlation between territories and the various socio-cultural and political arrangements that guide people in their representations of membership to socio-cultural, political, and economic units. In contexts of migration, Feldman-Bianco (2009) defines transnationalism as a set of symbolic and material processes in which migrants build and maintain multiple relations that connect various points of their mobile lives. We can only interpret this issue properly if we abandon the traditional opposition between “society of origin” and “society of arrival.”

In emphasizing the immigrants’ experience and the relations they build in the new place, this position offers a more sophisticated way to approach the complex articulations between the place of departure and that of arrival created by migration (Schiller *et al.* 1992: 2). It also shifts the focus from economic considerations as the main propeller in migratory flows. However, the analyses of migratory flows that adopt this perspective center their attention on the *immigrant*, the hybrid traveler (Trajano Filho 2009), divided into multiple belongings, while his/her position as *emigrant* and the universe of those who stay behind – but who also experience “transnationality” – remain underexplored.

The Cape Verde case permits us to analyze this dimension, that is, how those who stay live through migration. In this way, it may contribute to a better understanding of what globalization really means in practice: its implications to family organization and to the meaning of concepts such as family and belonging in the context of complex

relationships beyond the economic sphere. In the present case, the flow of emigrants, and the subsequent exchange of values, goods, and money, rather than provoking ruptures, sustains traditional practices and values.

When I include the Cape Verde case in the context of contemporaneity, I defend that, rather than producing a time-space compression (Harvey 1989), or a distance in time and space (Giddens 1990), the global flows that encompass Cape Verdean society burden the migrants' communities with growing duties and create contexts of negotiations linking kin and kith back home. No doubt, this process generates values, but mostly maintains values in a conservative movement behind what seems to be innovative.

Therefore, if we are to understand this game of innovation and conservation, I must go beyond the extant literature on circulation of people and goods in the global system, and turn to Levine's interesting and polemic text (1973) about African personality patterns where he ponders about family relationships in contexts very similar to what I found in Boa Vista. I am especially interested in his analysis of absence of anxiety related to physical separation in the African case¹³, because what I recorded in Boa Vista seemed to be very unusual indeed.

In dealing with a set of incorporated practices and dispositions that comprise a shared ethos, Trajano Filho (2005, 2009) agrees with Levine in what he calls the "idea of an African *ecumenon*." Similarly, we can analyze the relationships between emigrants and their relatives in Cape Verde along these lines where, above all, space conceived of as social space. Trajano Filho states:

These economic, political and cultural characteristics, which act as driving forces for emigration, represent the Cape Verdean expression of the above-mentioned structural obstacles of the African cultural *ecumene*. Their regular and long-lasting existence in Cape Verdean society generates unbearable tensions that would tear the social fabric were it not for the ethos

¹³ On the relative lack of anxiety in cases of separation, Levine compares Westerners and Africans. The former crave for intimacy in social relations and its absence generates anxiety. Separation and sentimentalism are ways Western culture found to deal with relations of affect and intimacy. Thus, the relative absence of anxiety in separation makes men and women, parents and children see it as less painful and disruptive than in the West. The emphasis on material obligations contributes to the maintenance of relationships during prolonged sojourns away. African families do not have to be residentially intact in order to preserve the social and psychological unity of their members. Nor are marriage and kinship duties slackened with those absences (1973: 142). Moreover, dispersed members play a central role in the redistribution of economic resources.

that emphasizes a lack of anxiety in regard to physical separation between those who stay and those who leave, and the maintenance of a strong feeling of relatedness, acting as a bridge for the physical distance, by means of continuity of material obligations (2009:525).

The sense of belonging resides in the quality of social relationships at a distance rather than in their permanent sharing of the same space. What is then reproduced is conservative and traditional. In fact, distance contributes to preserving patterns of the traditional organization in the context of increasing mobility. Trajano Filho goes on to argue that the Cape Verdean migratory process might be better explained in terms of continuity of the African cultural ecumene – that pushes community members beyond their social system – than as a misconceived product of diffuse contemporary transformations of a global character. “Flows of people, capital, information, things, and values in time and space are not exclusive to contemporaneity, they also existed in the past. What changed was the range of circulation of things, symbols, and people” (Trajano Filho 2005: 3).

In my attempt to understand the modes of reproduction in Boa Vista’s “spread out families,” I share Trajano Filho’s (2005) line of reasoning. Taking the local situation of Boa Vista not only as a case of flows typical of contemporaneity, but especially as a manifestation of the African ecumene, highlights the local practices observed in the field and helps me analyze the notion of proximity without physical presence, and the absence of anxiety. As my data demonstrate, to live together has a much broader meaning than sharing the same space. In this sense, the flows and movement – highly valued by Cape Verdeans – contribute to the reproduction of social organization; hence, the central role of material goods circulation.

Unlike the ideal type in western societies in which the emotional component of interpersonal relations is more important than material transactions, Cape Verdeans characterize their relations in terms of the kinds of these material transactions: who gave what to whom in what circumstances. The value placed on exchanging and sharing goods defines the quality of the relations. In this context, separation would be “minimized” by the rationale of material obligations; there would be a tendency to qualify social relations in terms of an idiom of material transactions.

It is worth noticing that some contemporary authors, as they cast a new look at material culture and the role of objects in the field of social relations in modernity, they bring out new theoretical and methodological frameworks to observe how objects flow

in various societies. We have, for instance, a study of the social life of things (Appadurai 1986), of their biographies (Kopytoff 1986), and their central role in producing social relationships (Miller 2002, 2010). On a different key, Bruno Latour (2007) initiated a series of analyses aimed at upsetting the Durkheimian maxim when he proposes that things are social facts. With this, he attempts to abolish the distinction in substance between object and subject¹⁴.

¹⁴ For interesting spinoffs of Latour's position see *Thinking Through Things. Theorising artefacts ethnographically*, a 2007 collective volume edited by doctoral students from the Department of Social Anthropology at Cambridge University in the late 1990s.

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Daniel Miller (2010) explores some interesting dimensions in ethnographic studies in Trinidad, Indian, and London with the purpose of challenging our perception that things and people are in opposed universes. The materialization of relationships, therefore, does not seem to be a unique African trait as opposed to the West, as Levine argues, but it is also found in the West, according to Miller. Sahlins (2000) adds to the

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debate when he analyses the exchange processes and the “indigenization” of Western goods by Pacific peoples. In the context of migrations where material goods and money circulate around the globe, he says: “Today, the huge phenomenon of circular migration is creating a new kind of cultural formation: a determinate community without entity, extending transculturally and often transnationally from a rural center in the Third World to ‘homes abroad’ in the metropolis, the whole united by the to and fro of goods, ideas, and people on the move” (: 522). “This flow of money and goods is better understood by the norms of ‘reciprocity’” (: 523). In this sense, what appears as remittances and payments is simply the material dimension of the circulation of persons and concerns between local homes and others elsewhere.

In the Cape Verdean case, the continuity of material obligations in the context of emigration, in a circuit that involves both the émigrés and those who stay home, acts as a bridge that shortcuts physical distance whether in space or in time. In this sense, circulating material goods are valued as constructors of relations and of proximity. The norms and notions that guide rights and duties between relatives are decisive for the operation of new ways of being close. When we analyze goods exchange, we notice the mediated character of this equation, namely, to achieve proximity at a distance, those involved use artifacts, people, and strategies that work as links in their circuit of relations.

Relationships between émigrés and those who stay on the Cape Verde islands show that “being together” goes well beyond daily conviviality. This “being together” is maintained by fulfilling a series of duties and mediations, even from afar. The constraining factor is not physical and spatial distance, but the impossibility of sharing substances and experience. Thus, material flows have a strategic place as they contribute not only to the material reproduction of those who stay behind, but also to the cultural and symbolic reproduction of social relations. In this process, not only money and goods circulate intensely, but also the production and reproduction of cultural relations, collective identities, family and symbolic systems, and the sense of belonging.

To complete this picture, I have pointed out the importance of news circulation, increasingly efficient due to new technologies. But I must stress the need to deepen the analysis of the social consequences of these new communication and transportation technologies that I see as essential factors to define distance in migratory contexts. It may be correct to say that Cape Verdean circulation must be perceived in a wider context rather than the immediate product of contemporary global transformations. But

it is also true that these new contemporary technologies play a central role in redefining social relations at a distance. For example, the impact of internet on these relations is yet to be explored. Perhaps this is a good topic for another paper!

Strategies for Survival in Adverse Context: Migration and Rural Societies Songhay-Zarma [Niger]

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Abstract: The progressive desertification of the Sahel associated with an inversely proportional population growth has become increasingly difficult physical survival and reproduction of the rural communities of Niger. Together, these contingencies ecological [and demographic] with the current political and economic Niger have contributed significantly to the growing of the rural exodus, both internal and outside the country.

In the case of the inhabitants of the country Songhay-Zarma, which corresponds roughly to the westernmost region of Niger, stretching, however, slightly beyond the Mali-Niger border, migration tends to be mostly circular and/or seasonal and contributes in no small way to the setting of urban economies [in their own country or in the host country].

For the Songhay-Zarma migration is a collective strategy: when the stored grain can no longer ensure the survival of the entire family, some elements depart temporarily to urban areas of influence. Its main goal is to ensure their own survival until the next harvest, so their margin for risk is minimal. This risk margin reduction allows them to engage in a variety of unique economic activities, thus contributing to a complexity of local informal economies.

Keywords: Niger; Songhay-Zarma; strategies of survival; seasonal migration; process of economic informalization.

Introduction: The Nigerien structural crisis

The Republic of Niger is a landlocked country situated in West Africa bordered by Nigeria and Benin to the south, Burkina Faso and Mali to the west, Algeria and Libya to the north and Chad to the east. Despite being the largest West Africa country, with a land area of almost 1,186,408 km², 3/4 of its surface is desert. And therefore, almost 90% of the Nigerien population [a really multi-ethnic melting pot] lives in a tiny strip on the southern bank of the Sahara Desert, south of 16th parallel (Grande Atlas do Século XXI, 2005).

Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the latest Human Development Report, it has one of the lowest ranks of the United Nations' Human Development Index [HDI], currently 167th of 169 countries, being only surpassed by Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe (Human Development Report, 2010). Indeed, this report clearly reflects the deep economic, social and politic crisis that currently plagues this country.

According to Finn Fuglestad (1983), Nigerien structural 'underdevelopment' dates back to the late phase of French colonization. Between 1948 and 1960, Paris put in motion several plans, under FIDES [Fonds International de Développement Economique et Social], in order to modernize and equip the country with the necessary infrastructures to launch its 'development'.

However, the geographical location of Niger [a landlocked country without direct access to the sea] associated to French colonial policies did not facilitated the development of an economic fabric sufficiently cohesive and able to meet the new expenditures, especially with schools, hospitals or roads. In fact, until the end of the Second World War the French Colony of Niger was totally underdeveloped. Despite colonial authorities had improved the development of some intensive agriculture for export [mainly peanuts], colonial state's main revenue source was extortion through tax burden on rural people who lived in the so-called 'subsistence agriculture'. Consequently, since Independence [Niger formally achieved its independence on August 3, 1960] very few Nigeriens governments have managed to ensure the functioning of their administrative machinery without the technical and financial assistance from international partners (Fuglestad, 1983).

Nevertheless, in order to grasp the size and complexity of this crisis, other factors must also be taken into account, particularly ecological, economic and political constraints that Nigerien populations have been going through.

Ecological constraints

The gradual desertification of the Sahelian belt (Glenzer, 2002), coupled with an increasingly erratic rainfall pattern, has reinforced the random nature of rainfed-based agriculture that many Nigerien people practice. Furthermore, a steady population growth has forced the abandonment of fallow land practice and the cultivation of land unsuitable for arable farming, frequently above 'critical' rainfall line (Fuglestad, 1983).

Indeed, the growing scarcity of fertile land, due to increasing population pressure, associated to 'archaic' agricultural practices, extremely vulnerable to plagues of locusts and exclusively dependent on rain (Charlick, 1991; AfBD/OCDE, 2005; Artuso, 2009) makes clear that Nigerien rural life has become more and more difficult.

In the last decade of the 20th century, various measures have been implemented to reduce risks regarding physical reproduction of Nigerien populations. In a time that 'food security' issue begins to dominate international agendas [especially after the World Food Summit in 1996] it has been introduced in Niger the so-called *contre-saison* cultures i.e. crops that grow exclusively on the dry season. A way found to mitigate the damage caused by chronically insufficient agricultural production (Bonfils, 1987; Gilliard, 2005).

However, even with the implementation of dry season cultures the majority of Nigerien rural people still unable to secure their own livelihood through agriculture. The problem of Nigerien food security continues to dominate national and international agenda. Only in this last decade, the Republic of Niger has faced two food and nutritional crisis in respectively 2005 and 2010 (Afrique en ligne, 2011).

Consequently, many Nigeriens have chosen to leave their lands behind and move to areas of urban influence. In fact, rural exodus towards the most important Nigerien cities, as well as towards neighboring countries such as Nigeria or Togo has increased substantially (Gilliard, 2005).

With respect to rural people who remain in place attached to land there is a gradual decrease in the importance of annual agricultural production in the survival strategies developing by communities. Subsequently, other economic practices [complementary to agriculture] have gained prominence, especially during dry season when agricultural activities decrease considerably (Sedes *apud* Jabara, 1991: 13; Gilliard, 2005; Artuso, 2009).

Among the most important complementary economic activities are livestock or firewood gathering. Both, together with *contre-saison* culture production are normally channeled to trade in local markets. Nevertheless the most crucial of all is seasonal migration [during the dry season] to urban areas, especially to Niamey (Charlick, 1991, Jabara, 1991; Gilliard, 2005; Artuso, 2009). The growing appeal of city shows how heavily Nigerien rural population actually depend on urban economic spheres for survival.

Economic constraints

Following the collapse of uranium prices [Niger's largest export] in international markets in the early 1980s, the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) was implemented under the auspices of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). In the Nigerien territory, living conditions have drastically worsened since the introduction of SAP conditionalities. The major constraints imposed by Bretton Woods Institutions (IMF and WB) were the liberalization and privatization of African economy and consequent reduction of state expenditure. From then on, any African country which needed external funding had been compelled to adopt liberalism (Chabal & Daloz, 1999).

In the case of Niger, the SAP implementation methods have led to a progressive reduction of government expenditure [especially welfare-state retrenchment], which was not accompanied, by the expected improvement of private sector. Indeed, the introduction of liberalism resulted in an exponential increase of unemployment. Consequently, the economic crisis worsened and informality flourished everywhere, particularly in urban areas (Jabara, 1991; Charlick, 1991, Gilliard, 2005).

Suddenly, fees started to be charged for services that were once free, like school or primary health care services (Oumarou, 2009). Paradoxically, as observed in other African countries subjugated to the logic of economic liberalism, the increase in unemployment was accompanied by a growing need of cash, which in turn led to a gradual commodification of social relationships (Chapman, 2010) and the proliferation of informal economic fabric, especially in urban spheres (Gilliard, 2005).

The shrinking welfare state affected particularly women, especially single-parent female-headed households. In most African societies, women have a duty to care for the needs of children or the elderly and/or infirm parents. With the introduction of users' fees in primary education or health sector, 'traditional' female occupations, such as farming, gathering

firewood or carrying water are no longer enough to cope with the rising cost of living. To meet their family's basic necessities, women need also to make money to pay for school fees, to go to the doctor or simply to meet the expectations of the entourage. To handle with these new exigencies, many women, especially illiterate women, have embraced the liberal logic of informal markets. Because of the scarce resources generated in the informal sector, women are always in transit between the rural and urban or peri-urban areas, which in turn translates into an excessive workload paid and unpaid. Low and irregular informal sector incomes, combined, with heavy workload, have a serious impact on women's family health, highlighting their profound socio-economic vulnerability (Avotri & Walters, 1999; Chapman, 2010).

In Niger, the growing presence of women, even if temporarily, in urban areas has clearly contributed to the proliferation of street begging and prostitution. As a consequence of Nigerien economic crisis, poverty spread and social relationships have been commoditized, and consequently social support networks have been weakened. Therefore, migrants compete fiercely for the meager resources and benefits channeled through these networks. Gender inequalities are very pronounced in most West African countries because of Islam's influence. And for that reason Nigerien women are often excluded from others mechanism of distribution than those operating inside the extended family. Although street begging and prostitution are typically informal activities, according to emic representations they are completely distinct from others forms of economic activities, since they carry a very negative social connotation. In fact, they are considered to be dishonorable occupations. Typically, Nigerien women only decide to practices prostitution and/or begging in the street when their tiny social support networks for some reason stop to function (Gilliard, 2005).

Political constraints

After General Kountché's death in 1987, political instability broke out in Niger. The first free elections in 1993 started a process of democratization of political structures and spaces that ended up marked by several moments of a literal 'democratic setback'. Since then, fragile democracies have been interspersed with authoritarian regimes of short duration (Abdourhamane, 1996; Gazibo, 1999; Arrous, 2003). As a matter of fact, the Republic of Niger has recently concluded one more process of democratic transition. On last March 12, 2011, Mahamadou Issoufou was elected President, inaugurating the *7ème République* and replacing in power the military junta called CSRD [Conseil Suprême pour La Restauration de La Démocratie]. This military junta had done a coup d'état on February 18, 2010 in order to

remove from power Mamadou Tandja who refused to vacate the presidential chair. Knowing that about 50% of the Nigerien State budget's is provided by international cooperation (Delville & Abdelkader, 2010), and whenever political instability worsens external assistance is suspended, it isn't difficult to estimate the effect of recurrent funding shortage in country's economic life. A good example of how the frequent lacks of funding impacts on Nigerien population are chronic delays in wage payments of civil servants. To bypass their economic difficulties, public clerks began to charge users, for their own benefit. Including public services that have remained [theoretically] free of charge for population (Souley, 2001).

In short, the introduction of liberal economic doctrines together with chronic political instability and climate changes that are incompatible with increased population pressure have projected Nigerien rural populations into urban economic spheres both inside and outside the country. In most cases, migration is temporary: during the dry season when farming activities decrease considerably, many people leave the country and flock to cities in search of new opportunities. Generally, the various segments of the informal economy are the target of migrants who travel to urban areas. Due to the low and irregular incomes generated in informal sector, a significant percentage of the Nigerien population is constantly in transit between rural and urban areas (Gilliard, 2005). This phenomenon can be perceived as a local solution to alleviate the precariousness of Nigerien daily life. As Filip de Boeck observed in Kinshasa, perhaps population in permanent circulation has more chances to meet business opportunities.

Strategies of survival among Songhay-Zarma people: migration in a diachronic perspective

The term 'Songhay-Zarma' was forged academically to designate a multiple and complex ethnogenetic process resulting from several migrations [some of them following up the disintegration of the former Songhay medieval empire] that converged during the pre-colonial era to what today roughly corresponds to the westernmost region of Niger. The common denominator between the heterogeneous social fabric resulting from these migration flows is sharing the same language [the Zarma], and by extension, certain representations of the world (Olivier de Sardan, 1984).

Since pre-colonial times, the extreme contingency of Sahel environment has inexorably marked the Songhay-Zarma's mode of living. And therefore, since then, the strategies of survival of Songhay-Zarma reflect this incertitude. To ensure their perpetuation, Songhay-Zarma populations tend to privilege the diversification of resources, despite the differentiated constraints experienced over time (Olivier de Sardan, 1998).

Pre-colonial migratory dynamics

From pre-colonial times to the present days Songhay-Zarma societies present themselves as deeply hierarchical social formations. According to Olivier de Sardan (1984) is very likely that an early exposure to Islam, around the 8th century, helps to develop a complex social stratification among the Songhay-Zarma. Since then, two fundamental cleavages structure the Songhay-Zarma societies. The first is the division between descendants of former slaves and former aristocrats, and the second is the gender division between men and women. In spite of social, cultural, political and economic transformation that Songhay-Zarma societies have undergone over time, symbolic and gender power relations never changed. The permanent composition, decomposition and recomposition of the social fabric, inherent in any historical process (Amselle, 1985) did not modify the nature of relationship between descendants of former slaves and former aristocrats and between men and women.

Despite the abolition of slavery by the government of Paris in the early 20th century, the socio-cultural mechanisms that perpetuate this inequality remained intact. In other words, a preference for endogamous unions between the descendants of former aristocrats still persists. Even today, the fact that an individual being descendant from aristocrats or slaves

continues to be an identity marker that decisively ponders on matrimonial strategies (Fuglestad, 1983; Olivier de Sardan, 1984; Gilliard, 2005). With regard to gender asymmetries, not only persisted over time but are getting worse, especially since the 1980s, when liberal economic policies were introduced.

This social stratification significantly impacted on pre-colonial strategies of survival among Songhay-Zarma. The ecological and climatic existing conditions at that time largely contributed to the randomness of crop yields, and therefore, people sought to multiply economic occupations that supported agriculture activity, in order to mitigate the risks related to their physical reproduction. Two of the most recurring activities were looting and plunder vicinal populations. However, because of social inequalities, war spoils were usually distributed among warriors who belonged to aristocratic families (Olivier de Sardan, 1984; Morgado, 2008).

In the early 19th century, bellicosity had substantially increased and deteriorated Songhay-Zarma country, mostly due to the presence of Fula and Tuareg (Olivier de Sardan, 1984). The intense military activity regarding this period completely devastated the region. As a result several warriors have eventually migrated into Gurunsi country [actually situated between the northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso] looking for new possibilities. The continuous warriors back-and-forth between these two regions ended up to bring a new dynamism to main Songhay-Zarma markets, thanks to slave trade (Rouch, 1956; Fuglestad, 1983; Stoller, 1995).

Even if informal economic fabric had an existence long before the emergence of formal economy, in fact, informality issue only becomes relevant when some kind of centralized government is able to establish control over a vast region. In this context, one of the administration's prerogatives is to tax all economic transactions within its territory. In the case of Songhay-Zarma, it is only after the French occupation [when an administrative apparatus was built in order to control 'indigenous' populations] that informality question becomes relevant. Before then, during pre-colonial period Songhay-Zarma populations had never been politically organized under the authority of any centralized government (Rouch, 1954; Hunwick, 1971; Fuglestad, 1983; Stoller, 1989). So,

Nevertheless, this does not take away the merit of Songhay-Zarma warriors in reviving the economy of the region which was completely depressed because of war efforts. It is unavoidable that the circular flow of migrants between Gurunsi and Songhay-Zarma countries had contributed to the setting of both economies

Migration under colonial and one-party rules

With the French occupation, in the last decade of the 19th century, the living conditions of Songhay-Zarma populations had dramatically worsened. In addition to all the pernicious policy set up to control the population of the region, the burden of the administrative apparatus put in place had been literally paid by sedentary populations. Especially by those who have no privileged relationship within the colonial administration. Initially, the government in Paris had no interest in investing in the colony of Niger, and therefore, the maintenance of administrative infrastructure was made at the expense of rural populations through high tax burden, jeopardizing their survival (Fuglestad, 1983, Olivier de Sardan, 1984; Charlick, 1991; Stoller, 1995).

As regard to Songhay-Zarma, under the domination of colonial power these rural populations also had decided themselves to diversify their economic activities. To overcome climate and political constraints Songhay-Zarma people combined a primary economic mode of action [agriculture] with secondary or complementary economic modes of action, such as tax boycott, grains sales in local markets or seasonal migration (Olivier de Sardan, 1998).

Any of the activity complementary to agriculture is indicative of Songhay-Zarma economic dynamism during the colonial era. Taxes boycott and sales in parallel markets [rather than markets sanctioned by colonial State] denoted how much Songhay-Zarma people needed to maintaining and developing alternative [informal] channels of trade. Although seasonal migration during the colonial period was closely related to the partial monetarization of Nigerien rural economies subsequently to colonial administration requirement that taxes should paid in cash (Stoller, 1995), this does not means that these migrants were not as enterprising as their warriors ancestors.

During the French occupation, preferred destination for Songhay-Zarma migrants was Gold Coast [the current Ghana]. The migratory flow that over the first decades of the 20th century flew to this British colony was composed mainly by young men who sought to settle preferentially in areas of urban influence (Rouch, 1956; Stoller, 1995).

Despite Ghanaian steady economic growth, job opportunities for the crowd of migrants who daily arrived in Gold Coast's cities could roughly be defined as the arduous and poorly paid jobs that the natives of southern Gold Coast refused to keep. Even so many Songhay-Zarma migrants had managed to overcome the trends in labor market opting most of the times for

self-employment as street peddlers in the so-called *marché noir*, bypassing in this way low wage jobs (Rouch, 1956).

Songhay-Zarma economic behaviors remained substantially identical during the early years of post-independence. Tax boycott and sales in parallel markets were banal practices under one-party rule, reflecting how heavy tax burden on rural world was at that time (Charlick, 1991). As regard to seasonal migration [to Ghana] the behavioral patterns remained fundamentally the same: as wage incomes in the decade of 1950/60 have not follow the rising cost of living, migrants continued to prefer the informal sector, where they continued to find more and better opportunities (Hart, 1973). After 1969 the preferred destination for Songhay-Zarma migrants became Ivory Coast (Olivier de Sardan, 1984). The Ghanaian border closure following the crisis triggered by falling cocoa prices in international markets (Marshall, 1981) had been the principal reason for this change in destination patterns.

In short, during the colonial and postcolonial period [especially the early years that followed the Nigerien Independence] the strategies of survival among Songhay-Zarma rural communities had contributed to growing informalization of wider 'economic space' (Amselle, 1985). In their own country, the development of informal sector had been evident through the creation of alternative channels of trade i.e. informal markets. In host countries, it was mainly via seasonal migration that Songhay-Zarma people had contributed to the growth of informal economic segments.

Rural-urban dynamics under neoliberalism

Today, the strategies of survival among Songhay-Zarma societies continue to be guided by the unchanging logic of diversification. Like in other Nigerien rural populations apart from some activities complementary to agriculture, such as livestock, fishery, forestry, cultivation in dry season, firewood collecting and selling surplus in local markets, seasonal migration still the most important activity (Bonfils, 1987; Charlick, 1991, Jabara, 1991; Gilliard, 2005; Artuso, 2009).

If until very recently, as has been referenced, seasonal migration affected mainly young males (Rouch, 1956; Stoller, 1995), presently it can involve several family members of different ages and of both sexes (Gilliard, 2005). In a situation of extreme deprivation, resulting from cyclical and/or successive years of very low crops, an increasing number of family members [sometimes all of them] have at some point to leave for urban areas.

Nowadays, the choice of preference of Songhay-Zarma migrants is Niamey. Indeed, the rate of urbanization in Niger (United Nation, 2009) accurately reflects this trend. Because of the deep economic crisis plaguing the Republic of Niger, temporary migration to Niamey necessarily means an insertion in a deeply informalized and increasingly saturated economy due to the massive influx of migrants that every day run into the capital. And therefore, the economic success of migrants rest on their ability to integrate this urban economic fabric: depends on how they capitalize their own social networks on the townscape, and instrumentalize what Pierre Bourdieu (1979) had termed as 'social capital'.

Traditionally, Songhay-Zarma always maintained a privileged relationship with Nigerien's towns, especially with Niamey. During the early years of French colonization, it was fundamentally among Songhay-Zarma populations that had been recruited the labor force necessary for the construction and maintenance of the colonial administrative apparatus (Fuglestad, 1983, Olivier de Sardan, 1984).

So, there is a clear tendency to urban ground be dominated by Songhay-Zarma people, which can be seen through the vast and complex social networks that has been woven like a blanket over the capital. Moreover, the fact that the vast majority of political offices are hold by Songhay-Zarma (Charlick, 1991; Stoller, 1995) clearly demonstrates the extent and nature of this domain.

Songhay-Zarma migrants manifestly seek to manipulate this social capital to their own advantage. As in many other African countries, they search to explore 'ethnic' relations with political office holders, through which they attempt to get advantages and benefits, according to a clientelistic logic that dominates most of African arenas, and basically takes place in the informal ground (Charlick, 1991).

Among Songhay-Zarma people, ironically those who are in clearly social advantage are the descendants of former slaves. During the colonial period, the majority of workers had been recruited [first to build on the city of Niamey and latter to fill the lower positions of colonial administration] among their ancestors [former slaves]. Therefore, today the descendants of former slaves are theoretically those who have denser networks in the city, which can be seen for the higher proportions of them being appointed to political office (Fuglestad, 1983; Charlick, 1991; Stoller, 1995).

In the antipodes are the vast majority of Songhay-Zarma women. As already mentioned, due to gender inequalities Nigerien women in general are excluded from political mechanisms of

distribution of goods, services or benefits. Often they can only rely on family [and related] networks which in most cases are profoundly weakened because of widespread economic insecurity (Gilliard, 2005).

The most successful migrants tend to diversifying even more their economic activities. They preferentially invest in their own home village, acquiring arable land or livestock. Many end up transformed into small 'landlords' who hire local manpower to extract the maximum profit from their rural enterprises. Needless to say, this frequent recurrence to paid work often translates into an increase of economic inequality between local poorest and richest since the formers are no long available to cultivate their own lands (Gilliard, 2005).

It can be thinking that given Nigerien current economic situation, Songhay-Zarma migrants do not have alternatives to the informal economy, contrary to what happened, for example, during the colonial period. Paradoxically, this absence of alternatives turns out to be a real stimulus for the development of new economic practices. Due to the deep saturation of informal tissue competition is very fierce, and therefore, migrants are stimulated towards constant innovation. Every day, countless economic performances are improvised to cope with the toughness of everyday life (Gilliard, 2005).

Therefore, as in pre-colonial and colonial periods, the constant traffic of Songhay-Zarma migrants between rural and urban areas has contributed to increase Nigerien economic dynamism. And above all, it has directly participated since colonial times in the progressive proliferation and complexity of informal economic fabric.

Conclusions: Songhay-Zarma migrants and the process of economic informalization in the Nigerien Republic

About the global process of economic informalization

The concept of 'informal sector' was first formulated by Keith Hart (1973) as a result of a study on Ghanaian labor market, which enabled him to rescue from anonymity the 'informal income opportunities'. At about the same time, following a mission carried out in Kenya by ILO [International Labour Organization] the term 'informal sector' was also used to designate a range of small offices, such as street vendor, shoeshine or waste picker (Kenneth, 1996, Carr 2001).

The issue of informality has jumped to the forefront of social sciences as a result of the international economic crisis that occurred in the early 1970s (Castells & Portes, 1989). At that time, it was thought that the presence of informal sector in the economies of Third World was just a transitional phase towards an increasing rationalization of economic activities. Under the influence of modernization theories, using as criteria the models of organization of production, it was emphasized the dual nature of these economies, in which the modern capitalist sector coexisted alongside the traditional subsistence sector (Laguerre, 1994, Fauré, 2007). Therefore, the informal sector was perceived as a reminiscence of the traditional economic structures, which would eventually disappear with the progressive industrialization of these countries.

However, contrary to all expectations, over the years, informal sector expanded rapidly to the rest of the world, including in the so-called 'advanced' countries (Chen, 2001). One of the main reasons for the informal sector proliferation is closely related to the increasing liberalization of economies (Fauré, 2007).

In the wake of the economic crisis in the 1970s, state bureaucratic structures were considered the guilty party. They were thought responsible for setting too many restrictions on 'normal' function of economic activities. Consequently, many countries of the Western World [as opposed to Soviet bloc] started to implement neo-liberal economic policies (Castells & Portes, 1989). The Reagan/Thatcher era and the subsequent fall of the Berlin Wall had eventually facilitated the dissemination of these liberal doctrines on a global scale.

The belief that market regulation did not require state intervention had a direct corollary: the progressive distancing of state regarding economic activities. Following the state removal from economic sphere markets have eventually tended to a total deregulation. The competitiveness between enterprises became increasingly aggressive and consequently, unemployment rates began out of control. In this chaotic economic environment, many corporations started to move some segments of their production to regions with cheaper workforce or to transfer these same segments into the 'invisible' arena of informality, maximizing in this way their profits at the expense of tax evasion (*idem*). At the same time, workers gradually began to lose labor rights that former workers had fighting for, eventually by direct action of states. Job insecurity becomes the watchword, especially for the poorest and/or least educated people, such as young, women or ethnic minorities (Cacciamali, 2000).

It is unquestionable that informal sector absorbs a significant part of the world population, especially those who for any reason are unable to access to formal labor market. So, the propagation of informal sector interests to governments. On the behalf of 'social peace', states are interested in overlooking the economic activities taking place at informal level. From this point of view the proliferation of informality became a safety valve that may prevent possible outbreaks of social unrest and agitation. Contrary of what had been so long time advocated the informal sector is not an exclusive feature of the so-called technologically less advanced countries. Neither discloses anything of 'traditional': on the contrary, its nature is embedded in a very economic dynamism and routed in modernity (Fauré, 2007).

The heterogeneous economic practices that can be encompassed in the informal sector had led several authors – e.g. Light (2004), Abreu (2007), Grassi (2007) or Lopes (2007) - to theorize about informality, giving rise to a myriad of utterances. However according to Fauré (2007), regardless the criteria used to build the concept of informal sector, it never reaches to embrace the whole of reality studied. Neither helps to fully distinguish the informality from other ways of producing, trading and bargaining in the economic area. Therefore, the term 'informal sector', due to its size and diversity, as well as to the close and sometimes unclear way which is relates to the formal sector of the economy, has lost ground to more operational concept of 'informal economy' (Carr, 2001).

The argument that the informal economy is not a reality outside the capitalist economic system, but instead is effectively a part of it [according to the structuralist school, informal components are fundamental to the survival of formal components] has led many authors to

prefer analyzing informality from the perspective of a process rather than an object (Castells & Portes 1989, Cacciamali, 2000).

The idea of process proves to be very advantageous especially for those who are fundamentally interested in seizing social dynamics that fuel informality, since it allows understanding that formal and informal elements of economy are not related to each other in a pre-established and static way. Quite the contrary, in fact they are viscerally intertwined, both locally and globally: it's hard to say where one ends and another begins. The boundaries between them are fluid and in permanently refashioned (Laguerre, 1994). This, in turn, shows how dependent and overlapping are both elements of economy (Adams *apud* Spring, 2007). Indeed today is no longer possible to think about capitalist economic system only through a Weberian perspective.

Furthermore, the idea of process also allows grasping the capacity for initiative and/or entrepreneurship of social actors involved in informal economic practices, particularly of those who are pushed towards the margins of the so-called formal economy, by virtue of market dynamics.

Far from being mere passive agents, many people who operate in the informal [or between the formal and informal] tend to contribute to increasing its complexity. Looking for constant innovation to cope with increasingly demanding markets they search to capitalize their social networks in the most diverse ways. It is also as a process that should be understand Songhay-Zarma contribution to the developing of Nigerien informality.

Songhay-Zarma and Informality

The process of informalization of any economy only makes sense if there are both economic segments that are regulated by laws emanating from the existing social institutions and others that are not. Despite informal economic fabric be much older than formal, in fact the former presents a profound dependence over the latter. As already mentioned informality only becomes socially tangible when some kind of centralized government is put in place. And in the case of Songhay-Zarma, it was only after the French occupation that they started to contribute to the process of informalization of wider economic spaces.

Several Songhay-Zarma economic activities [that support agriculture] have participated in this process, but it was principally circular and/or seasonal migration which has given a greater

contribution for the process of economic informalization both in Niger as in adjacent countries. In fact since pre-colonial times that Songhay-Zarma migration has helped to transform wider economic spaces.

This approach allows capturing the social, economic or politic transformations eventually experienced inside the rural communities as a result of migratory dynamics (David, 1995; Olivier de Sardan, 1998), as well as, to seize migrants' capacity to act according their own rationality and make proper choices to bypass constraints towards a growing empowerment. What is revealed through migrants actively participation in the transformation of economic and social fabric of welcoming places.

Although an overlapping range of rationalities is fundamental to understand Songhay-Zarma migratory process (Rouch, 1956; Olivier de Sardan, 1998), in these days the intersection between ecological, economic and political constraints clearly affects the seasonal migration. The departure Niamey usually happens when grain storage falls down dramatically and can no longer ensure the subsistence of all the family until the following harvest. As stock goes down, one by one, family members leave in order to relief the burden of those who still behind. When the stored grains finish sooner than expected such as in years of drought even elderly persons and women with small children to end up in the city's many slums (Gilliard, 2005).

In the city, the minimum objective for migrants is to ensure their own survival until the next sowing. There is no pressure put on migrants' back. They don't have the obligation of ensuring the physical reproduction of their entire family, during all over the year. With a minimum margin of risk and social support networks vastly impoverished, improvisation and innovation capacities are the watchwords for those who search to survive in the city during the dry season. It is precisely in this context that have arisen a range of unique economic activities (Gilliard, 2005). This constant renewal of informal fabric confirms the Songhay-Zarma contribution to the distinct and deeply modern process of economic informalization in Niger.

Moreover, as Songhay-Zarma migrants tend to returning home for sowing, it is clear that under the guise of a highly individualized *démarche*, seasonal migration reveals itself as a collective strategy, conceived by a group of people: the family.

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Does Botswana create a new Gaza Strip? The analysis of the ‘fence discourse’

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In 2003 the government of Botswana announced plans to build an electric fence, officially to stop the spread of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) among the livestock. From 2001 and 2003 Botswana has witnessed two outbreaks of FMD with epidemic sources in both cases located in Zimbabwe, heavily affecting its cattle industry and causing resentment among local communities. The epidemics coincided with a growing tensions between Botswana and Zimbabwe. Due to the unrest in Zimbabwe, a lot of its citizens have chosen to emigrate to Botswana whose economic success and political stability is held as an example across the continent. Thousands of illegal Zimbabwean migrants begun flocking into the country, shifting the fence discourse beyond what was originally presented as strictly phytosanitary concerns. Therefore we argue, that the fence has many parallel meanings and the decision about its erection, maintenance and possible electrification not only remains ambiguous, but also touches upon a range of issues, such as economic and wildlife. The paper is a result of a desk research and a field study conducted in Botswana. It is divided into four parts. The first part presents the historical patterns and typology of migration in the Southern Africa. The second is devoted to the chronology of the fence’s construction. The paper subsequently goes on to discuss five dimensions of the ‘fence narrations’, namely – environmental, phytosanitary, international and political, economic and social. The last section concludes.

*This is preliminary version of the paper. At the time of writing the authors were completing the field research in Botswana, therefore some of their findings are still in the process of formulation. The final draft may vary from the current version.

Introduction

In September 2003 the Zimbabwean High Commissioner to Gaborone, Phelekeza Mphoko, stated that ‘Botswana is trying to create a Gaza Strip’ (*Daily Mail & Guardian*, September 8, 2003). by putting up the fence on its border with Zimbabwe. This rather radical rhetoric can be found mainly in the Zimbabwean political discourse. Obviously, the situation on the border between Botswana and Zimbabwe can hardly be equated with the state of affairs between Israel, Egypt and Palestinian Authority in terms of their engagement in the Gaza strip. The origins of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, together with geopolitical and demographical setting in the Middle East, as well as the very involvement of the United States in the region are major dissimilarities. Whilst the Gaza blockade by the iron fence and a heavily armed Israeli forces is clearly a matter of national security, the Botswanian fence was officially erected as a result of phytosanitary concerns stemming from the risk of transmission of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) among the local cattle. Nevertheless, it is argued that the real agenda of the government was actually to put a stop to the uncontrolled influx of Zimbabwean illegal immigrants crisscrossing the border. The objective of the paper is to shed more light on this very issue.

Botswana has more border posts with Zimbabwe than with any other country it is a neighbor with, although it is not its longest border. The length of border with Namibia is 1 300 km, and with South Africa 1 840 km, whereas with Zimbabwe it amounts to 813 km. The border between Zimbabwe and Botswana is poorly demarcated¹, what was the most visible during perturbation around Kazungula Bridge Project. Nevertheless, the local communities on the two sides of the border coexisted rather peacefully, some of them even shared water sources, and family links between Botswana and Zimbabweans are common. Both countries share a long history of coexistence, and relative sympathy towards migrants (and refugees from the apartheid RSA). Botswana’s government decision to rise a fence of that length and height is quite extraordinary in the nowadays African politics, although the fences created in order to protect cattle from wild animals and diseases are common in the region. Historically, such huge infrastructural projects were usually being raised in the conflict zones, and their aims were almost exclusively connected with the idea of defense during the war (Sterling 2009). We are arguing that the fence on the border between Zimbabwe and Botswana is the very example of the classical barrier adjustment to the current socio-political conditions, and its idea and understanding is constantly being redefined depending on ideational structures that influence on our perception. In the age of globalization, when the classical physical barriers are disappearing and the new types of barriers are being created (e.g. economical disproportions) Botswana decided to rise a fence, that reminds cold war rivalry and has connotations to the period of anti-apartheid campaign. In the paper the authors trace the developments of the fence project and its status in the discourse.

This article is a result of a desk research and a field study conducted in Botswana. The paper is divided into four parts. The first part presents the historical patterns and typology of migration in the Southern Africa. The second part is devoted to the chronology of the fence’s construction. The paper goes on to discuss five dimensions of the ‘fence narrations’, namely – environmental, phytosanitary, international and political, economic and social. The last section concludes.

¹ The official border treaty was never signed.

1. The problem of migration in Southern Africa

The problem of migration in Southern Africa is mostly economic in nature. It is usually traced back to the discovery of gold and diamonds followed by an aggressive mining industry's expansion that marked the last decades of the nineteenth century (Crush 2000: 14). The industry was for years in constant demand for cheap labour which drew people from different parts of the region. The migration at this time was characterized by a strict control and the fixed contract system that allowed workers to stay only for a limited time (also to prevent them from bringing the families). According to J. Crush (*ibid*) between 1920 and 1940 the number of foreign workers in South Africa increased from 100 000 to 200 000 (at the peak at the beginning of the 1970s stood at a staggering 300 000; 80 per cent of the entire workforce in the mines were estimated to be of a foreign origin). An additional factors behind this movement in the colonial times was taxation imposed by the British administration (to be paid in British pounds) and the dispossession of the land. This was, for instance, the case of Bechuanaland whose population was literally decimated by the mineral rush mainly in neighbouring South Africa (it is estimated that a quarter of the male population was working in South African mines) which was strengthened by the hut tax required by the British. Migration driven by the expansion of the mining industry grew further as the British colonies of Northern and Southern Rhodesia became the region's magnet, bringing about new cross-border migration of unskilled labour - both between mineral countries and from other non-mineral countries (Crush *et alia* 2005). The inter-regional migration to mines, and to a lesser extent to commercial farms (which on many occasions concerned illegal migration), has made Southern Africa in fact a huge regional labour market which, albeit reshaped and reduced in scale, still continues to exist today.

There are also political motives behind some of the cross-border migration, albeit the scale of this phenomenon is significantly lower. As the independence struggle unfolded in the 1950s and 1960s, some Southern African countries were hosting refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring states that embarked on fighting off the white minority rule. During the struggle against the Apartheid regime Botswana (but also Zambia) became a popular refuge among activists from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. It might be said, that there is an established tradition of Zimbabweans migration to Botswana. During the internal conflict in Southern Rhodesia, more than 20 000 Zimbabwean 'political refugees' were welcomed in Botswana, and some of them were allowed to become Botswana's citizens (*ibid*). Botswana adopted an open door policy because of the lack of manpower in the country. Many Zimbabweans obtained important positions in Botswana. It is worth mentioning here, that the first permanent representative of Botswana to UN was a Zimbabwean migrant.

Nowadays the most popular destination for immigrants in the Southern Africa are Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. It goes without saying that in the 1960s and 1970s an idea that Zimbabweans or Zambians would one day flock into countries such as Botswana was rather unthinkable. According to Southern African Migration Project (SAPM) findings the majority of cross-border migrants in Southern Africa are temporary and circular, meaning they stay for longer than initially intended. Their prime motive is improving economic situation, and once this is accomplished the migrants prefer to go to their home countries (this only partly applies to Botswana, where a great deal of foreign workers wish to stay permanently) (*ibid*). Virtually, all countries are lacking pro-active immigration policy and in the vast majority of them the immigration – both legal and illegal - is perceived as a source of potential troubles, rather than economic opportunities. This attitude has its roots also in the post-independence legislation that was crafted with an intention to see an outsider as a threat. Interestingly, Botswana stands out as a country with relatively open policy towards a skilled migration which is reflected in the number of temporary work permits issued each year (more

than South Africa). Recently, this has changed, especially towards migrants from Zimbabwe, which are increasingly perceived as a peril.

The geographical factor must be taken into account while speaking about migration from Zimbabwe to RSA and Botswana as it is relatively easier to sneak into Botswana than to South Africa, because in order to get into South Africa, illegal immigrants have to cross the Limpopo River.

2. Fence's Chronology

The official reason to rise the fence was – to control the spread of Foot-and-Mouth Disease from Zimbabwe. The fence was originally intended to be 4 meter high, but it was finally reduced to 2,4 meters. This still did not convince the Zimbabwean authorities who argued that the fence was designed as a barrier against people not animals.

The idea of erecting fences is not entirely new in Botswana - fences were constructed for veterinary purposes already in the 1950s (Kuku cordon fence) to segregate livestock from wildlife, an example being 100km Nxai Pan Buffalo Fence put up in 1968 (Keene-Young 1999; Albertson 1998). Neither is the idea of the fence being constructed along Botswana's international borders (e.g. the fence between Botswana and Namibia put up in the 1960s). Nevertheless, this is the would-be electrified fence along the border of Botswana and Zimbabwe which captured the world's attention and stirred a bilateral debate between the two countries. It is argued here, that this may be a result of the multipurpose nature of the fence, or more importantly a discernible gap between the official position of Botswana's government and actual reasons of erecting the barrier.

The story of the fence can be traced back to 2003, when the government of Botswana announced plans to build an electric fence, officially to stop the spread of Foot-and-Mouth Disease among the livestock. From 2001 and 2003 Botswana has witnessed two outbreaks of FMD with epidemic sources in both cases located in Zimbabwe. As a result of FMD outburst Botswana lost 13 000 cattle, which was important not only in terms of economic costs incurred by local communities, but also symbolically, considering the high status of cattle in the Tswana culture. The epidemics coincided with a growing tensions between Botswana and Zimbabwe which first came to the fore in January 2003, following the prison fight between Zimbabweans and Botswana inmates which resulted in three deaths. In February, Zimbabweans informal traders clashed with Botswana on the streets of Gaborone over an alleged stealing of clothes (Mukumbira 2003). The Botswana's government was among the most vocal critics of the Robert Mugabe's regime. It was even accused of planning a military intervention in Zimbabwe together with the United States and United Kingdom (Merafhe 2003).

From 2006 onward, due to a deteriorating political and economic situation in Zimbabwe, Botswana experienced a large influx of illegal migrants, crossing its northern borders in unprecedented numbers. Thus the fence was increasingly seen as a way to put a stop to 'tidal waves' and 'floods' of Zimbabweans (as rightly noted by Crush and Pendelton (2003), illegal migration in the Southern Africa is often described using 'aquatic imagery'). In 2006 Botswana deported more than 56 000 Zimbabweans; in 2007 illegal migration problem escalated even further as the Zimbabwean economy took a nose-dive with hyperinflation in February 2007 already exceeding 50 per cent per month (the minimum rate required to qualify as a hyperinflation) to soar further at the world record rate. As a result, only a few months later in November, the month-over-month inflation rate was close to 80 billion percent (Hanke 2009). It was accompanied by unemployment growth (unemployment rate stood at 80 per cent in the peak time), shortages of food, fuel and foreign currencies.

Although the fence was primarily intended to be electrified, in 2006 the government eventually decided to abandon the idea as this would make it 'leathal', thus inevitably bringing an international condemnation (*Mmegi*, April 28, 2006). The only step that still considered was using low voltage that could deter infected animals from grazing on the Botswana's side of the border (it was actually tested in some places, but the installation was being damaged by people and animals). The government's announcement caused some resentment in local communities, whose cattle had been decimated by the FMD and smugglers. The money originally meant for electrification, estimated at P8 million, was diverted to increasing BDF and police presence and intensifying security along the border (*Mmegi*, July 24, 2006).

In 2008 Botswana completed construction of the fence. The fence, however, originally expected to be 500 km long, was not fully constructed - there are still missing parts because of problems of terrain and supply of material. The question of electrifying the fence seems not all dead and is picked up here and there by the local media. Nevertheless, the Agriculture Minister, Christian De Graaf, told in May 2011 that, according to his advisors, it would be difficult make the electric fence fully operational due to its length and risk of being destroyed by wild animals (*Mmegi*, May 6, 2011).

The government, interrogated by the MPs, announced that the total cost of the fence is estimated at P35 million (approximately 3,5 million Euros) (*Mmegi*, March 2, 2006).

3. Dimensions of the 'fence discourse'

3.1. Environmental discourse

The first dimension of the 'fence discourse' pertains to the wildlife, which may be adversely affected by its erection. Environmentalists have long suggested that dividing the natural game parks with physical barriers may be harmful to ecosystem as it hampers free movement and reproduction of animals within the area, along with many other negative effects (Boone and Hobbs 2004: 149). The fences 'introduce an entirely artificial constraining upon wildlife movement that is historically unprecedented, in terms of scale, magnitude and extent of impact' (Darkoh and Mbaiwa 2001: 44). Furthermore, it should be noted that 'many game species depend for their survival on seasonal migration between rangelands and water sources' (*ibid*). The decision to put up the fence in Botswana runs counter to emerging projects in the region that entail removing fences in order to create transnational parks and game reserves. A good example is the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park shared among Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

It should be noted additionally that whereas putting up the fence may be effective with regards to smaller animals, bigger ones not only do not find it impenetrable, but in fact do not hesitate to demolish it. Reportedly, elephants have been responsible for devastating the fence which then has not been repaired, thus making it easy to cross the border for both infected cattle and 'border jumpers'. The elephants have been also accused of destroying the livelihood and the crops of the residents (*Mmegi*, February 15, 2008). On the whole, the fence is regularly destroyed by the wildlife animals (mostly by elephants), which increases the cost of its maintenance and creates gaps for Botswana and Zimbabwean cattle to mix.

The fence complicates work coordination between Park Rangers on the two sides of the border. The reports about bad treatment and widespread arrests of Zimbabweans in Botswana were politicized by the government in Harare in February 2010, when two Park Rangers from Botswana were arrested in Zimbabwe, while tracing a pair of lions. The rangers were detained and accused of possessing illegal weapon. At this very point Botswana announced the recall of its defence and intelligence attaches from Harare and said it expects

Zimbabwe to do the same (*Africa Confidential*, February 19, 2010). In real terms it meant that diplomatic relations between these two states were one step from being broken up. At this point the environmental narration and the claims that wild animals do not recognize state borders overlaps with political narration and tensions between Harare and Gaborone.

3.2. Phytosanitary dimension

The phytosanitary narration is the most common in the discourse, and was officially used to legitimize the fence construction. Botswana's government argued that the fence was necessary because Zimbabwe did not fight FMD effectively enough due to the limited resources spent on anti-FMD vaccinations. One of the most strongly contested issues was the height of the fence. While contemplating the decision to rise a 2,4 m high fence the authors asked themselves a question 'how high can a cow actually jump'? To their surprise, cows can be quite fit and a 6 feet tall barrier should not present a problem (the authors have, however, failed to find any proof confirming that African cows are equally fit or possibly even fitter) (*Telegraph*, December 17, 2009). More importantly, the FMD might be disseminated not only by livestock but also wild animals. During the FMD outbreak in 2003 a lame emaciated wild Kudu was shot in Botswana and the samples obtained from it were confirmed positive for FMD (Mokopasetso and Derah 2005: 22). No matter how odd a question about the cows jumping abilities might be, kudus are capable to jump over the fence². Consequently, it may be suggested that erecting 2,4 m high fence may not be as difficult to defend as it is in fact an anti-animal measure in general. It is worth mentioning here that from phytosanitary perspective there is no point in turning the fence on to the lethal mode, as the lower voltage of electricity can effectively scare the animals and prevent them from crossing the border. Accordingly, the practice of fence building in order to prevent animal diseases outbreaks is quite common in South Africa. There is a border fence on the border between Namibia and Botswana, and many more smaller fences all around the region. The outbreaks of FMD between 2001 and 2003 are strong rationalizations for the fence construction, nevertheless the dominant narration does not exist in the vacuum and it should be correlated with traditional importance of the cattle for Botswana and economic dimension of FMD outbreaks (EU market ban on Botswana's beef – this issue is discussed in the forthcoming section). Phytosanitary narration strongly opposes accusations that the fence is aimed against Zimbabwean people and the Robert Mugabe's regime.

3.3. International and political dimension

The fence construction can be perceived as another example of Botswana's desire to manifest independence in international environment and a will of sending a clear signal to the Zimbabwean regime that the government in Gaborone will not accept Robert Mugabe's policy towards opposition. President Ian Khama was the most vocal African critic of Zimbabwean president. During the last years Botswana's foreign policy was quite extraordinary when compared with other African states, as the government in Gaborone is trying to establish itself as a continental champion for democracy³. Botswana did not reject the International Criminal Court call to arrest Omar Al Bashir; it supported the NATO intervention in Libya and recognized Alassane Ouattara as the president of Ivory Coast as a very first African state, despite many other African governments' reluctance. Botswana was considered as a state

² Interview with Senior Lecturer, Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana, August 30, 2011.

³ On contrary, in the internal political discourse, the current president, Ian Khama, is being accused of authoritarian tendencies. Interview with Senior Lecturer, University of Botswana, Department of Political and Administrative Studies, August 22, 2011.

where AFRICOM command might be hosted, it was also the only state in the SADC which hosts the Voice of America. The fence might be perceived as the most visible manifestation of the Robert Mugabe's regime's disapproval by Gabarone and a signal, that Botswana will not accept economic refugees from the neighboring country. Simultaneously, Botswana's government was fully aware of possible international condemnation if the fence would be electrified and turned on to the lethal mode⁴. Besides, the Zimbabwean officials who were using 'Gaza strip' and 'Berlin wall' analogies while speaking about the fence, this very construction was not criticized internationally. The Botswana's opposition parties supported the idea of the fence, the internal political debate alongside this issue did not concentrate on the need of the fence but on financial and transparency matters associated with the fence construction.

3.4. Economic dimension

An official explanation of the decision to erect the fence primarily stems from phytosanitary concerns. Each time FMD (see section 3.2.) strikes, the cattle industry is adversely affected. It should be recalled that Botswana's economy continues to be reliant on cattle production and export. Although, in macroeconomic terms its significance is small vis-à-vis the diamond industry which is a backbone of the economy, on the micro level many communities are dependent on cattle. It should be equally stressed that Tswana tribes have been historically defined by pastoral tradition and livestock are held not only for commercial but also for socioeconomic and cultural reasons (Makepe 2008: 122). Interestingly, the number of population in Botswana is smaller than the one of its cattle. Having said that, the FMD outbreaks potentially carry high social and economic costs. This is compounded by the fact that the EU, being the most lucrative market for Botswana's meet, has strict regulations concerning the quality of the beef. Those areas that export beef products to the EU markets (EU-areas) have to adhere to the regulations, which means that while FMD is detected the authorities are either compelled to kill the cattle within a certain area so the area could maintain the EU status, or vaccinate the cattle and wait until the area opens up for the EU. There have been instances of Botswana's meet being banned from the European market (e.g. in 1980).

It should be stressed that the fence has not been intended to address legal cross-border movement of goods and labour that continue to thrive and essentially has not been disrupted (formally, Zimbabweans do not need visa to enter Botswana, obtaining travel documents is, however, a different issue), even though it causes frictions in border towns as the Zimbabweans contribute to price hikes (*Mmegi*, April 24, 2008). Botswana has been a logical destination for Zimbabweans due to its renowned, widely acclaimed economic success, but also geographical proximity. It has been reinforced by appreciating Pula (against Zimbabwean dollar), a lack of job opportunities and a shortage of basic commodities. As a result, legal migration has been on the rise just as the economic situation in Zimbabwe got worse. Migrants from Zimbabwe take on jobs that many Botswana frown upon as too lowly paid or not meeting their financial expectations, such as housemaids, farm labourers, gardeners or street vendors. In many instances they are forced to work far below their formal qualifications and/or their new jobs hardly correspond to prior professional experience.

Having said that, the fence is rather associated with an issue of undocumented migration that arguably provoked Botswana's government to make a more aggressive stand against the influx of Zimbabwean, though formally the step, as it was discussed before, might be explained differently (as a barrier against the cattle). The problem of illegal migration

⁴ During the pick of crisis in Zimbabwe, Botswana's Minister of Agriculture, Johnnie Swartz admitted that 'in today's world, we can't erect a lethal fence as that might attract international condemnation'.

'stealing' jobs has been a part of the political debate for some time now. At the same time, to many locals interviewed by the authors, Zimbabweans are hardworking, efficient and reliable, surely not deserving the bad name they have across the country. The 'border jumpers' are also accused of contributing to the spread of FMD as they do not go through proper disinfection cutting the fence (allegedly along with some farmers), while looking for a job as herdboys (*Mmegi*, July 29, 2011).

While discussing economic rationales behind putting up the fence, a few other issues come into play, namely the costs of handling the migrants who have successfully made it on the other side and cattle, allegedly being stolen by Zimbabweans.

In 2003, according to Botswana authorities, each day the enforcement arrested 200 Zimbabweans crossing the border illegally. The number grew fast. In 2006, the Francistown police reported that only between April and September 30 000 Zimbabweans were deported, which on average gives a number of 5 000 per month (*Mmegi*, October 26, 2006). Captured migrants have to be transported to detention facilities, before being returned back on the other side of the border. According to the government these activities have a significant drain on the budget. Botswana's immigration officials have put the costs of deportation of illegals at more than P1,7 million a month. Having said that, putting up the fence may be defended as an economically justified project.

The idea of the fence was also presented to the public as a part of the plan intended to curb smuggling of the cattle to Zimbabwe⁵. This is, for example, how Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Peter Siele, explained the decision of the government to the people of the Bobirwa in Gobojango (*Mmegi*, July 24, 2006).

3.5. Social dimensions

Throughout its recent history, Botswana was a migrant sending community and the current situation poses an unprecedented challenge for both Botswana's government and its society. The number of illegal immigrants from Zimbabwe is being described as the biggest immigration problem since Botswana's independence. Nobody really knows how many Zimbabweans live in Botswana. The number ranges from 100 000 to 200 000 (Lesetedi 2007: 7). While speaking with Botswana one may assume that they have a passionate dislike for illegal immigrants – especially the African ones. In Botswana African migrants are described by the word *makwerekwere*, which originally meant a person who speaks non-Setswana language. During the field research the authors were told, that they are not referred to as *makwerekwere*, while Zimbabweans are, and while referring to Zimbabweans the expression *makwerekwere* has a derogatory and xenophobic meaning (Morapedi 2007: 231). Generally, the authors felt, that description of white Europeans carry no negative connotations while this of Zimbabweans does. Hostility and xenophobia in Botswana towards immigrants, particularly African ones, has been also confirmed by the SAPM study (Pendleton and Crush 2004). The study reveals that among many policy measures towards immigrants that Botswana would wish to see is an electrification of the border fence. In light of E.K. Campbell's public opinion survey - almost 60 per cent of Botswana's citizens preferred the iron fence to be constructed on the border with Zimbabwe and switched on to the lethal mode. The survey result is even more shocking when one takes into consideration the resemblance of an electric fence raised by the apartheid South African government on the RSA – Mozambique border, and widespread criticism of this construction. The illegal migrants are also being targeted by the press. The qualitative and quantitative study of David A. McDonald and Sean Jacobs (2005) revealed that the Botswanian press when compared with newspapers

⁵ In some cases, it is assumed, locals are involved in stealing and cattle smuggling.

in the RSA and Zimbabwe published the most xenophobic articles. The Botswana's press was arguing that the country was experiencing a severe rise of the crime rate. Zimbabweans are being accused not only of hijacks and burglary, but also of murders and brutal attacks on Batswana. According to 'Mmegi' in 2006 the Zimbabweans were responsible for over 50 per cent of criminal activity in Botswana (*Mmegi*, October 26, 2006), and in the whole country there have been some eruptions of small-scale xenophobic violence outbreaks against Zimbabweans (Throup 2001: 10). The other factor that has hardly ever been taken into account in both media and in the official political discourse is the information that due the political and economic unrest in Zimbabwe a lot of Zimbabweans were crossing the border in order to steal Batswana's cattle⁶ (see also section 3.4). This factor has an important meaning considering the symbolic meaning of cows for Batswana. The idea of the fence electrification was also supported by the opposition; in January 2009 Botswana Congress Party presented petition where it demanded the fence electrification in the Bobirwa region (*Mmegi*, January 7, 2009). This issue was also raised by the Bobirwa chief in the House of Chiefs. Nevertheless, political parties in Botswana did not attempt to make an usage of xenophobic feelings among Batswana during political struggle, whereas, some MPs, immigration officers and chiefs were quoted while making xenophobic remarks about Zimbabweans (Morapedi 2007: 246).

The fence construction can be also seen as one of the dimensions of struggle against HIV/AIDS epidemic in Botswana. The migrants who live in Botswana illegally are excluded from accessing the healthcare and other public services. Botswana is the only state in the world where HIV positive citizens are provided with antiretroviral drugs free of charge, whereas foreigners are excluded from the treatment; nevertheless the HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment is important for the whole population living on the territory. It is even more crucial when we take into account the common accusations of Zimbabwean women working as prostitutes in Botswana. It is difficult to find statistical data about the number of Zimbabwean sex workers, as sex work is criminalized. The halfhearted position of Botswana's government to the HIV positive foreigners were revealed in August 2011, when it announced that 'it will not provide foreign inmates with life-saving ARV' (*Mmegi*, August 25, 2011).

The recent inflow of Zimbabweans can be seen in the ongoing debate about the nation building in Botswana and in terms of the question of who is Motswana, and who is a 'true' citizen of Botswana. According to the survey conducted by Eugene K. Campbell and John O. Oucho (2003: 13) the ability to speak Setswana was a primarily condition while defining Batswana. Two thirds of the respondents stressed the importance of being born in Botswana, while 'many feel that it is essential that the parents of a 'true' Motswana should have been born in Botswana as well'. The fence may manifest here the desire to distinguish Batswana from the 'others'. The Zimbabweans may play the role of 'constitutive others' in the process of Batswana self-definition.

Conclusion

The core ideas behind the fence construction are not easy to disentangle. The fence exists in many hermeneutical dimensions. The official statements of the Zimbabwean government were highly critical towards the fence which was compared to the Berlin wall and Gaza strip; Botswana was accused of working against regional integration in the SADC and causing environmental damages in the border ecosystems. On the basis of the discourse analyzes the authors have distinguished five major narrations where the issue of the fence was

⁶ Interview with Lecturer, University of Botswana, Department of Economics, August 24, 2011.

raised. None of these narrations exist independently, they are interconnected and facilitated by the internal changes in both countries, the SADC region and international environment in general.

The first dimension put under scrutiny, namely the environmental, implies that the 'fence discourse' can potentially be of an important meaning. The authors are not experts in wildlife conservation and thus are unable to comprehensively assess potential damages that the fence may create for the environment. Moreover, the environmental aspect of the fence construction is beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, the authors concluded that the environmental discourse was not an integral part of the decision making process concerning the erection and maintenance of the fence. This discourse rarely crosscuts other narrations. The authors suggest further research in this very area.

The phytosanitary narration was officially used to legitimize the fence construction. The outbreaks of FMD are quite common in Botswana, same as the idea of livestock fencing during the disease. The narration of cattle prevention crosscuts the economic narrations, as FMD generates severe losses for the cattle industry. When we look at the political rhetoric of the government in Harare, it seems that it is very difficult to defend the statement that the fence is aimed at "ordinary citizens of Zimbabwe", as Zimbabweans are allowed to cross the border without visas. However, this argumentation is valid if we assume that Zimbabwean state was working properly. Nevertheless, due to the internal situation in Zimbabwe it was very difficult to obtain either passport or emergency document that would allow one to cross the border officially. The passport prices, corruption and the time needed to have official documents issued, forced many Zimbabweans to turn to illegal crossing of the border.

In the internal political discourse the idea of the fence building has not been challenged by any political party. Botswana sent a clear signal to Robert Mugabe regime, that it would take all the measures necessary to stop the illegal immigration, alongside the Botswana Defense Forces concentration on the border. Internationally Botswana confirmed its dedication to democracy, and a possibility of co-work with Western states.

In the economic dimension, the problem is essentially twofold. Firstly, there is a cost of FMD incurred by local farmers, thus being interlinked to phytosanitary concerns but also to the social dimension due to the meaning of the cattle in the Tswana culture (the latter being compounded by cattle stealing and smuggling across the border). Secondly, there is the fence construction as a measure to put a halt to illegal migration which blends with social dimension in two different ways - a fear of job stealing (mostly false) and contributing to the crime rate increase (in many cases true). This in turn make them a very political issue, which the government of Botswana is expected to address.

The last narration concentrates on Botswana's perception of the foreigners. This narration crosscuts all other narrations with the exception of environmental one. Perception of the real or imagined threat of Zimbabwean influx can be correlated with the FMD spread seen as a reasonable rationalization for the fence construction. Negative stereotypes about Zimbabweans and awareness of crime rate increase or job stealing from Botswana and economic perils also supported the idea of the fence. Botswana's government and political elite was concerned about public anxiety towards Zimbabwean migrants and international disapproval of the Robert Mugabe's regime, so the decision about the fence construction was relatively easy.

To conclude, the fence exists simultaneously in many dimensions, which however should not be treated as autonomous. The meaning of the fence is multiple and dynamic. It depends both on the perspective and the particular circumstances in which it is examined.

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“Italo Girls”: The Economic Dimensions of Illicit Migration in Nigeria

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Abstract

The movement of peoples across national and international boundaries is an enduring component of human history. Selective male migration and increasing female autonomous migration are manifestations of migration as survival strategies (Adepoju, 2000). A significant number of young women migrate independently to fulfill their economic needs. The dwindling economic fortunes in the country have impacted negatively on the family. The corollary is the erosion of family values resulting in many young women embarking on desperate ventures to seek better fortune in Europe. Using data collected from a field survey in Benin City, Nigeria, the paper argues that young women embark and/or lured into illicit migration for the purposes of economic benefits. Anchoring the analysis on Caldwell’s wealth flow theory and Merton’s theory of Anomie, the paper concludes that the desire to achieve material success albeit illicitly impels young Nigerian women into embarking on illicit migration. The implication is that this category of migrants becomes vulnerable to numerous abuse, violence and even discriminatory policies from their destination governments.

1.0: Introduction

Human trafficking remains an intractable problem in Nigeria and West Africa. It is believed to be modern-day slavery occasioned by greed, poverty and poor legislation, with the victims predominantly children, girls and women. Indeed the severity of the illegal sale and trade in persons particularly children and females in Nigeria, and the West African sub-region, prompted governments to seek new strategies to combat the heinous crime (Ojukwu, 2006). Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Within Nigeria, women and girls are trafficked primarily for domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation. Boys are trafficked for forced labor in

street vending, agriculture, mining, stone quarries, and as domestic servants. Religious teachers in the North also traffic boys, called *almajiri*, for forced begging. Women, girls, and boys are trafficked from Nigeria to other West and Central African countries, primarily Gabon, Cameroon, Ghana, Chad, Benin, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, and The Gambia. Benin is a primary source country for boys and girls trafficked for forced labor in Nigeria's granite quarries. Nigerian women and girls are trafficked through Libya, Morocco, and Algeria to Europe, primarily for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, and to the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, for forced prostitution and forced labor. While Italy is the primary European destination country for Nigerian young women, other common destinations are Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, France, and Greece. Children from Nigeria and other African countries are trafficked from Lagos to the UK's urban centers for domestic servitude and forced labor in restaurants and shops (U.S. State Dept Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2009).

The term trafficking refers to a set of interrelated activities that encompass migration, commercial sexual exploitation as well as acts that violate human and children's rights. The term is synonymous with illicit trade in human beings across international borders or within the same country. However, trafficking of children is often discussed together with the trafficking of women. The main reasons being that (i) available data on trafficking of women is often not disaggregated by age and (ii) there is considerable debate regarding the age at which a child should be considered an adult. For example, the majority of women coerced into commercial sexual exploitation are between 16-24 years of age (International Labour Organization 2002). Human trafficking tends to be systematic in its occurrence especially that its span increases as the globalization process intensifies. Though previously in existence in forms such as white prostitution, child labour and domestic servitude, today, contemporary human trafficking is an organized business just as the transatlantic slave trade was with various linkages

spread across the globe. Not only children and women are trafficked; young boys seeking greener pastures abroad also fall prey to traffickers. It can safely be argued that in this age of jet-planes, cellular phone, and the Internet, there are faster means of dealing in human commodities than hitherto. There is little doubt that globalization has created inequalities and inequities resulting in the migration of the poor to the rich regions of the world. Hand in hand with this came the commercialization of humanity, which is akin to modern day slavery. In times past, slavery and slave trade existed in various forms: people became slaves as war captives; criminals were punished with enslavement, and in some cases individuals in impoverished circumstances sold their relatives. However, in whatever form it took, it was quickly realized by most civilizations that the practice was the basest of crimes against humanity. One would have thought that, with the immense improvements in the understanding of human nature and the environment, any form of exploitation that looks like slavery would be abhorred automatically. This is not the case, as human beings are today, prized as commodities and exchanged for money like any other article in the market. The business of trafficking in humans is today organized loosely by groups that are also involved in weapons and narcotics, colluding with government officials in dozens of countries. There is very little doubt, that it is a lucrative business and may be one of the most difficult to combat. Its corrupting effects on governments and institutions are barely perceptible because they are less visible than those caused by gunrunning and drug trafficking. Exploiting the poverty and the low status of women in the developing world, middlemen are able to bring together the supply and demand for cheap labour and sex in ways that would have simply been unthinkable not long ago. Evidently, globalization has not only

stimulated the movement of capital, goods, and technology but also the movement of all categories of peoples from one end of the world to the other. This global development brought in its wake the loosening up of protective barriers and political boundaries which organized criminal gangs have capitalized on to perpetrate many heinous acts including human trafficking. Though the fact of human trafficking is not difficult to understand on its own, its dimensions and categorization continue to multiply by the day. Broadly conceptualized, human trafficking include forced and/or commercial sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, illegal and bonded labour, servile marriage, false adoption, sex tourism and entertainment, pornography, organized begging, organ harvesting, and other criminal activities (Corbin, 2001). Organ harvesting, sometimes referred to as organ laundering, involves the trafficking of humans for the purpose of selling their organs for money.

In Benin City, young women are lured out of the country with promises of good jobs and better well-being. For instance in April 2004, 25 trafficked young women were deported from the transit camps in the Republic of Benin, 23 of them were *Bini* from Edo State, Nigeria (UNESCO, 2004). Towards the end of 2003, no fewer than 13,000 Nigerian young women were trapped in transit camps along the West African trafficking routes en route to Europe. Their ages were put at between 14 and 28 years (Onyeonoru, 2004).

These young women are mainly trafficked to Italy, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands (Omorodion, 1999, Otoide, 2000, Okonofua, 2002). Evidence from literature show that 60 percent of those prostituting in Italy came from Nigeria (Ralston, Murphy and Mouldon, 1998; Orhants, 2002). Of significance is the fact that data on those deported

showed that majority of the young women was from Edo and Delta States (Okonofua, *et al*, 2004,).

Scholars such as Okojie *et al* (2003) have argued that the desire to escape poverty is a major reason why people avail themselves of trafficking situations. However, poverty in this context can be defined as relative deprivation. The potential traffickee may not be the poorest in absolute terms but feels poor because people in her environment have improved status and well-being as a result of proceeds from trafficking. Onyeonoru (2004) and Attoh (2009) argue that in addition to social deprivation and high youth unemployment, family disorganization, wider value distortion in the Nigerian society and gender based inequities located in the cultural practice of primogeniture in Benin City, Edo State – Nigeria are responsible for the exacerbation of trafficking in young women. This discourse would seek to provide answers to the following research questions :- (a) what is the effect of poverty on trafficking in young women? (b) Does unemployment impel the trafficking in young women? (c) How does undue parental expectation contribute to the trafficking in young especially in the context of Benin City, Nigeria? This paper is divided into five sections. Section one which includes the introduction discusses the concept of trafficking as well as x-ray the impetus for the phenomenon in the context of Benin City. Section two interrogates the wealth flow theory of Caldwell as well as Merton's theory of Anomie as epistemological anchorage. Section three discusses the method which was used to generate the data while section four is the analysis of the findings. Section five provides the conclusions and recommendations.

2: Theoretical underpinnings

Caldwell starts from the premise that people are rational beings and that reproductive behaviour is economically rational within bounds of biology and psychology. He avers that there exist two types of society- (i) the stable high fertility where there is no economic gain to be accrued by having fewer children. (ii) The lower fertility society where economic factors imply the undesirability of having many children. In the first society, children over their lifetime provide their parents with more economic resources than they receive. When this economic flow changes direction to the regime that favours the children instead of the parents, parents lose the incentive to have children and fertility falls to a low level. In societies where wealth flows from parents to children, the flow is downward whereas in societies where wealth flows from children to parents the flow is upward. The imperative is that pronatalism is favoured in agrarian societies where polygyny is practiced. Children provide cheap labour on their parents' farms and are instruments for acquisition of wealth by their parents.

The Benin social milieu favours polygyny and it is widely practiced. Children are regarded as assets by their parents. In Benin City, even though male children are valued more than female children but the female child is also desired. She is expected to bring wealth and good fortune to the family. In traditional Benin society the female child is expected to marry and give birth to many children. Since children are regarded as assets, a childless woman has no social standing (Usuanlele, 1998). However, modernization has brought some changes to Benin cultural values. Even though the male child is still cherished but the female child is equally desired. She is looked upon to wipe off poverty from her family by traveling to Italy to prostitute and amass wealth. Parents prefer to send daughters abroad because they could be relied upon to assist the family and girls were more willing to sacrifice themselves for their families (UNICRI, 2004). The proceeds from such ventures are invested in family businesses such as transportation or milling of grains and even real estate. This theory is useful in explaining the phenomenon of trafficking in young women in Benin City given that trafficking continues to thrive in Benin City

especially in polygynous families with many daughters. It equally explains situations where young women from monogamous families and even female-headed households are encouraged by their parents to travel to Italy to prostitute and change the family fortune.

The term anomie was first used by Durkheim to explain the transition from early mechanical to industrial societies. His postulation was borne out of the social upheaval that characterized Europe at that time. His concern was how to achieve social order. His paradigm was based on how to achieve social order within two kinds of solidarities namely mechanical and organic solidarities. He posited that in mechanical solidarity which is akin to traditional society that there exists collective consciousness. The collective consciousness is principally instrumental to making social order possible. The main components of this collective consciousness include commonality of values, belief system and cultural norms. These allow for cohesion in society due to the solidarity of similarities. The existence of collective consciousness inhibits the possibilities of members engaging in illicit activities or deviant acts such as trafficking in persons or partaking in trafficking situation. In contrast organic solidarity which is akin to industrial society is devoid of commonality of values. Rather there exist dissimilarities in beliefs, values and normative structures. In addition, there exist dissimilarities along occupational and professional lines within the exigencies of division of labour. The fact that members in such societies are associated through structural interdependence ought to result in cohesion. However, the existence of structural inequalities vis-à-vis the dominant norm in society makes social order impossible. The dominant societal norm suggests conformity of a cultural expectation of material success. The approved societal method of achieving this material success is by getting a good job. This presupposes a certain level of educational attainment or acquisition of relevant skills. However, the existence of structural inequalities makes it impossible for every member of society to attain material success using the culturally approved means. Those members of the society precluded from attaining material success using

legitimate means that are not morally inhibited, may innovate by indulging in deviant acts to attain success. The result is normlessness what Durkheim referred to as anomie. Durkheim saw anomie as a condition resulting from social change in society. Expanding on Durkheim's postulation on anomie Merton argued that appetites were culturally induced. For him, anomie results from the strain of cultural demands and applies to only the socially disadvantaged members of society. Merton defined culture as "that organized set of normative values that govern the behaviour of members of society and social structure as organized set of social relationships in which members of a society are variously implicated" (Merton, 1968). His postulation is that anomie occurs when there is an acute disjuncture between cultural norms and goals and the socially structured capacities of members of a society to act in accord with them (Merton, 1968:216). According to Merton, (a) everyone is encouraged to strive to be successful, (b) however, due to social conditions and economic realities not everyone or group possesses the required means to succeed hence anomie and crime. He posited that the dominant theme of American culture was emphasis on material success but this puts a lot of strain on individuals differentially located in the social structure. The American dream is all about material success and the possibility of social ascent for all members but the social structure allows this image to be a reality for just a few. Individuals and groups experience strain differentially depending on their location in the social structure and these pressures engender various outcomes. The key term used was anomie: "Anomie is ... conceived as a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjuncture between the cultural norms and goals and the socially structured capabilities of members of a group to act in accord with them. In this conception, cultural values may help to produce behaviour which is at odds with the mandates of the value themselves. On this view the social structure strains the cultural values, making action to accord with them readily possible for those occupying certain statuses within the society and difficult or impossible for others. The social structure acts either as a barrier, or as an open door for the acting out of cultural mandates.

When the cultural and social structure are mal-integrated, the first calling for behaviour and attitudes which the second precludes, there is a strain toward the breakdown of the norms, towards “normlessness” (Merton, 1968). Merton designed a typology of adaptation open to such members of society. These five modes of adaptation are namely conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. This is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Modes of Adaptation

Mode of Adaptation	Culture Goals	Institutional Means
1. Conformity	+	+
2. Innovation	+	-
3. Ritualism	-	+
4. Retreatism	-	-
5. Rebellion	+/-	+/-

Source: Merton, 1968

Those members of society with access to the legitimate means of attaining success goals conform to society's norms and values and are law abiding. Those denied access to the legitimate means of attaining success goals, feel alienated and innovate by seeking unorthodox means to achieve success. The last four are regarded as deviant adaptations. Most of the actions labeled as crime emanate from the innovation response. Using the American society as an analogy, Merton argued that the American Culture placed undue emphasis on material success but the social structure does not provide legitimate means to all members of the society to achieve this. As a result individuals feel strain and resort to illegitimate means, which is crime. Those who cannot achieve the cultural goals but have been sufficiently socialized into following legitimate methods cling to this in a ritualistic way and sublimate their desires, adopt the response of ritualism. Merton called this a lower middle class adaptation and was the result of a coincidence of strict socialization and opportunities. This is the perspective of the frightened employee, the zealously conformist bureaucrat in the teller's cage of the private banking enterprise. Retreatism is the rejection of both goals and means – withdrawal from the social race. The retreatist lives in the society but is not of the society. He has internalized the

legitimacy of means to such an extent that he finds it impossible to innovate but being unable to use legitimate means he avoids a moral conflict by repudiating both the goals and means. In this group are to be found psychotics, auroists, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, tramps, drunks, and drug addicts. Rebellion is a positive attempt to replace both the goals and means with another believed to be morally superior. To be found in this category are rebels, revolutionaries, non – conformist, heretics, or renegades. Evidence on school and crime suggest that dropping out of school leads to increased rather than decreased levels of anti social behaviour (see Shavit and Rathner, 1988, Thornbery, Moore and Christenson, 1985).

In the Nigerian context material success is highly valued but many people are unable to attain material success because of their position within the social structure. Those who belong to a lower socio-economic class with little or no education and lack skills find it impossible to attain material success through legitimate means. In this context, deviance takes the form of alternative and illegitimate means of attaining material success. In Nigeria, this structural imbalance within society engenders criminogenic behaviour. In essence the quest for success exerts pressures towards crime by encouraging an anomic situation, an environment in which people adopt “anything goes mentality” to achieve success goals. Despite the success of strain theory in sociology, some scholars criticized Merton’s application of it. One of the criticisms is the objection to the assumption that there is a consensus in society that everyone is pursuing an ultimate goal of material wealth (Jones, 2001). The argument is that this view overlooks the reality of pluralism; both ethnic and otherwise that precludes such a sweeping generalization. For instance Lemert (1964) doubted if any contemporary society subscribes to such a single set of values. However, in the context of Benin City, as a result of structural inequities engendered by the principle of primogeniture the girl child can neither inherit from her family of orientation nor from her marital family except indirectly through her sons. This has exposed contemporary Bini young women to strive to achieve material success through self effort and for those unable

to acquire a college education the alternative is to innovate by taking advantage of opportunities provided by trafficking syndicates.

3.0: Methods

3.1. The Ethnography of Benin Kingdom

The old Benin kingdom is regarded as being coterminous with present-day Benin City which is the capital of Edo State. The Edos of this area represent the core of the old Benin Empire and have owed allegiance to the Oba of Benin for over four hundred and fifty years (450). The area is bounded by other ethnic groups classified as Edos such as the Urhobos, Isokos, Itsekiris and the Igbo speaking peoples on the eastern borders of the kingdom. Benin City is called Edo by its inhabitants and in certain contexts individuals will refer to themselves as Oviedo (child of Edo) or ovioba (Oba's subject). There is a marked uniformity in culture, social organization and language over the whole kingdom (Bradbury, 1957).

3.2: Historical Origin and Influence

Edo mythology has it that Benin Kingdom was founded by the youngest of the children of Osanobua (the high god). Together with his senior brothers who included the first kings of Ife and "the first king of the Europeans" he was sent to live in the world (ogbo). The rulers of the first dynasty were known as Ogiso (ruler of the sky). The rule of the Ogiso ended by a revolt and for a long period of time the Edo people had no royal rulers. After a while, the chiefs sent an emissary to the Oni of Ife asking him to provide one of his sons to rule over them. He sent Oranmiyan who after staying with the people concluded that only a native could rule over them. He then impregnated the daughter of the Onogie of Eyo village (A village close to Benin) who bore him a son. This son eventually became the Oba of Benin and was known as Eweka I. Successive Benin Obas including the present Oba of Benin trace their descent to Eweka I.

The Benin kingdom reached its zenith between the 15th and 16th centuries. A Portuguese named D'Aveiro who visited Benin in 1485 to establish a trading post went back to Portugal with one of the Oba's chiefs as ambassador. Thereafter, a trading post was established at Ugwuto (Bradbury, 1957). By the 16th century, the Portuguese had established Catholic missions in Benin. Churches were built and in August 1516, the Oba ordered his son and two of his greatest noblemen to become Christians. This early contact with Europe explains the migratory pattern of modern Bini people.

3.3: Present-Day Benin City

Benin City is the capital of Edo State. Edo State was carved out of the defunct Bendel State, which was created from the mid-western region in Nigeria. Bendel State was split into Edo and Delta states. Edo State has 18 Local Government areas with a population of 32,183,322 million people (2006 Census). Benin City, which consists of three local government areas namely Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba-Okha, is regarded as the base of the ancient Benin kingdom. Benin City as alluded to earlier has had a long pre-colonial contact with Mediterranean Europe especially Portugal, Southern Italy and Spain. This historical contact explains the migratory pattern of modern Bini. Benin City, has a preponderance of Edo speaking people (Bini, Esan, and Afemai), there is also a large concentration of other ethnic groups such as the Igbo, the Yoruba and Hausa due its present status as a state capital. Benin City had a population of 1,085,676 persons (2006, census). Of this number women account for 543,122 which is over 50 per cent of the population. According to (Okonofua, *et al*, 2004) young people (10-25 years old) account for 40 percent of the population. The city is poorly industrialized and lacks income-generating opportunities. The inhabitants are mainly farmers and civil servants due to its status as a state capital. Even though the state has the highest rates of school enrolment in the country, it also has the highest rates of school drop-outs and youth unemployment in the country (Okonofua, *et al*, 2004).

3.4: The Bini Family System

In Benin villages, households vary in size from a single (usually impotent) man to a joint family of some twenty (20) persons. The following types of family are in existence:

- (1) The nuclear or compound family consisting of a man and his wife/wives and their children who may occupy their own houses or be housed in the family house.
- (2) The joint family consisting of an elderly man with his wives and unmarried children, together with one or more married sons with their wives and children and in some cases younger married brothers. Most married men prefer to move out of the family house after the death of their father. Of recent, married younger brothers may decide to stay under the authority of their elder brother who inherits the family wealth.
- (3) The extended family occupying several neighbouring houses made up of a man with his married brothers and sons with their wives and children. To any of this grouping may be added divorced and widowed mothers, sisters and daughters of the male and other categories of kin (Bradbury, 1957). The Bini are patrilineal and residence is virilocal. The father is the head of the family (erha) and he exercises control over his household (UNICRI, 2004). The father as the head of the family is honoured and revered. He has the authority to apply physical sanctions against those under him though he would not beat his adult sons or brothers. The rights and obligations consequent upon membership of family groups are conceived of in terms of a master/servant relationship (Bradbury, 1957). In relation to the family head all his dependants are servants. Both children and wives are regarded as servants of their father. A man is the sole owner of his wife/wives and he exercises absolute power and authority over his home stead (Usuanlele, 1998).

3.5: The Benin Economy

The Bini are predominantly farmers. The soil is rich in nutrients and favours the cultivation of many crops. In order to farm satisfactorily a man requires the assistance of one or more women since they plant and care for subsidiary crops (Bradbury, 1957). In addition, the people are dexterous in the art of carvings and bronze works. Women depend on the generosity of the male members of their family to engage in farming. A wife could be given a plot of land by the husband to plant subsidiary crops. A widow or divorcee may enter into an arrangement with her brother for this purpose. Yam (the king of crops) is the basis of its subsistence economy. Men plant and own yams with other income generating crops such as kolanuts, rubber and cocoa which was introduced by the colonial masters while the women are allowed to plant subsidiary crops such as corn, cocoyams and vegetables.

However, the discovery of crude oil and gas in commercial quantity in Edo State catapulted the state into the category of oil producing states with Benin City as the state capital. These two factors accentuated the transformation of Benin City from a predominantly agricultural town to a civil service town. Unfortunately, its status as an oil producing state did not translate into the industrial transformation of the state. Its cosmopolitan nature has engendered an influx of migrants both from other states and the rural areas of Edo State. Agriculture and crafts which hitherto were the main economic activities were neglected in pursuit of nonexistent white collar jobs. UNICRI (2004) in its study of Edo State concludes that Edo State is referred to as a civil service state due to the near absence of manufacturing industries. This absence of well paying jobs and the undue emphasis on material success accounts for the high incidence of young people leaving the state for foreign countries in search of better well-being.

3.6: Property Rights/Inheritance

Male children are valued than female children because it is a patrilineal society. And property rights and inheritance is by the principle of primogeniture. Male children are considered more

important than female children because they ensure continuity of the lineage (Usuanlele, 1998). Women are discriminated against in property sharing since they will marry out. According to, (UNICRI, 2004:44) “the rule of primogeniture is entrenched in Bini traditional culture, both with regards to crown and inherited property”. At death, a man’s property both movable and immovable including titles passes to his eldest son. Wives and women cannot inherit their husbands’ or fathers’ property. The Bini tradition regards a woman as a stranger in her father’s house because she would marry out (Ebohon, 1996).

3.7: Research Design

The nature of the phenomenon under study called for an eclectic methodological approach. The study combined four key methods of investigation: **cross-sectional survey method**, **Individual In-depth interviews (IDIs)**, **Key informant interviews (KIIs)**, and **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**.

For this study the population comprises all young women aged 15-25 years old residing in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The reason for limiting vulnerability to 15-25 years was informed by evidence from literature which shows that the global sex industry prefers young women in their prime (UNICRI, 2004, Wijers & Lapchew, 1999). From this population a sample size of 1235 young women made up of the following- 1000 never trafficked young women randomly selected and 235 trafficked but deported young women who were purposively selected were administered the research instrument which was designed to provide answers to the research questions. For the purpose of this paper only the data generated from the 235 young women who were trafficked but deported would be used.

4.0: Analysis and Discussion of Generated Data

Table 2: Age distribution of Respondents

Age Distribution in years	Ever Trafficked
15-19	23 (9.8)
20-24	79 (33.6)
25+	133 (56.6)
Total	235 (100)
Mean	21.93 years
Median	22 years

Table 2 above is the age distribution of those trafficked but deported. The figures show that majority of the respondents that is 56.6 % were aged 25 years and above. Those aged 20-24 years were 33.6 % whereas 9.8 % of the respondents were aged 15-19 years. Their median age was 22 years. The large percentage of those found in the age category 25 years and above is not unconnected with the fact that most of the deported respondents had spent many years in their countries of destination before they were deported. For a fact, some of them had become madams but suffered deportation as a result of having some differences with the syndicate that offer them protection. This is buttressed by the narrative of CB who spent 10 years in Italy before she was deported:

I was about 15 years old when I traveled to Italy with my auntie. I served her for four years and got my freedom. I started my own business and even recruited three girls that work for me. But I had problems with the syndicate. They were always demanding protection money. At a time I decided to call their bluff and they set me up with the police.

Table 3: Respondents Employment status prior to Trafficking

Were you Employed?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	39	16.6
No	196	83.4
Total	235	100

The information in Table 3 shows that 83.4 % of the respondents had no jobs prior to been trafficked; only 16.6 % said they were employed before they were trafficked. And

even for those employed, they were mainly in the informal sector of the economy with its attendant low wages and lack of job security. Most of the respondents said that they were working as either stylists or sales girls before they traveled to Europe. Many scholars view the inability of many of these young women to secure jobs in the formal sector as a form of unemployment. The finding of (UNICRI, 2004) in Benin City buttresses the above section. They argued that many young people could not secure jobs on the completion of their secondary education. Rather, they eked out a living through trading, fashion designing and hair dressing. The implication is that most of those unable to secure remunerative employment remain poor and live below the poverty line. This category of youths is usually vulnerable to trafficking situations.

Table 4: Financial remittances to the Family

Were you sending money home while abroad	Frequency (%)
Yes	178 (75.7)
No	57 (24.3)
Total	235 (100)

Table 4 shows that 75.5 % of the ever trafficked respondents were sending money home whereas 24.3 % said they were not sending money home. The high percentage of those sending money home shows the impact on the family economy and corroborates Caldwell (1982) postulation of wealth flowing from children to parents in societies that favour pronatalism. It equally explains why Western Union Money Transfer has a high volume of business in Benin City necessitating using a whole building. The belief is that the quantum of foreign currency transaction informed this decision. This was buttressed by one of the fathers group that stated:

Why are you worried about this trafficking? How many companies are here in Benin City? This is our only way of surviving. When

our children send us dollars we change the money and start a small project such as transport business or grinding of grains and pepper. It is our own democracy dividend.

The above statement buttresses the fact that trafficking is not an individual decision but rather a decision by family heads as represented by the fathers. In addition, the fact that the families of both the trafficker and the “trafficker” enter into contractual agreement that involves the signing of papers and oath taking at Ayelela shrine shows that it is a family decision. According to one of the native doctors involved in administering oaths, family members must be involved to guard against the “trafficker” betraying her madam. The elders know the implication of swearing before *Ayelela*. This will ensure that both parties respect the agreement. He added that apart from the administering of oath, that the agreement is documented by a lawyer for both parties to sign. This includes the amount of money the “trafficker” will return to the madam. Upon returning the full amount she is deemed to be free. This freedom is akin to the type of freedom given to apprentices. It involves throwing a party by the madam while the “trafficker” presents her madam with a piece of Dutch wax with a big bottle of gin. The madam on her part blesses the young woman and prays for her to succeed in her own business. According to one of the “traffickers” a good madam can start you off by allowing you to work in her territory until you have your own territory. However, she said that some wicked madams never allow their wards to complete the payment. As soon as they are left with a couple of thousands to complete the payment they arrange with the syndicate to have them deported by the law enforcement agents. This way instead of celebrating freedom they are deported back to Nigeria. Such madams never want to share their territory. They continue to recruit new young women to replace the deported ones.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Women's commodification and marginalization have been a global phenomenon. It seems that each advancement in technology rather than abate gender disparity and reduce social marginalization of women accentuates it. Within the Benin social milieu poverty, unemployment and undue parental pressure have contributed to the phenomenon of trafficking in women. These factors determine the position of the female child/woman within the social structure of the society. In a bid to conform to the structural stigmatization of inferiority, the female child accepts to be trafficked in order to improve the well being of her family. She is expected to contribute to the education of her male siblings and help improve the economic fortunes of her family. The same society expects her to get married at a certain age and raise a family. These societal expectations conflict with the traditional concept of marriage and motherhood. To fulfill these societal expectations she jettisons the traditional values of marriage and chastity and embraces the western values of freedom which conflicts with the traditional values to enable her conform.

Underneath this issue of societal expectation is the issue of gender relations. The fact that men occupy decision making positions both at home and at the societal level and they exercise this power over women even when their interests are jeopardized are imperatives. The gender relations of power/prestige expose many young women into trafficking situations thus exposing them to economic exploitation and discrimination including violence in the destination countries. These women are simply victims of societal inequity both in their countries of origin and destination.

- Since trafficking in human persons crosscuts many issues, the search for solution must be eclectic. To this end Sociologists, Psychologists, Lawyers, the Police, the Immigration as well as priests and the religious in both source and

destination countries should be involved must be in seeking a solution to the problem.

- Anti-trafficking laws should focus on the real guilty party, namely the trafficker, the pimp, the procurer, the brothel owners and even the clients instead of focusing on the traffickees who are actually victims of their society.
- Multilateral institutions, the United Nations as well as source and destination countries should work together to commission researches in source countries to unravel the dynamics of the trade.
- Finally , since trafficking in persons is a global problem that cross cuts various countries, its eradication should equally be global especially in the reduction of the gap income gap between the core North which are the destination countries and the peripheral south which supply the human commodities.

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Of Borders and Horizons: Reflections on Migratory Expectations in Africa and beyond

Knut Graw and Samuli Schielke

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The visible and the invisible of contemporary migration

In recent years, the topic of migration has moved more and more to the forefront of public awareness and concern. Issues of labour movement, asylum seekers, border controls, and the ‘integration’ of new ethnic and religious minorities make headlines in the wealthy (post)industrial nations, while the issue of ‘illegal migration’ and the complex dependencies involved in remittances and transnational families are constantly on the agenda in poorer countries. In the academia the study of migration has become a social scientific discipline of its own, with exponential amounts of literature published and specialized conferences held around the world. In short, it has become nearly impossible to think about the contemporary world without thinking about migration as well. And yet while migration is all over public and academic debates today, some aspects of it seem over-visible, while others perhaps under-visible. Two images are helpful to outline this problematic.

The first image is one that has become iconic of contemporary migration to Europe: the haphazardly built boat, half-sinking and filled with refugees/migrants from northern and western Africa undertaking the dangerous journey across the sea to Europe. It is a standard feature in the news and in cultural production about migration. It is a source of humanitarian concern and tightened border controls alike. It evokes strong emotions and associations. And yet it says very little about the migrants themselves. The image of the boat tells that lots of people are coming to Europe, that they are taking great risks to do it, and that there is something *we* need to do about it (for the whole complex concerning the image of boat migration see also Graw in this volume). But why do people take such a tremendous risk? The reasons cited are often highly generic: war, poverty, oppression, hunger. But there has been war, poverty, oppression and hunger before, too. Why now? Why not before? The image of the boats does not really tell us why. All we get is a vague sense that people have a bad life where they come from, and try to get to Europe for a better

life. This implicit narrative perhaps appeals to a European self- image of being the best place in the world to live, but it is ill-suited to help us understand why so many people in our time are so determined to leave their home, their social networks, and their trusted ways of life behind for such an uncertain and risky project.

The second image is one that is almost absent in the European perception of migration but over-visible across the global South: the house built by the migrant, often higher than their surroundings and with walls of reinforced concrete or red brick, built to a good standard of comfort on local standards, often in the outskirts of towns and villages, and often empty for most of the year. Building houses is an almost universal practice among labour migrants who invest a significant part of their incomes to creating a physical presence in a place from which they are absent for most of the time - some for years, others for a lifetime (Dalakoglou 2010). For the people who live in their vicinity, these houses are the most immediate and convincing aspect of migration they see. In this regard are *the* symbol of migration in the so-called sending countries, and more than a symbol in fact: they incorporate the very social effects of migration. The houses built by migrants involve flows of money and construction materials, rising prices of land and housing, new standards for a good life, an advantage for migrants and their children on the marriage market, a whole set of possibilities and expectations that mark the path of social becoming. They tell stories of success that are compelling not only by the power of the path they open, but also because of the increasing difficulty to pursue any other paths. How else could one build such a house? And how else could one build a respectable life in relative material comfort if not in such a house? Yet like the boats, the houses, too, leave a lot invisible and unsaid. They do not tell of the hardship and alienation of migrant labour, nor of the many cases where people were not successful and never succeeded in realizing the dreams for which they had left.

This is the situation we want to investigate in this book: the constant presence of migration for work as a possibility - an option sometimes, an inevitable necessity more and more often. In much of the world, it has become very difficult to think about a better future without thinking about migration to a place where one can make the money to realise that better future. Why this is so, and what that inevitable presence of migration, and its becoming synonymous for projects of social mobility, does to social and personal experience, is a crucial question if we are to understand the significance of migration in the contemporary world. After all, migration is not just about people migrating. It is a process of change that affects a society at large and by doing so changes the experiences and perspectives also of those who are not migrants. The question that we pursue in this

book therefore concerns not only the experience of migrants but the experience of migration within the respective societies, regardless whether people actually embark upon a migratory project themselves or whether they stay put. What we are concerned with is the question of the changing horizon of expectation that makes migration such a compelling path to so many people despite its well-known risks and adversities.

To our understanding, this question about what makes migration such a compelling path has been strikingly little discussed or studied despite the tremendous amount of research and public debate on migration in the recent years. Until the 1980s approaches to migration have often largely focussed on the socioeconomic and political causes and repercussions of migration. More often than not this perspective also remains characteristic of public debates. While we agree that these are important topics of research, we argue that they need to be complemented by culturally and historically sensitive accounts shedding more light on the subjective and existential sides of the causes and repercussions of migratory processes. We see especially three issues where the current interest in migration has drawn attention towards certain issues and away from others.

First, despite critical voices that highlight a transnational perspective since two decades at least (see, e.g., Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995; Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Glick Schiller 2005; Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2010), policy driven research and public debates are still characterized by a strong emphasis on the so-called 'receiving countries', the countries that have the money and the jobs and that attract labour migrants. As groups of migrants turn into diasporic communities, they become involved in new social conflicts and thence become the focus of a tremendous amount of research and social policy. What remains invisible in this focus is the fact that migrants initially are usually primarily concerned with changing their lives 'at home', and even if they permanently settle in their place of work, they continue to be closely connected to their places of origin. In this regard, the life a person lives as a migrant is often but half of his or her reality and yet the other half remains easily invisible to an outside observer, and often seems also less of a concern for national politics which, in turn, influences the distribution of research funding.

Second, where the study of migration does look at the various places it affects, it is often primarily focused on economical relations and financial transactions, especially the remittances migrants send to their families. This is in a certain way grounded in the common sense of migrants themselves, whose lives become heavily subjected to the primacy of economy and money. However, notwithstanding the tendency to abstraction implicit in the money form and explicit in much of the anthropological theory of money, even in today's extremely financialized world money

is more often than not bound with ‘moral, embedded, and special-purpose functions’ (Maurer 2006, 17; cf. Simmel 1989 [1900]). The money migrants earn, save, invest, and transfer is not just an abstract movement of finances. It is there to buy specific things, to fulfil specific social expectations - but these things and expectations easily remain invisible to the observer who will find it much easier to document and analyse flows of money than to grasp the affective sense of obligation and pressure that makes people invest so much of their life to acquire certain things.

Third, the study of migration is commonly focussed on people who actually migrate (or their children and descendants). This seems obvious, and yet it leaves invisible the fact that people who migrate at first weren’t migrants. They became so. In order to understand why and how people become migrants, we argue that it is important not only to look at people who in various ways have moved between places, but also those who have not yet become migrants, or are in the process of becoming migrants, or never will become migrants.

This is not to say that the study of migration would have been blind to the more personal, existential, emotional aspects of migration. The embeddedness of migration in a larger sociocultural context, as well as the transformative properties of migration in relation to individual lives and social worlds, have, in fact, become the topic of an emerging field of contemporary anthropology that is turning to the existential motivations of migration, its quality as an expectation and an experience, and its consequences for the people involved (see, e.g., Mains 2007; Pandolfo 2007; Jackson 2008). And yet at the moment, much of the most important theorising about the motivations and experience of migration has still been accomplished in the fields of literary fiction, arts and cinema - by default a field of writing suited at articulating issues of social experience rather than structure - while contemporary social and cultural anthropology is arguably still in the process of developing a significant theoretical debate about the existential aspects of migration. With this book we want to contribute to this emerging debate by offering approaches to study of the horizons of expectation that make it so difficult to think about a future without migration in much of the world in general, and the African continent in particular.

Based on detailed ethnographic accounts, the contributors to this volume focus on the imaginations, expectations, and motivations that propel the pursuit of migration. Decentring the focus of much of migration studies on the ‘receiving societies’, we foreground, thus, the subjective aspect of migration and explore the impact which the imagination and practice of migration have on the sociocultural conditions of the various local settings concerned. Scrutinizing the cultural processes underlying and triggering migration in different rural and urban localities across the

African continent, this volume decentres at the same time the question of migration as mobility. Instead, we address migration not only as movement but as processes of imagination and expectation that shape people's lives and lifeworlds, reflecting not just locally constituted imaginaries but increasingly global horizons.

The new quality of migration in Africa

It is an often repeated insight that migrations are an inherent part of human existence, witnessed most obviously by the spread of the human species across the globe. Stating this fact may not be very helpful, however, to understand the current dynamics of migration. Although the human species in general is characterised by migrations, the individual lives of humans, their families and communities are often remarkably place-specific over many generations (see Graw in this volume). Why is a young man from an agricultural village in Egypt or Senegal so much more pressed to consider leaving that village today than one hundred years ago? Or to put it in more general terms: Why are there times when it becomes more compelling to move? What kind of movement is involved here? And does this movement aim at? The history and genealogy of migration in any given context is neither static nor a simple natural or ethnographic given but continuously reshaped and reworked. Migratory processes cannot be understood in their full complexity without studying the cultural genealogy and history of the sociocultural notions and patterns migrants draw upon. It is therefore important to highlight the new quality of migration within and from the African continent in our time.

Despite the fact that contemporary migration in and from the African continent are often seen as relating to established 'cultures of migration', forms of interregional and international mobility (see, e.g., Whitehouse 2003; Cohen and Jónsson forthcoming), current processes of migration seem to have taken on a new quality. This is not just a matter of the increased geographic range of migration due to improved means of transportation, communication, and transfer of finances, which make it more likely and feasible to live transnational lives between, for example, France and West Africa. The more substantial change lies in the way the outlook of the world as a whole has changed.

The world in the experiential sense of everything there is, has become a very different place for most people in the past century. This is not to talk about a shift from isolated 'cultures' to global 'flows' (Appadurai 1996). People everywhere on earth have probably always been aware that there

are other peoples and other places, including distant and exotic ones. But very often the world beyond one's ordinary experience was a very distant and exotic one indeed. The world of the age of global migrations, in contrast, is one that is continuously present in the form of returning migrants, globally traded commodities, media, fashion, and most importantly in the form of likely paths of transnational life. In consequence, the rest of the world is not just a distant place somewhere beyond the boundaries of one's homely lifeworld; it becomes a constitutive element of people's lifeworlds and expectations (see Piot 1999). Local worlds are increasingly measured against a set of possibilities whose referents are global, not local. As a further consequence, migration gains an almost inevitable attraction as local means are seldom sufficient to achieve the demands of a life now measured by global standards. At the same time, however, actual migration becomes increasingly restricted due to labour, border and visa regimes. At the very moment when long-distance migration becomes extremely compelling - inevitable from a subjective standpoint - it also becomes more difficult. And paradoxically, this difficulty appears to make the pressure to migrate only more urgent.

It would be easy to ascribe this sense of urgency to people being ill-informed about the real risks and chances of migration, or even to put a blame on people and their cultures for erroneously putting their faith in a false sense of hope that by directing their energies to desperate projects of migration holds them back from pursuing more constructive projects. But such critique would overlook how serious the emotional pressure and the lure of migration can be in spite of contrary evidence. In the popular culture of Egypt, for example, there are countless proverbs, songs, films and news features that all repeat the common wisdom that migration is economically and emotionally perilous and that one should stay at home. And yet, amidst all this common knowledge, one chat with a cousin or neighbour who made it to become a shop-owner (or so he tells) in Italy can be enough to turn the scale and to confirm one in the assessment that going to Italy to work hard and save some money is the best and only way out of one's current predicament.

This underlying sensibility that propels the urge to migrate requires a theoretical approach that is sensitive to issues of people's outlook of the world, their senses of expectation and their lived experience - an approach that can be called an existential or a phenomenological one (see Jackson 1996; Graw forthcoming). In the following, we try to develop some general directions that could serve the development of such a theoretical approach, focussing on the themes of horizon, expectation and experience.

Migration as Horizon

As the contributors to this volume met in spring 2009, there was a shared understanding that there is need for theoretical directions that help to make sense of the powers of imagination and expectation that seem so central to migration, as well as their consequences to the people involved. What exactly those theoretical directions could be remained open at that moment, but with the different contributions coming together, we believe that an important problematic by all of them is the way they look at migration not just as movement but as a horizon of expectation and action. In this section we therefore try to make this notion and its uses more explicit, before in the following section turning to the different aspects of expectation and experience taken up by the contributors in their respective chapters.

In its most immediate and literal sense, derived from the Greek verb *horízein*, to limit or delimit, horizon refers to limit or outer rim of our field of visual perception, that is, the distant line where, when one's view is unobstructed by natural or built structures such as mountains, trees, walls, or buildings, the earth or the sea seem to meet the sky. Evoking images of travel, exploration, and open spaces, the term horizon triggers similar associations as the notion of migration itself. In a more metaphorical sense, moving from the realm of physical space and the vision of the eye to the inner world of the person and vision through thought and imagination, the notion of horizon not only refers to what is actually visible but to what is familiar, known, and imaginable for a person in a much more encompassing sense. Here, the word horizon not only describes a limit of perception but becomes almost synonymous with the world itself as that what can be grasped, understood, or thought off by individual persons, societies, or cultures in a given moment of life or history.

Drawing on this double meaning of horizon as encompassing the realm of both outer and inner perception, the physical world and the world of the mind, the notion of horizon has been and continues to be employed in everyday usage as well as in more formal, philosophical modes of reflection.

In everyday usage, for instance, a person's horizon is often conceived of as the reach and orientation of a person's knowledge, expectations, or personal ambitions. In this sense, a horizon is not just a static given but also entails something very dynamic, something that can be formed and widened for example through education, working experiences, meeting people, travel, or reading, or a combination of these.

Following the more literal meaning of the term, in philosophy, the term horizon was for a

long time simply understood as the limits of human understanding or perception. In the 20th century, and especially in phenomenological and hermeneutic thought, the notion of horizon acquired a wider and somehow more positive sense. In one of the few works he published during his lifetime, the founder of phenomenology Edmund Husserl described objects and acts of perception as defined not just by the properties of the act or object itself but as defined by their horizon (*Horizont*) or *Hof* (halo, a term describing a circle or circular space around something, derived from the Greek *halos*, originally a threshing floor), that is defined by the objects and perceptions that precede, come after or surround it (Husserl 1976 [1913]). In a similar vein but drawing more on the metaphorical meaning of the term and moving from objects and acts of perception to the cultural ‘objects’ of texts and reading, Hans-Georg Gadamer made use of the term horizon to describe that which characterizes the meaning of a text beyond its literal sense; that which can often not be grasped immediately but which has to be approached through a careful process of reading that is sensitive not just to what a text seems to say explicitly but also to the understandings which informed and made a particular text possible in the first place (Gadamer 1960).

It is in the form of such more nuanced conceptualizations that the notion of horizon becomes crucial also for the understanding of migration and migratory expectations in particular. Understood as being part of the larger sociocultural horizon of a given society or person as well as constituting a specific horizon in itself, migration and migratory expectations cannot be understood in an isolated or abstract way but rather within their social, cultural, economic, and historical context. In this regard, the very diversity which characterizes not just migration studies but artistic and literary works on migration alike, can be seen as the outcome of the conscious or intuitive understanding of the fact that migration implies much more than can be conveyed by describing migration as a function of economic difference alone.

It is in this context that the attribute ‘global’ becomes crucial. This is, of course, not to say that everything becomes globalized nor that the notion of globalization in itself would provide an answer to all our questions - on the contrary. Semantically and empirically, a concept or category such as a ‘global horizon’ is in fact not free of contradictions. If one remembers the original meaning of the term horizon as the (limit of the) spatial extension of the visual field, the notion of horizon implies a person who views his or her surroundings from a specific vantage point. In so far as any horizon shifts as soon as the person moves, horizons are necessarily specific. In this sense, there could be no such thing as a global horizon unless the differences between the different vantage

points would get smaller and smaller and finally disappear. But is this the case? This question seems to bring us very close to the question whether globalization leads to homogenization, flattening out cultural differences, or, on the contrary, to heterogenization, producing as many varieties of responding to globalization as there are people, cultures, locales, etc. Looked at from a 'horizonic' perspective, however, this is no longer an either-or question. The experience in question is essentially ambiguous, whereby the notion of a global horizon may offer a way to better comprehend that ambiguity (or dialectic, perhaps).

On the one hand, the hermeneutic properties implied in the notion of horizon transgress any attempt to essentialize cultural perception: the world as horizon is not just a locality or place but reveals itself as the way reality shows itself to the person in any given situation. Given its changing and perspective-dependent character, the notion of horizon also points to the fact that migratory expectations may not be identical even within the same sociocultural location but dependent on the situation, perspective, understandings, experiences, and biography of each individual.

On the other hand, a horizon not only implies a person's gaze but also a landscape or space being looked at. Horizons of expectation - be they related to migration or not - are therefore both structured by the reality as it is perceived as well as structuring that very reality. As lifeworld, that reality cannot be comprehended without reflecting the person's personal and cultural perception of his or her situation. In this regard, it is not so much the vantage points that become homogenized - or at least this is not what seems to shape this process in the first place - but rather the landscape or space being looked at. In regard to this dynamic, dialectical relation between world and person, the notion of horizon thus makes clear that insofar as a world is necessarily constituted by a horizon and cannot exist without it, the way the world and one's own life are perceived and experienced is always already the result of a complex process of mediation, integration and expansion.

The notion of horizon, thus, corresponds with the observation that contemporary sociocultural worlds are never fully autochthonous, endogenous or local, and probably never have been (Piot 1999). What the attribute 'global' emphasizes in this context is the fact that what constitutes the horizon of many locales today is not any longer just another adjacent locality with its own seemingly autochthonous sets of meanings, but instead notions and concepts that are either attributed to abstract and not easily localized concepts such as modernity, development, or progress, or projected onto geographical settings that are seen as setting the standards for these concepts. This is significant in at least two regards.

First, the formation of personal and cultural horizons implies both individually and locally

distinct experiences, structured by particular conditions as much as by local symbolic, religious, or sociopolitical networks of meaning, *as well as* the reconsideration of local situations in relation to much less localizable notions and processes. Speaking about a global horizon, we thus want to point out that the effect of globalization is not so much the replacement of one horizon by another but a gradual actualization along conceptual vectors (see Cassiman in this volume). Such vectors have specific histories (for instance, the logic of capitalist production can be traced back to very specific sociocultural and socioeconomic conditions in 16th century Europe) but due to the colonialist and capitalist expansion of the past centuries, they have now gained such a currency and scale that they have become commonplaces among various peoples across the planet.

Arjun Appadurai (1996) has famously proposed to understand these processes that exceed the boundaries of particular places and national states in both scope and quality, as ‘flows’ and ‘scapes’ of finance, technology, politics, and more. James Ferguson (2006, chapter 6), in contrast, has argued that Appadurai’s model of global flows does not do justice to the extremely stratified and unequal way in which globalization is experienced especially by people in Africa. Trying to get a visa to the Schengen area from Senegal, Egypt, or Cameroon puts global flows into perspective in a way that is hard to ignore. But while the goods of globalization are very unequally shared, or not shared at all, the promise of these goods has spread all over the world. By showing how the expansion of the scope of what can be expected is shaped but not diminished by the dramatic ‘gap between the actual and the possible’ (Weiss 2009), the notion of a global horizon is meant to allow describing both, the significance of the expansion of global flows, and the expansion of conditions excluding people from the flows of globalization they are exposed to.

Second, the notion of global horizon allows us to see that these processes, relational and implying different vectors and sets of meaning as they are, are not likely to be uniform. At the same time, however, horizons become increasingly comparable and similar through their relation to the elements that shape them: concepts, conditions, mediations, economical and power relations that transgress local, regional, and national settings. A marriage between a Senegalese migrant in Spain and a woman from his home village or region in Senegal is not any longer a local event in the conventional sense, even if the marriage takes place in the village or home region of the partners in question. Instead, such a marriage is related to European wages and remittances, Chinese consumer goods, Mexican or Brazilian telenovelas, etc. In the specific case, this relation is at once unique to the particular people involved in that particular union in that particular place, and similar to many others in many other settings worldwide. And most importantly perhaps, this is usually well known

by the people involved. It is perhaps this similitude, not homogeneity, between the interplay of conditions, expectations, and material elements of social practice which explains why migration movements in very different locations worldwide have started to look so similar.

Expectation and experience

What does it, then, in practical terms, mean to live, to hope and to struggle under the conditions of a global horizon of migration? This is the question which the contributors of this volume pursue in different ways. Four aspects of migration as expectation and experience emerge as central for the enquiry developed in the chapters of this volume.

First, there is the inevitable nature of the expectation of migration, the way non-migratory trajectories appear as increasingly unfeasible in face of the money and resources that migrants have access to. This is the more problematic as migration has at the same time become more difficult. In her study of involuntarily immobile Soninke youth in a Malian village, Gunvor Jónsson shows the discontents and troubles of men who do not make it abroad, and who therefore remain in a state of limbo, unable to accomplish full male adulthood. Regional rural-urban migrations have been less troubled by visa regimes, and in her study of the rural-urban migration of Dogon in Mali, Denise Dias Barros shows how being a migrant in the city has become a fundamental element of being a Dogon man. And yet while migrating to the city is much easier than migrating to Europe as in the case of Jónsson, the perpetual state of migrancy creates problems of its own when the social ideal of circularity (of migration and return) becomes unfeasible.

Second, there is the ‘time-making’ nature of the expectation of migration and the cultural practices relating to it, involving powerful ideas of personal future and one’s movement (or non-movement) in time (Graw 2005 and under review). The problem of incomplete circularity in the contribution of Dias Barros is very much a problem of time, but the most powerful and problematic temporal sensibility is that of waiting, which is taken up by Paolo Gaibazzi in his study of Soninke men expecting migration in the Gambia. Perpetual waiting is an intimate discontent of the expectation of rapid and significant progress through actual migration.

Third, there is the tragic nature of the expectation of migration, as the very constituents of hope turn into sources of misunderstanding and hardship. As Jill Alpes shows with the case of the (mis)communications about migration in Cameroon, there is often a striking discrepancy between what it is like to be a migrant worker, and what people back home know, believe, or want to believe

about the realities and prospects of migration. For those who fail to fulfil the expectations and to return wealthy with plenty of gifts, this is a very traumatic experience, since failures are very likely to be seen as personal ones, and not as inherent to the project itself. In his chapter about Senegalese and Gambians who undertook the path of travel and eventually found themselves working in southern Spain, Knut Graw looks at the situation where one now finds oneself in Europe, for better or for worse, compelled to think about what one expected and what one got - a process of reflection which is often difficult to convey to people back home, and which comes at a moment when crucial decisions have already been made.

Fourth, there is the imaginative, or world-making character of the expectation of migration involving a change of the outlook of the world as whole beyond (or perhaps even against) the particular prospect of migration. Looking at literacy in Mali, Aïssatou Mbodj-Pouye shows how the practice of keeping notebooks creates and accompanies different forms of mobility. Looking at the practice of fantasy in northern Egypt, Samuli Schielke argues that the gaze at the other side is an ambiguous one, partly oppressive when migration narrows down one's imagination to the need to make money, but partly also a creative site to develop alternative paths of action. Looking at the Eiffel Tower as a souvenir to Ghana from France, An Cassiman argues that the tower and the experience of 'having one's eyes opened' it embodies, open a space to think about migration and modernity as the connection and actualisation of lifeworlds to global landscapes of possibility. Filip de Boek in his contribution about the outlook at the world from the Democratic Republic of Congo offers a vision of different diasporic sites and imaginary trajectories evoked by people searching for survival and a better life, an endeavour that can generate more than just survival: the capacity to do something about one's predicament.

Divided in three parts, the volume explores these dynamics of expectation, perception and imagination through a series of case studies reaching from West and Central Africa to North Africa. Opening with the chapters by Graw on Senegalese migration to Spain and the question of cause, Cassiman on the image of the Eifel Tower, and Mbodji on literacy and mobility, the first part of the volume describes the perceptions and sensibilities through which ideas of migration, the outside world, progress and self-realization are articulated and evolve into a critical idiom of reflection on situations to which migration is often held to be a viable answer. The second part focuses on specific modalities and trajectories resulting from these processes of sociocultural imagination and practice, dealing with the history of ideas of migration in the Democratic Republic of Congo (De Boeck), rural-urban migration in Mali (Barros), and the problems of social becoming (Jónsson) and

time (Gaibazzi) under conditions of Soninke (non-)migration in Mali and Gambia respectively. The third part turns to look at how ideas of migration are reacted upon and contested, combining analyses of the disconnections of information about 'the bush' in Cameroon (Alpes), and the different consequences of gazing at the other side of the sea in Alexandria, Egypt (Schielke). Finally, an afterword by Michael Jackson concludes the volume.

Acknowledgements

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This paper is the first exposure of research results of our ongoing fieldwork in the framework of the EU-research project Mig@net on “Transnational Digital Networks, Migration, and Gender”. Here we deal with the issue of border-crossings in connection with what is headed under the notions of deterritorialisation, digitization, securitization, and diffusion of the EU border control (Huysmans 2005). Its double function of politics at a distance and data collections is supported by a general knowledge-based shift of the politics of border and produces a control network that computerizes not only the forms of surveillance, but also the very form of punishment of offenses. By extending the risk of deportability within and beyond state boundaries (de Genova, 2010, 2002) it creates a new mode of migration management, to which we refer as “digital deportability” or “cyber-deportability, in the sense of “the affinity between the fast, flexible multidirectionality of the mobile subjectivities of migrants and the knowledge-based cyber-technologies used for their surveillance” (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos 2008: 176). We speak of digital deportability when the risks of illegalized mobility – that is, money, duration and possibly the life itself – are materialised through the computer screen. In this sense, Dana Diminescu talks about a “virtual prison” (Diminescu 2005). Furthermore, Dennis Broeders suggests, that the European database systems (besides Eurodac there is for instance also the database SIS II and the forthcoming VIS) provide the infrastructure that member states “need for the detection and exclusion of irregular migrants ‘at home’.” (Broeders 2007) According to Broeders, the European network of data systems is “also increasingly used to *exclude* and where possible to *expel* the group of migrants who have succeeded in travelling to Europe and are living illegally in one of the member states.” (Broeders 2011: 58-59) Following Broeder's allusion to the fact that exclusion always combines two modalities, namely the exclusion *from* registration and documentation and the exclusion *through* documentation and registration (Broeders 2011: 59), our understanding of digital deportability encompasses the flexible and moveable interplay (or modulation) between both logics of exclusion through and within the operations of the information and communication technologies of control.

Our respective case studies in Italy and Greece focus mainly on the European Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Eurodac. The starting point of our project coincided with two events: the first event concerns a description within the annual report of the activities of Eurodac in 2009 (published in August 2010). This description notes a significant shift in the data curve of persons apprehended for irregular crossing of an external border: “The trend regarding the number of (such) persons (...) changed dramatically in 2009. After a rise of 62,3% between 2007 and 2008 (to 61.945), the number of transactions fell by 50% in 2009 (to 31.071). Italy, Greece and Spain continues to be the countries which introduce the vast majority of such data.

However, Greece is now the one with most transactions – it sent 60% of all 'category 2' in 2009 (18.714 compared to 20.012 in 2008).“ (COM(2010)415 final, p. 5) Striking here is the fact that already in 2009 the figures for Greece explicitly and in a statistical manner demonstrate a 'drama' that came into its own in a 'real' way one year later, through the second event which was decisive for us: the proclamation of the Schengen state of emergency based on the processes and operations going on at the Evros border in the autumn/winter 2010, including the first deployment of the Rabbit-troops of Frontex¹.

Our initial question was the following: how can we address the short circuit between a statistically proclaimed drama and a politically proclaimed state of emergency at the level of the operability of digital databases? Eurodac is an EU-wide data system. It links a digital collection of fingerprints – that means biometric identification technology combined with information technology, or rather, computer data applications – with a particular political purpose, that was established and framed under the Dublin II Regulation. It aims primarily at the prevention of multiple applications of asylum by the same individual and also uncontrolled movements of potential asylum applicants and other migrants within the Schengen territory. By way of registering and re-identifying cross-border movements through searching and comparing fingerprints, Eurodac is a tool of automated border governance and should serve to respond primarily to the phenomenon of so-called “refugees in orbit” and “asylum shopping” – these were the notions used during the hotbeds of debate in the late 1990s when during the so called refugee crisis in Western Europe Eurodac was developed. However, Eurodac is in fact an amalgam of asylum and immigration issues, as it does not only contain on a mandatory basis the records of fingers of *potential refugees* (all individuals who apply for asylum and are over the age of 14: *category 1*), but on a voluntarily basis Member States can also add those of *irregular crossers of the external borders of EU* (arrested whilst crossing: *category 2*). Also, it allows for the matching of the fingers of persons who are *residing illegally on the territory of the EU* (arrested whilst staying: *category 3*). In short, as Mathiesen asserts, the “history of the issue of fingerprinting 'illegal immigrants' shows how Schengen and Eurodac concerns are intertwined”. (Mathiesen 2001: 18) Like the Dublin framework, Eurodac is a Regulation adopted by the Council of the European Union on the 11th of December 2000 as a Dublin-related measure.² Online since 8 years now (since January 2003) and operated as a hit/no-hit system by the

¹ RABBIT is the acronym for „ Rapid Border Intervention Teams“ (see also: REGULATION (EC) No 863/2007 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 July 2007 establishing a mechanism for the creation of Rapid Border Intervention Teams and amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 as regards that mechanism and regulating the tasks and powers of guest officers)

² A Regulation does not require parliamentary approval, but is issued directly by the Commission. The Eurodac Regulation provided the legal basis for the establishment of an IT-based European dactylographic system, which combines biometric identification technology and information technology (Council Regulation (EC) 2725/2000) and the Eurodac II Regulation of February 2002 provided the legal act to make the system technically operational. It encompasses rules for administrative maintenance and enforcement such as age limit, etc.

European Commission, Eurodac's functioning is generally confirmed as a successive policy instrument, interestingly enough given the crisis of the Dublin system, which has become manifest in recent times. And last but not least, Eurodac's good performance as the first European Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) plays a key role for the current trend of an increase of biometric-based data collections or the extension of existing ones for various areas of EU migration management³.

How to study the digital border *in actu*?

In order to address this at least partially paradoxical and certainly not systematic effects we began to think about how Eurodac can be researched as a new European border technology in relation to the configurations and practices it is part of. Doing border from a 'bottom-up' perspective calls always for the question: how is the border constructed, managed, and by whom. We think it is crucial to investigate Eurodac as an *agencement* or, as Haggerty and Ericson (2000) suggest, a *surveillance assemblage*. In other words, as something that works its effects by being connected to other technologies, practices, systems, institutions and conventions, as Irma van der Ploeg repeatedly suggested (2005: 2, 13; 1999a: 43; 1999b: 296, 300-301). To be clear, our interest in Eurodac is an approach to technology as something that is inflected by social, symbolic, organizational and juridical cultures, practices and imaginaries that are beyond the literal realm of the electronic space. Our research should thus help to understand how Eurodac contributes “to the profiling and control of individual and social behaviours” as Ayse Ceyhan puts it (Ceyhan 2008: 103), and to capture some of “the complex imbrications of technology and society” (Sassen 2002: 369). In contrast to such research desideratum, the given literature on Eurodac is mainly based on policy papers, on the annual reports about Eurodac's performance or on the evaluations and analysis of data protection authorities. This corpus documents quite well some of the politically weak and critical points of Eurodac's and Dublin's interplay in the context of the Europeanization of migration management (and its political and democratic structures). However, much more rare are the contributions of scholars in social or political sciences that are based on their own fieldwork

(Council Regulation (EC) No 407/2002).

³ There was a plan for a so called 'Entry/Exit System (EES), or the development of SIS II and VIS, respectively the actual plans for a better interoperability of systems such as SIS II, VIS and Eurodac, through the establishment of the "Agency for the Operational management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice" by the Commission in 2010. Another contemporary concept is the "integrated border management" a concept that covers all the activities of the public authorities of the Member States relating to border control and surveillance, including border checks, risks analysis and the planning of the personnel and the facilities required - or the so-called "smart border" - a diffuse border which is not localizable in a certain zone or in one place of passage only, but a border that is based on a multiplicity of physical and virtual sites of control and surveillance related to each other through a digital network of databases (Amoore, Marmura and Salter 2008).

– as if only the public administrations would be in charge of providing empirical instruments to examine the actual functioning of this European system, embedded in a complex manner in a variety of (national and local) institutional and geopolitical contexts.

So, a second starting point of our research is the observation that both in the field of policy consulting as well as in the critical current research the categories of subjectivity and materiality or matter tend to be underrepresented or simply disregarded. By this, we point not only to the underexplored aspects of the technological infrastructure of control, but also to the contingency of the abilities and capacities of the bodies of migration in relation to their lifetime situated within what we call digital deportability. And this is what definitively requires to investigate how the knowledges, subjectivities, concerns and practices of migration shape the knowledges, subjectivities, concerns and practices of control and the inverse. Such a perspective enables us to overcome both, on the one hand a simple subject-object relation within the dispositifs of control and within the research field itself and, on the other hand, the naivety of technological determinism (Pieper, Kuster, Tsianos, 2011).

Our research can certainly not compensate for the wide range of such stated deficiency. And we have limited ourselves to present here some first insights from our explorations on the interplay between the actions of migrants and those of the agents of control. In this respect we have identified the actuality of European border conflict at three different geographical spots and some of the connections between them: From Athens via Igoumenitsa to Bari and later Wiesbaden, back and forth and within the timespace of Dublin II crisis. What do we mean by that?

In January 2011, the German federal constitutional court revised a removal under the Dublin II regulation. This act was thus pointing to the potential revisability of the European integration of immigration and asylum policy since 1993. With the MSS case against Greece and Belgium, the European Court of Human rights issued also a clear decision against Dublin II. These are just two prominent examples in a number of cases, in which the key line of the Dublin II regulation, namely the so-called principle of first entry (“*country of first entry* into the EU”) was legally and actually abrogated. The Member States had to acknowledge that in Greece and Italy, there is *de facto* no asylum system. When the government of Silvio Berlusconi in spring 2011 issued 25.000 residence permits for the Tunisians arriving in Italy, this became the most notorious rupture with the principle of first entry. France responded immediately with a closure of the border to Italy, and subsequently re-introduced border controls, which were valid in the short term. On 1st July 2011, Denmark introduced controls at the border with Germany. To be clear, we have to note that the importance of the Dublin II or rather Schengen crisis is twofold for us: a) The crisis makes evident that the digital border, installed by Eurodac, has to be articulated as part of the Schengen space and contextualized in its cycles of stability and instability. To investigate such turbulences

of the digital European border, requires a praxeography that accounts for the digital *and* the territorial spatialisation of the actuality and the timeliness of the border conflicts. b) The crisis allows us to radically align our research to the materiality and locatability of current conflict areas according to Rabinow's "anthropology of the actual". (Rabinow 2003) By this we do not point, however, to the disconnection between the free movement of people within European Union and the control of the external borders; we do not bespeak the collapse of control on the basis of building the European territory as an area of *Justice, Freedom and Security*. But we want to outline the unexpected appearance of a disintegrative dynamic within the process of European integration of migration politics and border control policies.

The production of entries in Eurodac

When we visited in June 2011 the German Central Unit of Eurodac, which is located as an electronic archive within the department of the much bigger German Automated Finger Identification System AFIS (with 3.5 million records) at the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) in Wiesbaden, our interview partner, the head of the German AFIS, asked us, if we as researchers know about the reasons or motivations of the Greek authorities to produce such a large number of entries in Eurodac under the *category 2* of "illegal border crossers". He commented on the large number of entries into this category, which doesn't permit searches and noted that, in his opinion, this practice has been established neither out of technical nor of logical considerations, but as a result of a political compromise. He made the following remark: "In Italy, the number of these records has indeed been reduced meanwhile. There seems to be a change of mind to have taken place. (...) Why does Greece not use the category 3? I cannot understand that. Tell me if you've found out about it. If they would use the category 3 they could get rid of many asylum seekers." What becomes clear in the consideration of this police officer is that despite the technocratic approach, which was enforced with the introduction of the Eurodac system, a wide and decentralized range of national and institutional scope for different strategies and tactics exists when it comes to the quantitative and qualitative feeding of the Eurodac Central Unit. And this is of even more importance because the technical components of the Central Unit located in Luxembourg work fully automatically, including the deletion of data. Only a few administrators work there and not one fingerprint expert. Eurodac's Central Unit is a so-called Lights Out system, that is a black box.

Despite the striking simplicity, sophistication and the seeming stringency of Eurodac's technological solution, a variety of practices in how to produce, to process and transmit data bodies for the storage and circulation in Eurodac are spread over the entire European space. Such "data

bodies” – a term first coined by the Critical Art Ensemble in their book *The flesh machine* (1998) and defined as the total collection of files connected to an individual in complete service to the corporate and police state (145) – become crucial in the context of border crossings, when as few as possible of 'proven', valid or credible identity markers such as papers, containing nationality, name, age, gender and facial photograph etc. are documented within this database. A “data body” does not serve the better *knowing* of third-country nationals. Rather it is a way of *establishing* an “embodied identity” of migration (Ploeg, Sprenkels 2011) with the aim of making the volatility of migrant's bodies *readable* via the supposedly objective and universal applicability of biometric representation and the promises of digital hypermobility. Hence, the moving body of migration is literally to be 'read' by machines. But a crucial questions is: what about the relation between the “data bodies” and the real bodies of flesh and bone of migrants on the move? As we don't conceive of the 'real' body as an essential one, but as being in itself a semiotic apparatus, we confront an unmeasurable difference. It is an abyss that is usually filled with naive empiricisms, technopessimism and victimology. At this point, we draw on the work of Homi Bhabha and his notion of the “Third Space of enunciation” (Bhabha 1994) as an interval between the *énoncé*, the subject of a proposition and the subject of enunciation. Thereby he insists on the split of performative enunciations (in our case: *establishing* an embodied identity) which are never only a communicative act between a subject of enunciation and a subject, which is designated in a statement. The “Third Space” lies between the general conditions of the language, the code and the particular implications of a statement or enunciation as part of a performative and institutional strategy. In Bhabha's view, the Third Space is constitutive for the ambiguity of any utterance. Nevertheless, our abyss of incommensurability has nothing to do with the *Location of Culture* (and cultural identity) where the figure of the Third Space unfolds its meaning, but rather with a register. A register is an archive that is composed of recording and identification media, as we learn from the media theorist Bernhard Siegert (2006) in his analysis of the control of mobility on the Spanish-American passage in the time of *Conquista* and *Reconquista*: “The media of identification and the archiving of individuality (...) are the media of the erasure of identity. (...) Deletion or omission is as well an act of writing. One cannot *not* write.” (Siegert 2006: 101⁴) The codes of the Eurodac-register are algorithms; the validity of Eurodac consists in the “identification” between codes (one-to-many matches)⁵ and it should make its services in reference to a sovereignty, which be-

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“Die Medien der Identifizierung und Archivierung der Individualität (...) sind Medien der Tilgung von Identität. (...) Auch die Auslassung oder Weglassung ist ein Schreibakt. Man kann nicht *nicht* schreiben.”

⁵ In the language of programming “identification” is the one-to-many search via pattern recognition algorithms in an established database. In contrast, a “verification” is based on a one-to-one match. This distinction reflects the difference between truth and identity, as it is well established in the western (everyday) thinking. While trying to reach the truth corresponds to the attempt to liquidate the mediation and to thereby gain congruence,

lieves to master the identification of its subjects and the assignment of their respective places with the help of cultural techniques of representation. What we call “data body” seems to us to comply with a name, with a signification that aims at the singular body that has no identity and moves: the body of migration. The subject of enunciation, which makes this description, corresponds to the approximate value of a somatic singularity (the uniqueness of a fingerprint), which is represented as an algorithm that designates the ratio of distance and closeness. The “Third Space” which lies in between them and which is in itself a non-representable, empty space, but constitutes the conditions of a particular enunciation, is at the same time bar and bearer of difference (Bhabha 1994: 143). Homi Bhabha states: “The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People. In other words, the disruptive temporality of enunciation displaces the narrative of the Western nation which Benedict Anderson so perceptively describes as being written in homogeneous, serial time.” (Bhabha 1994: 37) Now we have induced in the “data body” itself a space of ambivalence and contingency of interpretation. In this sense, if hereinafter we allude to “data bodies”, we speak about the *location of identity*. Hence, we use the Third Space as a working tool that might help us to escape the polarity between discipline/control and agency/interpretation, as to study and articulate how both are set in motion, the control practices and the subjectivities of migration on the one hand and on the other hand, ourselves as situated researchers (Tsianos, Karakayali 2010).⁶

But, as we said earlier, there are different situations and junctions that participate in producing as their effects “data bodies” of migration. Some of them might be unintended, yet always tangible and contingent. These effects may not all account for the coherence of a computerized system such as Eurodac or for the reliability of biometric measurement that work on approximate values. The establishment of “data bodies” could even become opposed to such logics or simply be due to different rationalities or relations established with other readable “texts”, other social, political or institutional scripts. So, in the next section we look at the ways in which different police agents in Greece comment on dealing with Eurodac's form of digital control, while being heavily under

identity is always already confronted with the difficulty to subtract multiplicity. Authenticity in turn, tries to meet the subtraction of the multiplicity of identity in the singular. In the language of biometric matchers, on the contrary, “verification” and “authentication” have the same meaning. See also, The Biometrics Blog online at: <http://www.360biometrics.com/blog/difference-between-identification-authentication/>.

⁶ We refer here to the method of the *ethnographic border regime analysis*, which we have developed in the research project “transit migration” and its further developments, such as for instance the *ne(t)hnographic border regime analysis* (see: Pieper, Kuster, Tsianos 2011).

pressure to comply with the rules implemented at the European level through the Dublin II Regulation. As the German officer alluded, Greece as a border state may not have so much interest in registering 'category 2'-cases, as such entries lead to nothing other than that these migrants should and could be sent back when later identified in another Member State.

Control conflict 1: Va te faire voir chez les grecs

The EU discourse on the development of a common policy on border security is permeated by a desire to establish control as the dominant form of power in contemporary European society. As Deleuze has argued, control societies rest on the normalisation of bodies that is no longer effectuated through the enclosure into disciplinary institutions, but through the distanced and dispersed relations of control. (Deleuze 1990). Digital surveillance via fingerprinting conducts surely to everything else than a disciplinary strategy but rather to a control strategy: the security of borders becomes the sorting of “alien bodies” into predetermined, securitized categories. But the model of such a complete digital archive always seems to be incomplete since less economic forms of power, such as disciplinary and violent mechanisms and tactics continue to be implicated in the construction of European borders making their appearance in different locations and instances. In this context, Greece appears – and symbolically constitutes – the paradigmatic failure of the Schengen crisis. Interviews with head officers of the central asylum unit in Athens have confirmed that in areas such as Evros, Igoumenitsa or Patras, there are no fingerprint scanners. A Frontex officer from the Piraeus branch, in charge of the coordination of operational projects in Italy, Greece, Malta, and Cyprus, declared in an interview, that the EU funds for the purchase of those machines have been lost because of the delay of the Greek authorities to absorb them on time. In contrast, in many other areas such as Athens or Lesbos scanners do exist but remain either out of use or used only sporadically under pressure by EU and other national authorities. Rather than a paradigmatic failure of the system, we argue that this strange inability to fully enter the regime of control by failing to operate the digital workflow and processing is a key characteristic of the practices of producing “data bodies” for the Schengen space as we began to explore. The production of “data bodies” in the Greek administrative police context, resembles rather a practice assembling dispersed information collected by different agencies with the use of different digital and non digital means to collect fingerprint data. As the head of the refugee unit in the Athens police explained to us during an interview, each unit has to improvise its own unique techniques in order to produce fingerprints. This leads to a strange amalgam of data that are very difficult to convert, because it consists of imprints on paper and digital recordings that have later to be processed and fed into the Eurodac system by the central national unit based in

Athens. Interestingly, this is the case even when there is a digital fingerprint scanner because the Greek criminological databases require full palm fingerprints, which are not possible to produce with these scanners. Unlike a black box, the Greek police employs fingerprint experts who collect ink palm and finger prints, which are then filed into paper folders stored in the Greek police headquarters and then scanned and sent to the Eurodac Central Unit. This procedure, according to different interviews, often lasts more than forty days and in some cases the local police units are asked by the national Eurodac Central Unit to re-take the fingerprints because they do not fit into the system and its requirements.⁷ The process of converting ink prints to digital representations produces a space of difference where un-processible, incomplete, delayed or lost “data bodies” become possible. These are the bars and bearers of data fluidity. And here appears a fundamental split within the vision of digital control. The digital hyper-mobility, which tries to make fluid what is not yet fluid, to pick up a thought by Saskia Sassen, faces its own limit of liquefying when meeting in its own system the inertia of matter. What if the readability (i.e. the absolute liquefaction, that should make readable the volatile bodies of migrants) is itself volatile and meets its own plastic condition? The European border is constantly externalised and deterritorialized by control technologies, but it is also pushed by migrant movements. As the migrants embody the border (especially in the form of their fingers) and at the same time transgress it, they re-territorialize the border and they push it back into the European territory. In this way, they challenge the limits of Europe by transforming the border into spaces of in-betweenness and passage. This is what the emblematic places such as Evros, Igoumenitsa, Calais, Rome, Athens or Lampedusa show us. It is precisely the excess of migrant movements and the non-convertible, incomplete, delayed or lost data bodies that makes it impossible to escape those spots and instances of the Schengen crisis (wherever in Europe it bursts).

Control conflict 2: The road to Europe, Mare Adriatico

Usually, when a migrant is picked up by the police, his or her fingerprints are scanned. In Puglia, on the Adriatic coast this happens in several places: police headquarters, identification centres, reception centres for asylum seekers, airports and also in the areas of landing of small boats and dinghies on the coast of Salento – the area around Lecce – during the summer and the fall when there are many arrivals. In the rest of the year the migrants who land in Salento are brought to the identification centre of Don Tonino Bello to be fingerprinted and then sent to reception centres of the region, according to the availability of places. Normally, all the apprehended migrants who enter the country illegally are checked up on the Italian AFIS and registered there, while un-

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At this point, see also: Papadimitriou and Papageorgiou 2005.

til now we don't know if their data are also sent to the Italian Eurodac Central Unit, where notably and obligatorily the fingerprints of asylum seekers are stored and processed; if a hit is communicated from Luxembourg their data are sent to the Dublin Unity, Department for the civil Liberties and Immigration in Rome, a body of the Ministry of the Interior. In an interview, a police officer in Bari underlined that the Dublin Unity works very slowly and once has even spent 18 months for the determination of the state which was responsible for an asylum application, because they had very few personnel. This same police officer also complained that Greece, the country from which the majority of migrants arrive in Italy through Puglia, takes a long time to reply at all. In Puglia, the possibility to ask for asylum depends on the way, in which migrants arrive on the coast. The migrants found on the ferry-boats coming from Greece to the ports of Puglia are immediately sent back to Greece without having any chance to ask for asylum; they are not even fingerprinted. Italy continues to apply the 1999 bilateral convention that enables “re-admission without formalities based on the captain’s judgement” (Maccanico 2010). Instead, our field research showed that in the case of arrivals by sailing boats or dinghies on the coasts of Salento migrants rather have the possibility to make an asylum application. If they claim to come from Turkey, they cannot be sent back to Greece.

But there is also a difference between Salento and Calabria. A social worker in Cara of Bari (the reception centre for asylum seekers) told: “When migrants land on the coast of Calabria in small boats and dinghies they are sent back to Greece. A migrant told me that once he arrived in Calabria, the police deceived them saying that they were transported to Cara reception centre in Puglia. It was terrible. They were deceived until they arrived in the port of Patras in Greece. And even there, when the boat arrived in Patras, the police told them they were arriving in the Cara of Bari.” Depending on the interpretation that the police makes of the (attempted) way of arriving (on ferry-boats or dinghies; from Turkey or Greece; on the docks in the port, on the seaside, on a main road, under a trucks or on the sea – when caught here, people are not even allowed to disembark and their number cannot be estimated as they are not recorded (Maccanico 2010)), the Police deduces a kind of pre-categorization of the migrants according to the three categories of Eurodac. This in turn, as it seems, sets into operation the corresponding appropriate law enforcement practices before the actual digital recording has taken place: transfer, return, detention, distribution in so-called reception centres etc.

Firstly, this is paradigmatic of the *figure of exclusion* proposed by Broeders (2011: 59) as twofold, namely *from* registration and *through* registration; the example of the practice of deception mentioned above demonstrates this in a particularly striking way. And secondly, it is evident here that in anticipating the occurrence of digital control or even by bypassing the adoption of digital technology the vested consequences of the digital control instruments are translated into action and

implemented. What we see here is the preemptive impact of digital control. These preemptive practices are not necessarily kept aloof from the production of data, as the following example shows. They rather occur in the offside from digital control. To better understand the operations in the border zone of the Adriatic Sea, the legal basis for refusals of arrivals and the rejections and returns from Italy to Greece and, above all, to learn what happens to those people when they arrive in Greece, the social scientist Alessandra Sciorba (from the anti-racist network Melting Pot) travelled in 2010 from Venice to Igoumenitsa, in order to conduct an interview with a port police officer. This officer pointed to the contradiction that the Schengen Agreement is superior to the bilateral agreement between Italy and Greece, according to which the returns are executed. He pointed out: “For instance, Italy does not even know if what they do are readmissions or rejections. They write 'readmission' in order to try to comply with Schengen, but in reality these are rejections. (...) The most serious problem for us is that no one officially said how and from where these people came into Italy and then return to Greece. (...) You see? Not even an original document! Only this paper that is put in the hands of the captain of the boat in order to give it to us!” The paper that this police officer showed to Sciorba was the photocopy of a statement of the border police in Brindisi, a readmission without names, but only the year of birth of the candidate for rejection: 1992. (Sciorba 2010)

Control Conflict 3: “The glass is dangerous”

In April 2011, we continued our fieldwork in Igoumenitsa. It is the last small Greek port city against Italy near the border with Albania. There we spent a few days during which we visited the informal settlement of transit migrants, meanwhile destroyed by the police forces. It is situated on the outskirts of the town, on the slope to the harbour entrance. The residents called it “the Mountain”. There, Rastaman came to us and asked us for a cigarette. From Sudan via Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, and Mytilini in November 2009 he finally got here. He came to the Turkish port city Aivalyk in front of Lesbos and waited there for 2 months. He paid 1000 € for the rubber dinghy. It was his last money. The traffickers were also on board, maybe they were Turks. Almost in the middle of the sea the engine broke down and they had to row ashore with their hands. After a few days in Mytilini, he was arrested together with 4-6 people and taken to the prison of Paganis. He stayed there for 6 or 7 days. It was there that he has been “fingered” like all the others, photographed and interviewed by Greek police officers. The officers were not bad, he says. The others who were with him were “fingered” on paper; he as well. He does not know why, maybe because of the print of his fingers was not good enough or anything, but he also had to stick his fingers into a small machine with a glass to put his fingers on. He says he knows that most of the

fingerprints do not matter so much. He knows two Sudanese people from “the Mountain” who made it a week ago over the Adriatic Sea to Germany. They all were already together in the prison of Pagani. Obviously, there was no problem with their fingerprints in Germany. People never tell that they come via Greece. So, Rastaman thinks and knows from many conversations and experiences that the Greeks do not deal so well with “fingering”. Rastaman wants to continue to England, where his friends and family are. The family in England supports him via Western Union. His eyes are on the port and he waits for the right moment. There are always people who make it. When they leave they write their names and phone numbers on the wall of the port; when they arrive, they send a message.

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Panel 6: Border regimes and migrant practices: citizenship, belonging and the making of migrant subjectivities

Convenors: Paolo Gaibazzi

1st Session

Discussant: Mattia Fumanti

1. Rwanda, Burundi and the Negotiation of Border Regimes in a Narrow Space

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Abstract

In the early years of Independence the border between Rwanda and Burundi saw a wide variety of migrants moving within a tense paradox of competing border regimes across a very small area. Long-term residents from the colonial era and earlier were joined by forced migrants and militant exiles in both countries, while traders crossed the border frequently with ease, all moving within overlapping and paradoxical regimes created by states and citizens. Military incursions from both state and non-state actors punctuated the border, while the various subjectivities of exceptionally similar cultures recognised ethnic continuity as well as a sharp national divide along an ancient, yet newly re-created boundary. State presence varied from heavy military control to complete absence within the space of kilometres; within single communities, some civilians took it as their role to police the border, preventing immigration, invasion and escape equally, while others openly engaged with and welcomed the movement of neighbours from across the frontier. Developed from nine months of oral and archival doctoral research (to be completed in June 2011) and taking an historical approach to a contemporary issue, this paper will examine how apparently conflictual border regimes can exist within a narrow space, competing and coalescing, and how different types of migrants negotiate their position within and between them, shaping their subjectivities and the regimes themselves through their actions and relations with people and states.

2. An ethnographic regime analysis approach to articulate the "data bodies" of Eurodac

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Abstract

Based on the fact that private and government sectors are operating hand in hand for biometric identity assurance solutions to meet security requirements at borders, for elections or in commercial fields, our paper will explore the concept of "digital deportability" to account for the knowledge-based shift of the politics of border: the deterritorialization of border control, with the double function of politics at a distance and virtual data collection to cast a net of control, which denaturalizes and virtualizes not only the form of surveillance but also the form of punishment by extending the risk of deportability of migrants. To avoid the reiteration of the perspective of control policies, our contribution claims for a situated analysis from the perspective of migration, that is a movement contained in the power relations of border zones and operating its own information exchange channels, sensemakings, understandings, and rules to access mobility and to cross borders. Drawing on interviews with sub-Saharan migrants and on the findings of our research on the mode of operation of the European database system Eurodac, where the fingerprints of asylum seekers and apprehended illegal immigrants are stored, we look into the emergence of new subjectivities related to the bodily and mobility patterns in liquifying and de-materializing of border control technologies.

3. Public and Traditional efforts in Cameroon Border Patrols: The Soh and Official Law enforcement Officers at the Cameroon-Nigeria border Town of Nwa

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Abstract

The permeability of the Cameroon–Nigeria border of Abonshe has been experiencing an increase in the actual quantity of cross-border flows, as well as a deepening of the penetration of cross-border operations into the heart of the national territories. This implies that cross-border operations have undergone some structural reorganization. The socio-economic interactions as well as immigration of Nigerian populations into Cameroon are carried on with little regard for the colonial demarcation despite the establishment of state border control mechanism, namely gendarmes, police and custom officers. Indigenes in both countries are able to evade gendarmes from Cameroon and police and customs and immigration officers from Nigeria given that they are very familiar with the terrain. But due to the difficulties in tracking and controlling the situation, the Soh society (a traditional vigilante group) has come into the scene. This paper analyses the strategy employed by the Soh in tracking down illegal immigrants, surveying and controlling foreign traders. It also shows that the complacency of the Soh and the law enforcing officers in the process of establishing legality, has often led to a systematic abuse, extortion and maltreatment of foreigners in the area.

4. The political economy of cattle raiding across the Ethio-Sudanese border

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Abstract

Cultural and economic explanations of cattle raiding are dominant in the field of pastoral studies. Cultural explanations explain cattle raiding as an enactment of masculine ideologies. Accordingly, cattle raiding or rustling present the youth with opportunities to prove their courage as well as their skill in the handling of arms. Economic explanations view cattle raiding as a form of redistributive mechanism between pastoral groups, essentially to restock herds, expand rangelands and improve social status. A more recent transformation of livestock raiding is the predatory type the purpose of which is the sale of raided livestock for monetary gain and procurement of weaponry, instead of the restocking and accumulation of animals by the herders. The paper discusses the new political economy of cattle raiding across the Ethio-Sudanese border in reference to two registers, i.e., how pastoral border-crossing and the escalation of cattle raiding were intimately connected to the conduct of the civil war in Southern Sudan by the various political actors, and the discourse of second class citizenship in the peripheral areas of Ethiopia, with a special focus on the Gambella region.

2nd Session

Discussant: Paolo Gaibazzi

5. Borders and Horizons: Theoretical Reflections on Migratory Expectations in Africa and the Middle East

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Abstract

Based on ethnographic research in Senegal, Spain, and other places along the routes of contemporary African migration, the paper engages with the interplay of border regimes and migratory subjectivities. Drawing on conceptual work for an edited volume (co-edited by Samuli Schielke) as well as ongoing ethnographic work on migratory expectations, the paper develops and makes use of the notion of horizon in the context of migration as a means to understand and analyze the increasing attraction of the idea of migration in Africa and the Middle East. In terms of sociocultural theoretization, the notion of horizon allows for and necessitates a linking up different realms of analysis ranging from anthropology and phenomenology to geography and hermeneutic philosophy. In this regard, the paper aims at an inter- or transdisciplinary approach, not so much in its empirical method but in terms of the combining of different perspectives and modes of analysis.

6. “Italo Girls”: The Economic Dimensions of Illicit Migration in Nigeria.

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Abstract

The movement of peoples across national and international boundaries is an enduring component of human history. Selective male migration and increasing female autonomous migration are manifestations of migration as survival strategies (Adepoju, 2000). A significant number of young women migrate independently to fulfill their economic needs. The dwindling economic fortunes in the country have impacted negatively on the family. The corollary is the erosion of family values resulting in many young women embarking on desperate ventures to seek better fortune in Europe. Using data collected from a field survey in Benin City Nigeria, the paper argues that young women embark and/or lured into illicit migration for the purposes of economic benefits. Anchoring the analysis on Caldwell's wealth flow theory and Merton's theory of Anomie, the paper concludes that the desire to achieve material success albeit illicitly impels young Nigerian women into embarking on illicit migration. The implication is that this category of migrants becomes vulnerable to numerous abuse, violence and even discriminatory policies from their destination governments.

Rwanda, Burundi and the Negotiation of Border Regimes in a Narrow Space

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The definitional extent of a borderland is a problem well exemplified in the borders of the Great Lakes. Transposed into the context of their giant neighbour, the total area of Rwanda and Burundi would be considered entirely as borderlands; the Congolese province of South Kivu, slightly larger than the combined surface area of the two countries to the east, is routinely treated as just one section of the eastward 'border territory' of the DRC. The capital cities of Kigali and Bujumbura are easily within a day's travel of each other, a six hour bus ride today (including lengthy border crossing) that was already achievable in roughly twice the time at the point of Independence. Burundi traders who make their living crossing the border with Rwanda can live as far away as Gitega in the centre of the country, routinely completing day return trips to the southern Rwandan town of Butare (see map 1 below). Nowhere in Rwanda or Burundi are you more than a couple of hours from an international frontier.

Curiously, this universal physical proximity to the border makes the popular perception of the extent of the 'borderland' itself much narrower. Discussing Rwandan border issues in Bujumbura the conversation leaps immediately to the section of the border furthest from the capital, the north east province of Kirundo (see map 2); similar conversations in the central northern towns of Kayanza and Ngozi, about half an hour's drive from Rwanda, tend to switch quickly to the communes to their north that physically touch the border, rather than dwelling on their own proximity; move into those border communes, and the perceived 'borderland' narrows to the hills that peer over the border river itself. When everyone lives within touching distance of a border, and people everywhere cross with relative ease and profit from the crossing, the idea of a borderland that is distinct from the 'mainland' narrows considerably, and consistently does so relative to one's own position.

Population density aids this squeezed conception of the borderland. As the number of people per square kilometre in rural areas reaches over 400, there are no empty spaces into which the thin line of the border as drawn on the map may broaden in perception, while the fact that there are always large numbers of people living closer to the frontier than you do yourself aids the distinction between your own situation and those more immediate border-dwellers. With a small country comes a tiny borderland.

Within this narrow space, multiple border regimes through which migrants must pass govern equally minute slivers of the frontier; the mountainous terrain, the sheer number of inhabitants and the very limited resources of the state see the experience of crossing the border vary widely from one hill to the next and from one day to another. Occasional heavy military presence on the main road across the border is accompanied by an easy unmonitored crossing a few hundred metres downriver; even rarer military patrols in the hills are slower than a quick hop across the border on the next hill, migrants easily lost among the dense population, so long as the population is willing to withhold denunciation of their presence. But they are not always so cooperative to all movement, monitoring and defending the border on their own terms in alignment with the desires of the state as frequently as they conceal or aid movement against the state's desired terms. In such a situation, the border regime is not only a matter significantly under the control of the local people, but it becomes in itself a paramount issue of debate and competition within the borderland community that defines it. And thus, as a matter controlled and debated by the inhabitants, the regime is a question that migrants themselves may influence in their bearing and interaction with those resident on edge of the border.

Context and History

The following discussion is entirely an empirical analysis of a specific context, and the position within the literature of border regimes of the conclusions drawn below is yet to be resolved. It is hoped, however, that the fascinating accounts of surprising detail can point towards elements that will have value and application in many other circumstances; the historical record of Burundi in particular is exceptionally rich and almost entirely untapped for the period concerned, and this is an opportunity to explore elements of this context that may be brought to bear elsewhere, once their critical relevance has been more seriously considered. Below we tell stories, but intend that the stories may begin to hint at themes that will enrich larger theory.

The area under consideration is small in terms of distance, a short stretch of about 25km along the central part of the border between Rwanda and Burundi, incorporating the major border post on the road between Kigali and Bujumbura, known as Kanyaru-Haut after the river that defines most of this length of the frontier (map 3). The river is relatively broad, swift and deep in places, the river banks very steep on both sides, but points at which it is possible to wade across are frequent and frequently exploited, both by those wishing to avoid official scrutiny and by those for whom it is simply quicker and closer to make the wet crossing than go out of their way to one of the controlled bridges. To the west of Kanyaru-Haut the hills rise progressively higher towards the mountains of the Congo-Nile Ridge, covered by the pathless rainforest known as Kibira in Burundi, and Nyungwe in Rwanda; the heavily cultivated and densely populated strip between the forest and the border post has seen a wide variety of border regimes fluctuate from hill to hill, a rich ground for intriguing contrasts.

The period in which this area is to be discussed comes shortly after Independence for both countries in 1962. The border was newly inaugurated as an international frontier, both countries having emphatically rejected the Belgian and UN proposition of continued union as an independent federation, but was established along deeply historical lines; the Kanyaru river had been the frontier between the pre-colonial kingdoms for a couple of hundred years, firmly entrenched through long war and powerful cultural symbolism. While the two countries had been governed as subsidiaries of the same Territory by German and then Belgian rulers, the river continued to mark a strong distinction between national identities among the people, and even a distinct gulf of interaction between the respective arms of European administration; the last Belgian administrator of Ngozi province, Valère Vandenbulcke, recalls zero contact with his neighbour in Astrida (later Butare, Rwanda), explicitly comparing it to being in another country.¹ A de facto national border existed along the Kanyaru under the Belgian Tutelle, only lacking the significant marker of customs checks.

There were, of course, exchanges across this unofficial border, whether in the form of regular trade (the most common recollection of the nature of the colonial union among border inhabitants today is that both countries 'had the same money'),² through intermarriage or in conflict, particularly local reciprocal cattle raids. But the division of the border only became clearer towards the end of colonial rule, as Rwanda entered its civil war in 1959 and Belgian military rule was introduced across the northern provinces of Burundi to prevent the spread of trouble southwards.³ Large numbers of refugees crossed the border from Rwanda, and the movement of political troublemakers in either direction was closely monitored. Watching from a political climate in which ethnicity was a far less significant issue, the Burundi were largely horrified at the division of Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and the revolt against the Rwandan mwami (king), and perceptions of significant differences in national character and morality were further entrenched by the emergence of party politics in which the Burundi united heavily behind the son of their own mwami and his powerful rhetorical emphasis on national unity. The historical border was thus reconfirmed simultaneously in both popular sentiment and in the investment of state military surveillance and control, prior to the recognition of the border as an international division of recognised states.

¹ Interview, Westrozebeke (Belgium), 21/07/11

² Interviews, various (Burundi), February to May 2011

³ While the ethnic strife of Rwanda was largely welcomed by senior members of the Belgian administration as a manifestation of the moral liberation of the subjected Hutu, and a similar war seen as desirable in Burundi by the Resident General Harroy, it was considered that Burundi was not ready for such a conflict, and so actions were taken to ensure that war did not break out before the desired outcome could be ensured. *Archives Africaines, Brussels (AAB)*, Letter, Guillaume and Lannoy to Harroy, 08/08/60.

The years that followed Independence were defined by suspicion, fear, instability on both sides of the border, and an atmosphere of impending war. Burundi's pre-Independence unity was shattered 100 days after it had first manifested, as the son of the mwami became Prime Minister-elect with 80% of the vote and was then assassinated by a Greek gunman employed by his political and dynastic rivals. Rwanda's Revolution had produced a Hutu Republic that triumphed in its military and projected moral victory, but remained under threat from armed Tutsi exiles on all its borders. President Kayibanda of Rwanda regularly accused Burundi of sheltering and supporting these *inyenzi* militias, and several raids on Rwandan territory were launched by exiles from bases in Burundi. The Burundi government, itself in turmoil, accused Kayibanda of sheltering their own dangerous rebels, Barundi who had become sympathetic to the ethnic politics of Rwanda and saw in the continuously changing government of Burundi an attempt to exclude Hutu from power. Both countries denounced the dangerous behaviour of their neighbour, both appealed to the UN, small-scale military incursions became frequent, and full-scale war appeared imminent. The context of the unfolding Congo Crisis, in which both Rwanda and Burundi witnessed their fellow former Belgian possession rapidly disintegrate, and during which both countries were implicated in harbouring or supporting various factions while European mercenaries were seen or even crossed their western borders, ensured that the tension remained at the very highest levels, and that the perceived internal and external threats would only be taken absolutely seriously. Burundi experienced a military coup in 1966 and the creation of its own Republic, but tensions did not decrease as it soon became apparent that the army was gathering power in the hands of exclusively southern, Tutsi officers, despite the continued denial of the existence of ethnic politics in the country.

The States' Border Regime

The establishment of an official state border regime for Burundi, organised immediately prior to Independence, entailed the establishment of permanent military guards at four border posts (with Kanyaru-Haut as the primary), and instituted the necessity to obtain a *laisser-passer* or *feuille de route* from a local administrator for any individual wishing to cross the border. From a substantial record of these pass papers issued in Ngozi during the last few days before Independence on the 1 July 1962, a handful of common themes may be noted. Firstly, the reasons given for movement were largely religious (European and African priests and nuns conducting visits to related churches on either side of the border) or familial (as parents or children were given permission to reunite with their families just as the inauguration of the international border would otherwise divide them), with movement for reasons of employment largely limited to drivers and chauffeurs, often working for European residents of Astrida. Secondly, those who were issued such papers were almost entirely resident in communes that did not immediately touch the border. While there is no record of those who were refused permission to pass, and there is no way to know what proportion of issued passes have survived to be thus analysed, it appears that those who lived in the narrowest definition of the borderland, in the hills that overlooked the Kanyaru, made no significant effort to obtain official permission for crossings they could make simply and illegally in their own back yards. A few of those Barundi who still live right on the border remember the official requirement to obtain a pass document; most knew it wasn't actually necessary unless one went by the main road, and many don't even remember hearing that they were supposed to get one at all.

The creation of the permanent military posts were similarly ineffectual. The Burundi National Army was a young creation, with close to zero experience or resources at Independence; the Belgians had used Congolese troops from the *Force Publique* to maintain order in Ruanda-Urundi, but with the sudden Congolese accession to Independence, these troops had to be immediately disarmed and soon repatriated to their native country, Belgian paratroopers assuming military duties in Ruanda-Urundi for their remaining time under the Tutelle. Barundi were recruited for a new army, at first under the command of Belgian officers and advisers, but three months after their own Independence the permanent military border posts

were disbanded;⁴ in their short career on the border the nascent army nevertheless managed to instigate the first recorded instance in the long and considerable tradition of border corruption at Kanyaru-Haut only a few weeks after Independence, when a European businessman named Van Dyk who travelled twice weekly between Kigali and Bujumbura objected to having to pay a sergeant a bribe of 100 francs to pass.⁵ The letter giving the order to disband the posts, however, noted that 'their suppression does not at all indicate that the unit should lose interest in the surveillance of the Rwandan border';⁶ the permanent posts were to be replaced by fixed patrols, whose orders are simple but informative: 'a) to combat all armed incursion into the territory of Burundi; b) to verify, through inquiries, the identity of vehicle drivers and passengers coming from Rwanda'.⁷ Suspicion and fear of Rwanda was still very much a living concern, but even if moving patrols might have been intended to cover a greater extent of the border than fixed posts, they appear only to be expected to be able to monitor those same roads traversable by car. The patrols would be supplemented by military exercises, so that activities 'that will be planned outside of the garrison will permit the company to manifest its presence on the border';⁸ the military regime on the border consisted of little more than shows of force to displace the clear show of weakness in the loss of the four posts.

Aside from the sporadic military presence, the state's presence on the border was limited to officers of the Immigration authority, checking the documents of those crossing by the main roads. They, however, were similarly restricted in resources and numbers; the relief at the border post must have been considerable in October 1963 when the Minister of Immigration sent a telegram to announce his decision that 'a single immigration officer cannot work day and night'.⁹ The Minister recognised the danger posed to officers attempting to turn away migrants with insufficient documentation during the night, and so the 24 hour border posts were to be closed between 6 in the evening and 6 in the morning. A pair of immigration officers worked at each post, almost always recruited from the border community itself.¹⁰ Rather than impositions of state authority maintaining a forbidding distance from the community, they were local boys imbued with state authority, albeit with little power to back it up. The border regime of the state functioned, in so far as it functioned at all, through the involvement of the borderland people.

Away from the main border crossings, the dangers of state incapability to impose any kind of border regime were acutely noted by local government. The communal administrators on the border sent numerous pleading requests for a vehicle with which to be able to travel within their communes, visiting their constituents and monitoring the well-known illicit movement of individuals across the border, firstly requesting cars before begging just for a bicycle. Even when a vehicle was made available, the extreme difficulties of monitoring the region were apparent; the steepness of the hills and the ease with which the roads are swept aside by rain make much of the region impassable by car today, and the early requests for vehicles soon give way to requests for parts and materials to repair broken down vehicles defeated by the geography. Without personnel, military capability, or even means of locomotion, the ability of the Burundi state to bring its desired, heavily restrictive border regime into existence was all but illusion.

On the Rwandan side, however, the new Republic seemed far more capable, and indeed threatening. While it too had been patrolled by the Congolese *Force Publique* under the Belgians, the violence of the revolution had ensured the swift establishment of the core of an army with some military experience. Rwanda was able to unilaterally close the main border crossings when tensions mounted, maintained a permanent military camp in the hills close to the border at Ncili, and frequently conducted operations that crossed into Burundi. Terrified telegrams in Burundi record the sight of Rwandan military aircraft overflying their territory, or pass on rumours of soldiers crossing the border, both Rwandan and Belgian personnel and, on occasion,

⁴ *Archives nationales du Burundi* (ANB), Letter, Lt Col Verwayen to Commandants of Ngozi and Usumbura, 26/09/62

⁵ ANB, Letter, Governor Bizimana to Captain of Ngozi, 29/09/62

⁶ *ibid.* 'leur suppression ne signifie nullement que l'unité doit se désintéresser de la surveillance de la frontière du RWANDA'

⁷ *ibid.* 'a) s'opposer à toute incursion armés sur le territoire du BURUNDI; b) Vérifier, par coups de sonde, l'identité des conducteurs de véhicules et passagers venant du RWANDA'

⁸ *ibid.* 'qui seraient prévus hors garnison permettront à la Cie de manifester sa présence aux frontières'

⁹ ANB, Telegram, Minister of Immigration to Progou Ngozi, 18/10/63; 'VOUS INFORME SEUL OFFICIER IMMIGRATION NE PEUT TRAVAILLER JOUR ET NUIT'

¹⁰ Interviews: Cendajuru, 25/04/11; Rwanyege, 28/02/11

unknown white men believed to be mercenaries. Rwanda was pursuing those it considered to be *inyenzi*, militants sheltered and aided by the Burundi government; the internal documents of Burundi suggest that Rwanda was largely wrong on this count, as letters and orders frequently express urgently the importance of disarming refugees and preventing the formation of militias among the Rwandan exiles, but again the state's capability fell painfully short. The Tutsi militias certainly received support in Burundi, but it was through private means rather than collaboration with the state; in 1964 a cabal of former Congolese soldiers, under the command of a Murundi from the border region who had served in Congo under the Belgians, were arrested and prosecuted in Burundi for providing military training to refugees, hired to do so by a wealthy Rwandan exile.¹¹ The best that could be done by the state was the expulsion of those found to have engaged in such raids. 114 Rwandans were removed to the Congolese border in February 1964 since 'the persons concerned, having entered Burundi after massacring the people of the prefecture of Cyangugu without provocation on the part of the Rwandan population, cannot be considered as refugees'.¹² Rwanda desired a far more severe border regime than Burundi was capable of establishing, and so went about attempting to impose it itself through military action on both sides of the border.

However, despite its evident superior military capability, Rwanda was similarly unable to patrol the length of the border and bring into reality its desired regime through state power alone. The landscape defies the kind of total surveillance desired, even for a much more resourceful state. On both sides of the border, the nature and execution of any regime of border crossings lay largely in the hands of the local population. The sympathies, loyalties, beliefs and interests of local people made the experience of border crossing a highly unpredictable affair for different kinds of migrants. In order to explore the nature of these regimes, how they were formed and how they reacted to various border crossings, three curious incidents emerge as fascinating examples of local specificity, uncertainty and flux, and it is to these exceptional accounts of individual experiences that we may now turn.

Ryamukona: The Kidnap of Nkurunziza

The first incident to be discussed occurred at Ryamukona, a very steep hill that is less than 7kms from Kanyaru-Haut but that remains distinctly difficult to reach except across the border from Rwanda. One Saturday afternoon in July of 1967, a man drove his cattle along the bank of the Kumuremure river, a small stream that marks the border for a short stretch before it joins the Kanyaru. He had taken his cattle along this route many times, from his home on Ryamukona through the colline of Kivuvu and up towards the heights of the Congo-Nile ridge, where the grazing was better; he would prepare a temporary enclosure for his beasts near an abandoned camp of the mining company Minétain, so that they could graze without destroying his neighbours' crops. As he followed the line of the border this time, however, he was followed.

A group of Rwandan civilians had crossed the frontier and penetrated a kilometre into Burundi territory. They gave chase; he was caught, and forcibly taken across the Kumuremure, into Rwanda. There were Rwandan soldiers waiting on the far bank of the stream, and the man was stripped naked, dragged away to a hill at some distance from the frontier, and tied to a tree. At this point, the reports become confused; initial telegrams sent between the Burundi Ministry of the Interior and the local Commissaire d'Arrondissement speak of the man's 'assassination',¹³ but when the official reports were written a week later the Vice

¹¹ ANB, Interrogation of Karega Sébastien and accomplices, 10/10/64. Interestingly, while they made no secret in their interrogations that they had been hired as mercenaries (and were angry that their Rwandan employer had failed to pay them for their services), they nevertheless made emphatic political statements that phrased their training of refugees as a cause they believed in, support for the exiled Rwandan mwami claimed as a logical corollary of their background as Lumumbists in Congo; when arrested, they were on their way back to Congo to fight for the Simbas.

¹² ANB, *Procès-verbal et notification d'indésirabilité*, 14/02/64; 'les intéressés qui sont entrée au Burundi après avoir, sans provocation de la part de la population rwandaise, massacré des gens de la préfecture de Shangungu, ne peuvent pas être considérés comme réfugiés'

¹³ ANB, Telegram, Dirgalinter to Comarro Kayanza, 21/7/67

Governor of the Province would only claim that 'till this day, the fate of Monsieur Nkurunziza is unknown.'¹⁴

He shares a name with the current president of Burundi, but Nkurunziza was himself Rwandan. He had lived in the area for over fifteen years, first moving under Belgian rule when the border was officially just an internal administrative divide. The reports of his abduction mostly recognise him as 'Rwandais', but the outrage of the Burundi authorities is no less for this identity of foreign origin; the actions of the kidnappers are regarded as invasion and molestation of a Burundi national. Local authorities believed that Nkurunziza, along with members of the other six Rwandan families who lived in the same *colline* of Ryamukona, had long been suspected by Rwandan authorities of being spies for Burundi. Rwandan soldiers had penetrated Burundi three times in the previous month, claiming to be searching for *inyenzi*; the abduction of Nkurunziza was believed to be a key part of this operation, aimed at eliminating a traitorous spy who was aiding the *inyenzi*, and attacks on the other six long-term residents were to follow. 'The Rwandan authorities', reports Vice Governor Rwamo, 'have decided to liquidate systematically these seven persons'.¹⁵

A litany of frontier incursions over the previous months and years are recalled, the movement of people through the borderlands is portrayed in sinister terms as being 'under incoherent pretexts', migrants and visitors to neighbouring markets described as instigators and provocateurs of troubles, and casual contact between resident populations on either side of the border cast as the channels of rumour, fear and espionage. Barundi officials were just as anxious about the role of their former citizens who had taken up residence north of the border as Rwandans were suspicious of their own refugees in Burundi; several Barundi had moved during a short period of turmoil a couple of years previously, when internal troubles coincided with what was termed a Rwandan 'invasion', a few nights of hut burnings along the border. While speaking of good relations today, Barundi on the frontier hills recall how their Rwandan neighbours used mirrors to catch the sun and set light to the thatched roofs of their huts across the valley.¹⁶ 'The Barundi refugees, former inhabitants of Rugwiza *colline*, are at the base of these ploys,' Vice Governor Rwamo states with assurance.¹⁷ Rwandan administrative paranoia is mirrored in Burundi with the belief that that Barundi refugees act as 'intelligence agents for the Rwandans', even assigning to them the responsibility for the charges of espionage levied against Nkurunziza and his neighbours.¹⁸ These refugees were motivated 'by a spirit of racism', the local authorities claimed.¹⁹ They had not moved far, but only crossed the Kumuremure river; while Rwandan refugees were mostly transferred deeper into Burundi, the much smaller number of Barundi exiles were settled within literal shouting distance of their old homes, and their old enemies. In the days and weeks that followed the 'affaire Nkurunziza', more incursions, more rumours of attacks, more threats and fears of conflict spread, and the nights echoed with 'cries of alarm ... intended to create a spirit of insecurity amongst the peaceful population of Burundi'.²⁰

The first element of this tangle of events to be noted is the contrasting attitude to long-term migrants, alongside the shared suspicion of refugees generally. Nkurunziza and his other long-term settlers in Ryamukona were still considered as having a 'Rwandan' element to their identity after 15 years, but while the militant Rwandans, both civilians and military, were regarding him as a traitorous exile, the local Barundi and Burundi administration seem to have accepted him to a certain degree as one of their own to protect. Yet when it comes to their own migrants settling on the other side of the river, the Burundi state considered them with equal fear and disdain to the Rwandan perspective on Nkurunziza. Local opinions are

¹⁴ ANB, *Procès-Verbal Administratif sur la situation frontalière de Kabarore*, 24/7/67; 'jusqu'à ce jour le sort de Monsieur NKURUNZIZA est ignoré'

¹⁵ *ibid.*; 'les autorités rwandaise sont décidées de liquider systématiquement ces 7 personnes'

¹⁶ Interview, Karama, 08/03/11.

¹⁷ ANB, *Procès-Verbal Administratif*, 24/7/67; 'les réfugiés Barundi, anciennement habitant la colline Rugwiza sont à la base de ces manoeuvres'

¹⁸ ANB, *Affaire Nkurunziza*, 24/7/67; 'servent d'agents de renseignement aux Rwandais'

¹⁹ *ibid.*; 'd'esprit raciste'

²⁰ ANB, *Procès-Verbal Administratif*, 24/7/67; 'cris d'alertes...pour créer un esprit d'insécurité parmi la population paisible du Burundi'

here assumed by the official reports to be in alignment with the official stance, and this is not necessarily unreasonable; the raids and hut burnings of the previous month were extremely localised to Ryamukona, inhabitants of the neighbouring hills today recalling the nighttime violence on the skyline while they lived in unalarmed peace. Personal feuds between local people seem certain, their movement across the border amplifying the dispute to national importance. The 'racial' element claimed in the official reports remains conjecture, but in it we nevertheless see the conceptual backing to the government's desired regime of closure on the border, a perception dominated by ethnic conflict even as it clinged to the idea of Burundi as a land of ethnic fraternity; Rwanda is the land of ethnic division (in favour of Hutu), and those who choose to migrate across the border are choosing a stance of violent Hutu supremacy. The Rwandan government takes a mirror stance, seeing Burundi as the holdout of feudalist Tutsi, and migrants who settle south of the border are investing in unequivocal Tutsi militancy. The difference is that Rwanda is able to act on their manichean perception of the frontier.

However, the Rwandan army is seen to be imposing its border regime largely through the action of civilians. It is Rwandan civilians who cross the frontier in pursuit of Nkurunziza, perhaps under the direction of the Burundi émigrés, leaving the soldiers to stand guard in Rwandan territory. Residents of Rwanda (apparently of both Rwandan and Burundi origin) impose their conception of a desired border regime on their neighbours, with the assured support of an eager state, local clashes bringing local opinion into line with official policy. With the knowledge and action of borderland residents, the subjectivities of one set of inhabitants and migrants impacts violently on those of another; the subjective perception that short-distance migrants are treacherous, their movement an exploitation of the traversable border as they plot an imminent and bloody return, overwhelms the subjective position that long-term migrants hold of permanent residence and adopted home. The permanence perceived in years of peaceful residence is displaced by the dangers perceived in the narrow distance of movement.

Kibati: Informants in the Congregation

While the events of Ryamukona and Nkurunziza's abduction witness the close alignment of local people and national policy in the interests of a closed border regime, other events show an intriguing disagreement, falling short of actual conflict, between both local people and the state and within the local population itself. About a year after the disappearance of Nkurunziza, further west from Ryamukona, on the edge of the Congo-Nile Ridge and in sight of the Kibira rainforest, the local leader of the *Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore* (JRR), the 'youth movement', cultural propagandists and semi-official police of the single party (whose watchword, repeated frequently in their monthly reports, was 'Vigilance'), received a tip-off that three Rwandan soldiers had appeared at a protestant church near the border. Before the arrival of the JRR, two of the soldiers escaped back to Rwanda, but a 20 year old recruit named Faustin Ruziragu was caught and interrogated. Ruziragu told a curious story; he and his comrades were stationed at Ncili, the permanent military camp in the hills on the Rwandan side of the border, but had entered Burundi with no aggressive intent, neither threatening the country nor even hunting *inyenzi*, but were simply on a purely personal, religious visit to the protestant church. But Ruziragu's identity card indicated that he was Catholic; in a fit of patriotic and political cheek the young man retorted that 'When one is Parmehutu [Parti d'émancipation du peuple hutu, the ruling party of Rwanda] one is free to embrace the religion of one's choice'.²¹ A surreal, slightly suspicious anomaly was that apart from his military ID card, Ruziragu was carrying documents bearing the name François Twagirayezu, which he claimed to be a nickname given to him by his fiancée. It was eventually decided that he was merely 'an undisciplined soldier'²² and not part of any greater plot, but no record survives as to Ruziragu's fate.

²¹ ANB, *Rapport sur la visite de trois soldats rwandaise en Ijene*, 31/08/68; 'Quand l'on est Parmehutu on est libre d'embrasser une religion de son choix'

²² *ibid.*, 'un soldat indiscipliné'

The bizarre nature of this 'incursion' contains a variety of implications. Ruziragu claimed that it was the third time that he had crossed the border, and the idea that he would casually drop by the Burundi mission as if it were his local church speaks volumes as to his perception of the international boundary; the locals interrogated by the Commissaire said that this was the first time they had seen Rwandan soldiers in their country since the running battles of 1965. It seems likely that Ruziragu was telling the truth, since admitting to repeated violations of the border was scarcely in his interest now that he was in Burundi custody, which leaves the claimed local ignorance of these visits in an intriguing position. The two denials recorded come from Samson Ntahnkiriye, a communal councillor, and Samuel Mugendashamba, the catechist and JRR member who had reported the soldiers' presence. Ntahnkiriye speaks for the general population when he tells the Commissaire that at the visit of the three Rwandan soldiers 'the population thought that it was war that was about to break out', but that 'since the arrest of these Rwandan soldiers, the population is calm. However, the people wish that Burundi soldiers would sometimes make patrols in our region so that the inhabitants of Rwanda can see that we have protectors'.²³ This is of course the correct official answer; to confess to knowledge of the unreported presence of Rwandan agents on Burundi soil, or to any reaction other than fear of the captured man, would immediately bring either man under suspicion, and the wish for a greater military presence from the current army dictatorship is a practical statement of the population's patriotism and political investment in the government. It also echoes the perennial position of the local authorities, who added a request for a garrison on the border to almost every monthly report after the permanent border guard was disbanded. But these statements do not align with Ruziragu's account of his experience in Burundi, and the catechist Mugendashamba perhaps lets something slip when he twice insists that it was the first time that he, personally, had actually seen a Rwandan soldier in Burundi; he seems to emphasise a little too strongly that he had not witnessed a Rwandan, leaving open the possibility that he knew well that they visited frequently.

Apart from his claim to have made multiple trips across the border with apparently no adverse reactions, Ruziragu informs on the Burundi reaction to the presence of the three soldiers when he describes the conversations he had with the locals. In the middle of a conversation with the catechists about 'purely religious matters', he says, 'suddenly, *voilà*, a former soldier called Ngirente turned up and began to tell us that he is an ex-corporal, and so I asked him how soldiers here are treated.'²⁴ The Rwandan registered interest at the disparity between the seven-year contract of a new recruit in Burundi as opposed to the two-year tour back home, and at the great difference in size between the small Rwandan communes and the much larger ones of Burundi. The casual small talk, suggesting open knowledge of his foreign origin and a general mutual curiosity, scarcely aligns with the general shock and fear reported by the two informers. A final, obscure disparity is found in the Commissaire's notes to his interrogation, where he records that according to the local Premier Secretary to the Party, the people told the soldiers to report their presence to the communal authorities, but that Ruziragu retorted that to do so 'wasn't really a big deal to him, because he said that his fellow soldiers were around to defend him'.²⁵ Ruziragu denied saying any such thing.

Despite the claims of popular fear and the pious request for a greater military presence 'to show the Rwandans that we have protectors', the soldiers' incursion was met by a variety of responses, but scarcely caused terror in the local community. They were able to attend mass, recognisably Rwandan and military, and hold conversations with locals; while perhaps being advised to report to the local administration, they were certainly not immediately repulsed. It is possible that they had been in the area twice before, and were not entirely unknown faces. Some of those who saw them responded as self-appointed border guards, protecting themselves, their community, their nation, and advancing their political status by reporting the Rwandan presence to the authorities, while others chatted casually and amiably. Such curious disagreements in the report illustrate the divided nature of the local Burundi population along the border.

²³ *ibid.*, 'la population pensait que c'est la guerre qui allait se déclencher'; 'depuis l'arrestation de ces soldats rwandais, la population est calme. Cependant elle souhaite que les soldats Burundais fassent quelquefois des patrouilles dans notre contrée pour que les habitants du Rwanda remarquent que nous avons des protecteurs'

²⁴ *ibid.*, 'des choses purement religieuses'; 'soudain, voilà un ex-soldat nommé NGIRENTE se présenta et commença à nous raconter que c'est un ex-caporal et c'est alors que je lui ai demandé comment les soldats Burundis sont entretenus'

²⁵ *ibid.*, 'lui importe peu car disait-il que ses compagnons soldats étaient aux alentours pour le défendre'

The local informers were members of the administration's 'integrated movement' the JRR, and may be expected to have held reasonably close to the oppositional perspective of the border inherent in the young revolutionary government. The Murundi ex-soldier who engaged the Rwandans in friendly chat about their respective military experiences, on the other hand, is revealed as having a sketchy political past that would set him against the government and under suspicion of Rwandan sympathies, the communal councillor indicating that 'for the moment he doesn't dabble in racial politics, though during the elections in 1965 he did.'²⁶ But even the degree of antagonism between the informers and their more welcoming neighbours is notably weak; the councillor's report of the ex-soldier's racial politics goes out of his way to minimise the seriousness of this serious allegation by limiting it firmly to the past. The informers at every turn seek to present the local Burundi community of Kibati beyond reproach, uniformly loyal to the Burundi state and therefore fearful of Rwandan aliens, enthusiastic civilian agents of an ineffectual border regime. Yet their reports cannot conceal that the behaviour of their neighbours indicates that it is the actions of the informers, the invocation of a closed border regime, that is in fact unusual in this area.

In this remote corner of the border, therefore, where the nearest locus of state power was the Rwandan army camp of Ncili rather than any centre in Burundi, we see the nature of the border regime as a matter under contest in the local community, but not a matter of conflict. Some individuals set themselves up to be extensions of the state, pursuing some home political advantage, enacting yet exploiting the official border regime as they choose to inform on the migrants rather than on their Burundi neighbours. In this case it is likely the nature of the migrants that triggers such a response, soldiers reported to the authorities where civilian migrants may not have been. Yet the incident nevertheless illustrates some of the multitudinous influences that shape the border regime when it is largely in the hands of local inhabitants; unlike the urgent alignment of common interest between state and people seen in the mutual feuds and suspicion at Ryamukona, the people of Kibati demonstrate that manipulation of the response to movement across the frontier was a valuable, optional tool that lay entirely within their own power as inhabitants of the unguarded borderland. They do not seem to have been in genuine fear for their lives or livelihoods, but some individuals saw the opportunity to advance through the application of the state regime in which they had otherwise no particular investment.

Kanyaru-Haut: Preventing Escape

While the previous two accounts have dealt primarily with the collaboration or otherwise of governments and people in the shaping of a border regime, the final anecdote gives a vital glimpse at the experience of migrants as they attempted to make their way through these regimes. The tale dates from 1967, as two Rwandan Tutsi students at the University in Butare began to fear for their lives and decided to try to seek refuge in Burundi. Eight of their close friends had been arrested and incarcerated, and harassment from state security agents saw them abused as *inyenzi*, incessantly insulted in public places, and their student funding halted. As 'mercenary' attacks on Rwanda from Congo began anew and suspicion fell on them more than ever, they took their chance. 'We told ourselves that our last hour was about to chime if we stayed any longer',²⁷ they later recounted, and they resolved to flee.

Their first attempt to cross the border was a simple plan that merely served to show them the nature of the border regime surrounding the post at Kanyaru-Haut. A driver collected them from Butare on a Friday morning, dropping them in the area of the border around 10 am:

²⁶ *ibid.*, 'pour le moment il ne joue pas de la politique raciale sauf en 1965 lors des élections il faisait de la politique raciale'

²⁷ ANB, *Rapport sur l'escapade vers le Burundi de 2 réfugiés Rwandais*, 24/08/67; 'On s'est dit que notre dernier Leure [heure?] allait sonner, si nous restions plus longtemps'. The report is exceptionally dramatic and intellectual in style, but is littered with linguistic errors of varying degrees that suggest a student seeking to impress beyond his actual capabilities in the French language. Quotations reproduced here as originally written, with suggested alterations for particularly odd words or spellings.

'We're on our way through the hills, giving ourselves the air of a passerby, insouciant, greeting each person we meet, and so on... Finally, nevertheless, our height betrayed us, and the local people said to themselves that it is suspicious to see folk of our size in the borderland. At the moment that we believed our salvation was near, a whole mob charged at us with spears and knives. But seeing our confidence they stopped short of manhandling us, and agreed to ask us some questions: What are we doing there? Well, purely and simply students going for an educational walk. But so close to the border? Well yes, if one is to conduct research, we said, on the state of schools in Rwanda, whether or not they are abandoned, the life of the teacher, etc., one must not neglect any corner'.²⁸

The bluff barely worked. The pair were taken to the Immigration Office at the customs post, where a wily old man listened suspiciously to their story. He took down their names and identities and prepared a report for his superiors in Butare. The hopeful refugees saw an opportunity; they were not arrested, but put in the car of a passing Arab who was heading towards town, and told to return to University. The man who drove them did not know their background, and so eight kilometres from the border they asked him to drop them off, hoping to make their way back and attempt a crossing at night. They had heard of a man named Peter who knew a sure way across the Kanyaru, and having failed in their unaided attempt to cross, now sought his assistance. Immediately, however, they ran into another passerby who demanded to know their business, and so they chose the least suspicious option and headed for the nearest bar. The attempted flight neared the level of farce when they walked in on two policemen at the bar, who challenged them and asked to see their papers; not convinced of their story that they had been abandoned on the road by a lying Arab who had asked for too much money, the policemen took them away to be judged by the bourgmestre. Taken deep into the hills, the students spent the night sleeping on cold cement before meeting the local official and requesting a *laisser-passer* to return to Butare. Less suspicious-minded than the others they had met at the border itself, the bourgmestre obliged, but required them to take the quickest route home; left with little choice, they headed back to Butare to try and escape again the next day.

The first attempt had shown their naïveté in their foolish attempt to pass the border at the main crossing, but their second confirms their total lack of knowledge of the borderland region. Hiking through the night, they rejoiced at crossing a stream they believed to be the Kanyaru, before realising a little further along that they were still in Rwanda. They slept the day in a ditch, continued on at night, but were dismayed to find that when they finally found the real Kanyaru it was too broad and violent to cross. Their solution was again naïve, if also courageous; they followed the river towards the post at Kanyaru-Haut, where the water curls in a broad gentle curve, and today children swim and play beneath the bridge. Finally, with much caution and fear, testing the depth of the river all along and clearly unable to swim, they found a point at which they could wade across with water only up to their thighs. 'This time we were in the territory of Burundi and our problems were over, except for exhaustion.'²⁹ Climbing 'like automatons' they found the main road leading away from the border, came to a communal road barrier and found a policeman to take them on to Kayanza and register as refugees. The vivid account they wrote there of their trials in ambitious but problematic French remains an extraordinary tale.

While beset by hindrances, challenged by almost everyone they met, visually identified as Tutsi by their height, it must be noted that the suspicions of civilians, immigration officers and policemen were only ever followed by deferment. The border regime was one of heavy controls, seeking to prevent escape just as much as it sought to guard against incursion, and it seems that all those who lived and worked in the vicinity of the border knew their part in collaborating to enforce this regime. But that only went so far; suspicions are one thing, but acting on one's own authority is quite another. The refugees were passed from

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 'Nous même en route à travers les collines nous donnant un air de promeneur, insouciant, saluant chaque personne rencontré etc... Finalement quand même, notre taille nous trahit, et les habitants se disaient que c'est suspect de voir des gens de notre taille aux environs de la frontière. Au moment on croyions notre salut proche, tout une meute se rua sur nous avec des lances des serpettes. Mais voyant notre assurance ils présiterent [hésiterent?] à nous malester, et se consentèrent à nous poser quelques questions: Ce que nous faisons là? Eh bien purement et simplement des étudiants en promenade d'étude. Mais si près de la frontière? Eh bien oui, si on doit faire une enquête disions nous, sur l'état des écoles au Ruanda, les écoles abandonnées ou non, la vie de moniteur etc, on ne doit negligier aucun coin'

²⁹ *ibid.*, 'Nous étions cette fois en territoire Burundi et les ennuis, étaient finis à part la fatigue'

one border guard (whether an official one or not) to another until they reached the bourgmestre, an important local figure, but one who lived well away from the border itself. Though empowered to enforce the state's desires in ways that the other challengers were not, the bourgmestre showed the least concern and gave them a pass to travel unhindered, albeit only away from the frontier. The closed and violently enforced regime that the Rwandan government seemed to have established when viewed from south of the border appears distinctly lacking in bite when such an account of escape features only harassment and suspicion, and no worse. It appears that the local people who confronted the refugees were reasonably aligned with the government in terms of the politics of the border regime, but were not invested in its enforcement in the way that those engaged in local feuds near Ryamukona had been, and thus the strict regime relaxes under the determined migrant's perseverance.

The ignorance of the borderland geography as much as its human monitors is a similarly vital aspect of the refugees' tale. They were so unaware of the nature of the border that they could not tell the difference between a small stream and the Akanyaru River, and came unprepared for it to be a fast flowing torrent; there are a great many places where the river is relatively easy to cross, but the refugees could only turn towards the one point they had seen, beneath the post at Kanyaru-Haut. They were exceptionally ignorant migrants, if such a phrase can be used without too disparaging a tone; they came from outside the borderland, had no experience or knowledge of the border regime as enacted by state agents, civilians, or the natural barriers, and so encountered an ordeal that amplified their desperation and relief at attaining their goal. All along the border it is easy to find people who, living close to the river, have hopped from one side to the other in times of trouble to take refuge for a night or two in the neighbouring country, their familiarity with the area and with the border making the act of refuge a significant, but relatively easily undertaken process. Coming from without the narrow borderland (though only around 30 km from the frontier), the harrowing experience of passing through a terrifying (though ultimately rather porous) border regime transformed the subjective experience of these two migrants, making the arrival in Burundi the achievement of the promised land.

Negotiation in a Narrow Space

The three accounts discussed here illustrate a variety of recipes for the negotiation of a border regime between local inhabitants and governments, with the influence of the migrants themselves a crucial and perhaps decisive element. In Ryamukona we see local people personally invested in enforcing the closed regime of severely limited governments, their vigilance and aggressive dedication responding to the movement of short-distance migrants; the experience of one set of migrants in this mess is to see their short-distance movement outweigh their long-term settlement, and be treated as those who were intending to return home with violence. In Kibati the negotiation of the regime is even more explicit, as inhabitants choose whether or not to enforce the state's intentions based on personal advancement rather than personal survival, the regime just another tool to be exploited in local power games, albeit one exclusively at the disposal of those living in a very narrow borderland; the nature of the migrants involved in this case certainly seems the cause of such a response, and their casual curiosity for their neighbouring country transforms to the subjective experience of armed invaders. And finally, as the refugees cross Kanyaru-Haut, we glimpse a circumstance where local people and the state are aligned in purposes or intentions, but distinctly weak on investment in the policy, creating a hostile regime that is nevertheless open to penetration; the most remarkable aspect of the story is the total confusion of migrants who come from outside of the area in which the border regime is in place, their perception of their flight magnified in gravity many times due to their inexperience. Under such a crossing regime, the thin borderland was more foreign and hostile to them than the foreign country they eventually attained.

Such assessments, of course, are built on simple delineations of the parties involved in the negotiation of the regime, broadly a discussion between people and state. A more incisive analysis must go beyond this obviously artificial and misleading dichotomy, as the position of those involved in these negotiations are

clearly effected by their very involvement; when local people exerted their membership in the JRR and apprehended the soldier in Kibati, they were claiming an associated position of power in the outskirts of the state through their execution of the desired border regime. Just as local people show great variation in this particular case, the state position was scarcely monolithic; one local bourgmestre on the Burundi side of the border came under great suspicion when it was alleged that he often met with his Rwandan counterpart and that the two cooperated on border matters counter to the official antipathy that the frontier was meant to represent. The bourgmestre was soon dismissed from his position, imprisoned, and died in custody.

Nevertheless, these diverse incidents along a tiny stretch of a Central African border can point us in the direction of where to look for the dynamics that shape the formation and exaction of border regimes. Even when faced with a crippling lack of resources and capability, a state's desired regime can come into force if local people have reasons to take it up. The value obtained in engaging with the border regime is a variable of utmost significance, and even in locations where informal, officially prohibited trade is universal, there are circumstances where there is greater value or opportunity for local people to close the border themselves, for a time. The border regime is formed in each narrow crossing point through the negotiation of the state's desires and the potential value felt by local individuals. But alongside this paramount variable of local value and investment in the regime, the nature of the migrants themselves is a decisive factor; not only are their subjective experiences of movement shaped through their contact with a shifting border regime, their identity, history, knowledge, purposes and resolve hold the potential to pierce the most firm of regimes, or trigger the closing of the most open.

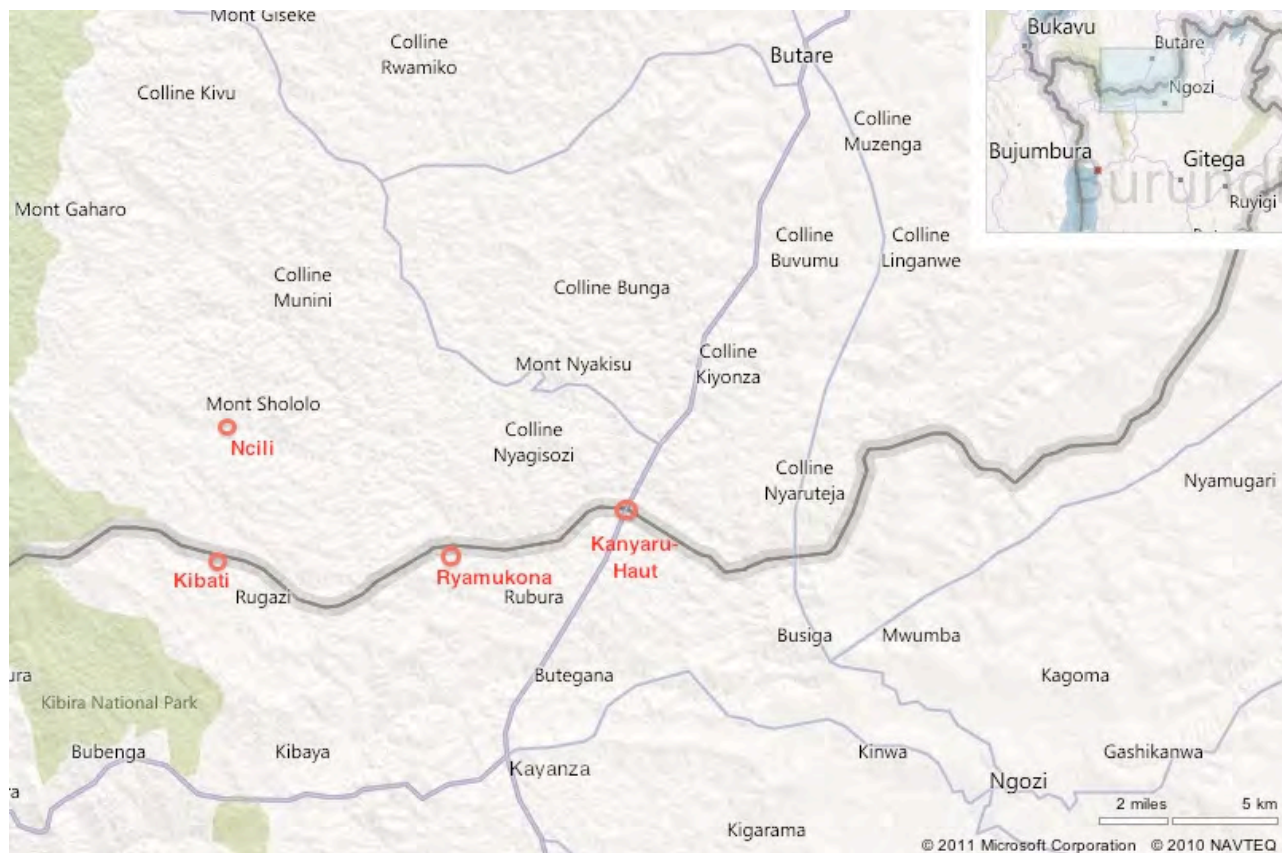
Map 1



Map 2



Map 3



Borderland Entrepreneurs: The dynamics of cotton production and smuggling by farmers along the Mukumbura border post between Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

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Abstract

The Zimbabwe-Mozambique borderland, which stretches for thousands of kilometres, is one of the longest and poorly managed in the Southern Africa region. Cotton is the major crop grown along the border. As the borderland communities are full of related people, the production seasons see Mozambican farmers coming to Zimbabwe to buy planting seeds and other inputs whilst Zimbabwean farmers would cross the border in search for fertile soils. The marketing period, depending on the strength of the country's producer prices, is marked by cotton smuggling to both sides of the border as farmers search for higher prices. This paper seeks to explore the dynamics of cotton production and marketing (smuggling) along the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border as the farmers take advantage of the porous border to obtain better rewards for their crops. It examines the role played by cotton buyers who are often willing accomplices in the smuggling of this bulky commodity. While not taking the initiative away from the farmers, this paper also looks at the role of corrupt border officials in aiding this smuggling. Though there are several routes used by farmers from both sides of the border to smuggle cotton, this paper will focus on the smuggling at the Mukumbura border post. This paper is premised on oral interviews with farmers on both sides of the border as well as various cotton buyers and border officials.

Introduction

The Zimbabwe-Mozambique border is one of the longest and poorly managed in Southern Africa. It extends for over 1231km, and is the second longest after the Malawi and Mozambique border which extends for 1569km.¹ The popular perception about African borders in general and Mukumbura Border post in particular is that borders are a colonial creation which ignored the way people used to live before the advent of colonialism. Even though it is assumed that the people from Mozambique and those from Zimbabwe speak different languages, at the areas on either side of the Border, people speak the same or similar language and share the same customs. Therefore, for the inhabitants of this borderland, the border is an inconvenience. The people always moved between the two countries, and they continue to do so up to this day with little regard to border control measures. To some inhabitants, it is not really a border in the stricter sense of the word as they can walk in and out of both countries without following the correct procedures of cross-border movement of using passports and other travel documents.

The Mukumbura Border post, as it is known in Zimbabwe or Mecumbura Border post as known in Mozambique, has become a source of livelihood for its inhabitants. While the border is predominantly located in a rural setting, this has allowed the majority of the people to make a livelihood out of agricultural commodities, primarily cotton, which is the major cash crop grown on both sides of the border. This paper examines how farmers on both sides of the border negotiate favourable prices for their contraband; make choices whether to sell in Zimbabwe or Mozambique and also how they maneuver through a maze of cotton merchants. This, as will be shown, has caused a 'border dispute' between the cotton merchants from the two countries involved. The paper further argues that Mukumbura border post has become a locus of opportunity primarily for cotton farmers who obtain inputs from Zimbabwe, but grow their crop in Mozambique for a predominantly Zimbabwean market. The paper attempts to map out the livelihoods afforded to these farmers at the border, and how, with the help of border officials, they have participated in the 'illegal' marketing of cotton at the borderland. The marketing of

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Zimbabwe. Accessed 25 August 2011

cotton along this border has never been a concern for the two governments until early 2011, when Mozambican merchants began losing most of the cotton produced on the borderland to Zimbabwean cotton merchants.

Research for this article was conducted in the Mukumbura area, primarily on the Zimbabwean side of the border between January and February and May to July in 2011 when the selling season for cotton was at its peak. I mostly dealt with the cotton farmers. Mozambican cotton farmers were interviewed when crossed the border to sell their produce in Zimbabwe. However, it has to be noted that some of these people are transnational beings, thus at times it is difficult to tell whether they are Zimbabweans or Mozambicans. In addition to these sources information was obtained from Zimbabwean companies that finances most of the farmers in getting inputs. Given that this trade is illegal, winning their confidence was difficult since they suspected that I was an undercover custom official. Once I got their trust, they provided useful information on the ‘smuggling’ of cotton between the two countries and how it is effected, and the benefits and challenges that have accrued to both the farmers and the cotton merchants respectively. However, the identity of my informants is protected by the use of pseudonyms in this paper. As will be shown later, the language of commerce in this particular area is predominantly Kore-kore, a sub dialect of the Shona language which I speak fluently. Although a large number of Mozambican farmers speak Sena, they are also able to speak this Kore-kore language because of their historical interaction with Zimbabwean communities across the border. Therefore communication was never a problem for me as I managed to converse without problems with most of my informants.

Contextualizing Cross-Border Trade

Like most international borders in Africa, the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border was arbitrarily drawn by the European colonizers following the Berlin Conference of 1884/5. These unilateral borders cut across ethnic and kinship groups and this has led to the controversies over the legality of the livelihoods pursued by such people at the

borderlands.² While the authorities see the people as engaging in clandestine and illegal activities, the inhabitants of the borderlands see themselves as entrepreneurs who are only taking advantage of the prevailing economic conditions on both sides of the border to make ends meet. There is also agreement in the literature on cross border trade that while economic, social and political pressures are the major reasons for the escalation of informal cross-border activities, a critical facilitating factor is the close historical and cultural ties linking the border communities of contiguous states.³ Borderland inhabitants therefore see no reason why states should curtail their economic activities as they are free to belong to each side of the border as they have relatives on either side. Indeed, the most challenging aspect of controlling these people is that some do have dual identity cards, have families across the border and most of their children attend schools especially on the Zimbabwe side of the border. It is because of the restrictions imposed by the states that the people concerned do not use the official entry and exits points but their own, which the authorities have failed to control.

Literature on cross-border trade has been on the rise as evidenced by the works that have come up in the last decade or so. There are different perspectives that have been propounded by scholars to explain cross border trade. From one perspective, cross border trade is viewed as 'informal', illegal activity that threatens the economic stability of the regions and countries concerned.⁴ My study draws much from Ellis and MacGaffey's study which attempted to describe some of the methodological and conceptual problems in researching aspects of sub-Saharan Africa's international "underground" trade, meaning commercial transactions which are conducted across international frontiers but which are unrecorded in official data.⁵ The cross border trade at Mukumbura can be described as part of what is variously referred to as the "second," "hidden," "parallel," "underground" and "informal" economy, all terms intended to convey the sense of

² For an analysis of smuggling in other parts of the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border see N. Popiwa, 'Smuggling on the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border' in J. Crush and D. Tevera, *Zimbabwe's exodus: Crisis, Migration, survival* (Cape Town: Southern African Migration Programme, 2010)

³ S. L. Chachage, 'Citizenship and Partitioned people in East Africa: The case of WaMasai', *African Development*, 28,1, 2003, pp. 53-54.

⁴ S. Ellis and J. MacGaffey, 'Research on Sub-Saharan Africa's Unrecorded International Trade: Some Methodological and Conceptual Problems', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2

⁵ Ibid.

economic activity which is not officially reported to state authorities and which is therefore not directly taxable.⁶ Although such activities are not necessarily illegal, they may involve a wide range of degrees of illegality. In the same vein, Brenda Chalfin argues that the border zone of north-east Ghana, a tri-juncture spanning Ghana, Togo and Burkina Faso, is characterized by the extreme mobility of persons and things on the one hand and extreme state surveillance on the other.⁷ Numerous layers of state personnel-police, border guards, customs agents and army officers-occupy this site with the aim of regulating trade.⁸ On the Mukumbura border, it will be argued that there is a huge presence of the para-military police, popularly known as the Support Unit on the Zimbabwe side and the Border *Frontera Guards* on the Mozambican side. Whilst these officials are meant to regulate movement and ensure that no smuggling takes place at the border, more often than trade, in this case they are primarily there to aid in promoting illegal crossings and trade by extorting the farmers.

Studies on cross border trade in Zimbabwe have slowly been on the rise recently, especially following the collapse of the Zimbabwe economy since 2000. Most scholars have been focusing primarily on ‘border-jumping’. Victor Muzvidziwa, for instance, argues that border post management in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been an impediment to the development of cross-border trade.⁹ He states that state functionaries engage in corrupt practices and so does immigration and customs officials who are often ‘too zealous’ as they harassed traders and seized their goods.¹⁰ Government controls have often provided enough justification for the conduct of illicit trade as the traders argue that they are not recognized by the states involved. In the main, cross-border traders and smugglers are undercapitalized individuals who cannot afford to pay import duties for their goods and therefore resort to illegal methods. Some do not understand the bureaucracy of customs and are willing to use the ‘easy’ methods that fit very well into their immediate scheme of operations. Given that governments are always

⁶ Ibid, p. 20-21.

⁷ B. Chalfin, ‘Border Zone Trade and the Economic Boundaries of the State in North-East Ghana’, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 71, No. 2, 2001, p. 202.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ V. N. Muzvidziwa, ‘Women without borders: Informal Cross-border trade among women in the Southern African Development Community Region (SADC), Addis Ababa, OSSREA, 2005, p. 48.

¹⁰ Ibid.

putting measures to combat illicit trade, smugglers have constantly shaped their activities to defeat the long arm of the law. Their responses, and the nature of interaction between the traders and the state, is the subject under discussion in this present study.

Focusing primarily on the eastern border of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, Nedson Pophiwa's work details the smuggling that takes place there of precious minerals like diamonds, often with the massive involvement of state officials.¹¹ In addition to diamond smuggling, Pophiwa argues that there has also been extensive tobacco smuggling through the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border after a stalemate in price negotiations between the state and the growers of the crop.¹² Mozambique was used as a route to export the crop to lucrative tobacco markets overseas.¹³ During that period, the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority reported that millions of dollars worth of raw tobacco was being smuggled out of the country and sold into neighbouring countries where prices were high.¹⁴ They noted that the bulk of the crop was finding its way to Mozambique where the local currency could be fully converted on demand into United States Dollars. Fish smuggling is another lucrative industry along the Zimbabwe-Zambia border. The big players in the kapenta fishing industry are alleged to smuggle millions of tonnes of fish annually from Lake Kariba into Zambia. Whilst smuggling of clothes, minerals, fish and to a lesser extent tobacco has been studied, this paper seeks to study the smuggling of a bulky agricultural commodity, cotton at the Mukumbura borderland between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Being a bulky commodity, it is largely difficult for farmers to smuggle cotton without the aid of border officials. Hence, the connivance between border officials and cotton smugglers need to be interrogated.

In this study, I desire to find out how and why borders are perceived by those continuously crossing them as corridors of opportunity rather than as divisions and

¹¹ N. Pophiwa, Smuggling on the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border, http://www.idrc.org.sg/es/ev-158067-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html. Accessed 8 august 2011.

¹² N. Pophiwa, Smuggling on the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border, http://www.idrc.org.sg/es/ev-158067-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html. Accessed 8 august 2011.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ L. Makombe, 'Raw Tobacco being smuggled: ZIMRA', The Herald 22 April 2003.

barriers?¹⁵ Indeed as Prescott has pointed out, boundaries have a significant impact on the economy, culture and environment of the borderlands.¹⁶ This study therefore seeks to examine how the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border is both a barrier and a conduit for cross border movements of goods.

Cotton Production in Zimbabwe and Mozambique: Key Players

Cotton production in Zimbabwe started during the colonial period and the sole buyer of the crop was a parastatal, the Cotton Marketing Board up to 1995 before it was renamed Cottco as a private company. It was deregulated in 1993 and new entrants were Cotpro 1995, Cargil 1996, Tarafern 2000, Farmers World 2000 and FSI Agricom in 2001.¹⁷ Before the deregulation Cottco used to set the prices of cotton and it was the only company that provided inputs to farmers. But by 2004 most cotton buyers began giving inputs to the farmers and the greatest competitor to Cottco became Cargil and Tarafern. Increased competition as a result of the entrance of new players into this industry resulted in the increase in cotton prices. Production is mainly done by small scale farmers whose production increased from 65 000 tonnes in 1980 to 298 000tonnes in 2000 whilst planted area increased from 59000 hectares to 376000 hectares over the same period.¹⁸

In Zimbabwe, commercial farmers began to stop cotton farming in favour of more profitable alternatives such as tobacco in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Cotton Marketing Board responded in 1992 with the introduction of a credit scheme designed to assist smallholder farmers in expanding their cotton production. By the time this sector's liberalization in 1994, smallholders accounted for 60% of production.¹⁹ Their share had

¹⁵ D. K. Flynn, "We are the Border": Identity, Exchange and the State along the Benin-Nigeria Border', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1997, p. 311.

¹⁶ J. R. V. Prescott, *Political frontiers and boundaries*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1987, 159

¹⁷ D. Dombo, 'Analysis of factors affecting the buying of cotton in Zimbabwe: the case of Manicaland and Masvingo regions', MBA, Africa University, 2005, p. 1.

¹⁸ The Herald 13 July 2004.

¹⁹ Ibid.

risen to almost 90% by the onset of the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme.²⁰ Mozambique operates the only local monopoly system in the region and is the only country that maintains a fully-administered, pan-seasonal, and pan-territorial price where merchants get concessions to buy cotton within a particular region at a set price. The government's role in price setting is strong in Mozambique because of a very weak state of farmer organizations in the country.²¹ The setting of prices by the government meant that prices were not always competitive and contributing to illegal buying and this has led for calls to reform the marketing system in Mozambique.²² Faced with persistent illegal buying which it could not control, with mounting farmer protests to be allowed to sell to whomever they wished, and with donor pressure to open the sector to increased competition, government in 2000 launched a short-lived attempt to gradually liberalize the sector. In October 2000, during the first national meeting of government and stakeholders, participants adopted an "open concession" model with a view towards eventual full liberalization. The model allowed communities within concession areas to opt out of their implicit contract with the concession company and deal with a competing company from input provision through sale of the seed cotton.²³

In Zimbabwe, the onset of the economic crisis in 2001 made acquisition of foreign exchange a top priority, and cotton production appeared an attractive way of achieving this goal. In addition, the real exchange rate depreciated spectacularly during 2001/2002, but the existing cotton companies did not pass on the benefits to farmers. As a result the total number of ginners rose from 5 in 2000/1 to 17 in 2006/7. The increase in the number of ginners meant that cotton production in Zimbabwe has been competitive second only

²⁰ N. Gergely and C. Poulton, 'Historical Background and recent institutional evolution of African cotton sectors', David, Tschirley, C, Poulton and P, Labaste (eds.), *Organization and Performance of Cotton Sectors in Africa: Learning from reform experience*, World Bank, Washington, 2009, p. 40.

²¹ J, Baffes, David Tschirley and Nicolas Gergely, 'Pricing systems and prices paid to growers', D, Tschirley, C, Poulton and P, Labaste (eds.), *Organization and Performance of Cotton Sectors in Africa: Learning from reform experience*, World Bank, Washington, 2009, p. 68.

²² D. Tschirley, C. Poulton, D. Boughton, The Many paths of cotton sector reform in Easter and Southern Africa: Lessons from a decade of experience, Working Paper No. 18, June 2006.

²³ Ibid

to tobacco. This has led to a massive increase in efforts by cotton merchants to tie a lot of farmers under contracts so that they would get a captive market, and be insulated from serious competition.

The entry of new cotton companies in Zimbabwe marked the proliferation of seed of uncertain quality, little or no insecticide, and no extension advice. In the same vein, entry of these new companies was also accompanied by large increases in credit default among farmers. The defaulting farmers, especially at the border areas, provide an interesting way to look at how business is conducted. As will be shown, most farmers at the borderland have dual homes, one in Mozambique and the other in Zimbabwe, and, as a result, they just cross the border when the marketing season starts. Several companies have lost their inputs to such unscrupulous farmers who are taking advantage of the absence of controls to get loans but sell their produce to other companies. Whilst such double-playing happens in the interior, the farmers are obliged to pay back the loans or will risk losing their belongings to these companies as they can attach anything of similar value to the loan provided. In Mozambique there is the perennial problem of very inadequate input packages and no extension advice has often been used as a pretext to buy indiscriminately during the harvest.²⁴ Cotton production in Mozambique is characterized by low levels of productivity, low prices and low returns. As a result cotton farmers in Mozambique are often no better off than their neighbors who do not grow cotton.²⁵ Within this context, it is easy to understand their desire to ‘smuggle’ the crop to market it in Zimbabwe.

At the border area on the Mozambican side, inputs and chemical distribution is often late and this leads the majority of the farmers to approach cotton companies from Zimbabwe to fill in the void, thereby creating conditions for the eventual sale of Mozambican cotton in Zimbabwe. This is due to the fact that Du Mucumbura is further away from the centres of commerce in Mozambique, and is much more linked to activities in Zimbabwe.

²⁴ David Tschirely, ‘input credit and extension’ David, Tschirley, Colin Poulton and Patrick Labaste (eds.), *Organization and Performance of Cotton Sectors in Africa: Learning from reform experience*, World Bank, Washington, 2009

²⁵R. Pitoro et al, Prospects for BT Cotton in Mozambique, Research Report No. 5E, June 2009
http://www.aec.msu.edu/fs2/mozambique/iiam/rr_5e.pdf, Accessed, 25 August 2011.

Production is mainly done by small scale farmers whose output increased from 65 000 tonnes in 1980 to 298 000tonnes in 2000 and planted area increased from 59000 hectares to 376000 hectares over the same period.²⁶ However, the general trend is that farmers have never been satisfied with the price they get from the buying companies. For example, in 2004, Cottco was offering ZW\$1 800/kg when the farmers expected to get ZW\$5 000/kg.²⁷ There has always been price impasse during the beginning of each marketing season after 2000, with the farmers mostly accusing the buyers of being exploitative and hungry for profits through the input credit scheme.²⁸ The lack of better prices has led most farmers to dishonour their contractual obligations to sell their produce to the financiers. This situation presents numerous problems for companies at the borderland as most farmers devise better ways of getting the best prices for their produce.

During research, the people who dwell in the following areas on the Zimbabwe side of the border were consulted; Gungwa, Chigango, Kapfudza, Mukumbura, Chisecha and Chimbuwe. On the Mozambican side of the border most farmers of the farmers interviewed were from Du Mecumbura. It is said that this area was formerly a FRELIMO camp during the war of liberation of Mozambique.²⁹ In addition, most Mozambicans involved in cotton production are settled along the Mecumbura River for water supply. It also has to be noted that the population density in the Mozambican Area is relatively low compared to that of the areas on the Zimbabwean side. This has inevitably led to many farmers from the Zimbabwean side to cross over to the Mozambican side in search of fertile land.³⁰ However, these people still maintain their homes on the Zimbabwean side due to the belief that the Zimbabwean economy is stronger than the Mozambican economy. It was also interesting to realize that most of the farmers on the Zimbabwean side do not have fields in Zimbabwe, and new farmers are clearing land on the Mozambican side.

²⁶ The Herald 13 July 2004.

²⁷ The Financial Gazette 3-10 June 2004

²⁸ The Financial Gazette 15 July 2004

²⁹ Interview with Mr. Chitima, 27 February 2011.

³⁰ Interview with Mrs. Maworesa, 27 February 2011

Whilst Zimbabwe has just concluded one of the most chaotic but revolutionary land resettlement programme between 2000 and 2005, it is important to note that this has by and large excluded most small scale farmers as land moved from white farmers to ZANU PF elites.³¹ This has meant that most peasants are still eking out a living on poor soils. However, for cotton farmers bordering the Mukumbura border post, this has allowed them to move across the border in search of fertile soils. It is therefore not surprising that a number of farmers from Gungwa, Chigango, Kapfudza, Mukumbura, Chisecha and Chimbuwe are clearing forests on the Mozambican side so that they grow crops.³² The other incentive for these farmers is that the land on the Mozambique side of the border is virgin and therefore relatively more fertile compared to that in Zimbabwe. This means less application of artificial fertilisers.

Even though the border is unmarked, those familiar with it identify it through landscapes such as trees and rivers. The crossing point used are mainly those areas that have been cleared of mines that were planted by the Rhodesian Armed Forces trying to stop the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) forces from crossing from Mozambique into Zimbabwe.³³ Most of the mines have been identified by the government and are marked with some red marks put against the mine but a number of people and their domestic animals are still being killed by those uncleared mines. As a result of fear of those mines, there are known routes which people follow when crossing into and from either country. This brings us to the role of the para-military and the border guards from either side. While people who are crossing the border to either see their relatives or to go to school or fields do that without any hassles, it is those who are moving their agricultural produce who are supposed to pay bribes in order to gain passage. Most farmers I have spoken to argued that without the help of the border guards and the cotton merchants, it would have been difficult to carryout business at the border. One farmer told me that they sell their cotton early in the morning between 03:00am and

³¹ For a detailed analysis of land reform in Zimbabwe see for example Moyo, S. (2000) 'The Political economy of land acquisition and redistribution in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999' *Journal of Southern African studies*, 26, 1, and Sachikonye, L. M. (2005) 'The land is the economy: Revisiting the land question' in *African Security Review*, 14, 3. These scholars argue that the land reform was chaotic so much that it ended up benefitting the leadership in ZANU-PF at the expense of the landless peasants.

³² Interview with Mr. Chimoto, a farmer from Gungwa village, 20 January 2011

³³ Interview with Mr. Masawi, a farmer, 20 January 2011

06:00am whilst the officials will be ‘sleeping’.³⁴ The farmers’ argument was that since they often make lots of money, the cotton merchants could be robbed but they ignore such threats to meet with the farmers very early.³⁵ In addition, this buying happens outside the buying points designated by the Cotton Growers Association (CGA). This clearly shows that the cotton merchants, in search for an elusive target set by their managers due to competition are willing accomplices in the ‘smuggling’ of cotton between the two countries.

Until recently, there has never been conflict between the Mozambican farmers and Zimbabwean farmers over the land issue. This is explained by the fact that most of the people on the borderland are relatives. There are intermarriages between borderland communities which ties these communities together. Furthermore, because of the better standards of schools in Zimbabwe a number of Mozambicans living on the borderlands send their children to Zimbabwean schools close to the border. In addition, there has never been any language barrier as the languages spoken are almost similar. In Mozambique, they speak Sena, which is more or less similar to Kore-Kore spoken by the people from the Zimbabwean side. Whilst the people try to negotiate the border restrictions of the heavily armed policemen and the Mozambican Borderfrontera Guards, their main stumbling block are the landmines that that were set up by the protagonists during the struggle for independence in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Most victims of the landmines are however those who are seeking to clear new lands for cotton production. There are however no statistics of smugglers being killed by land mines. This is mainly due to the fact that these farmers have their own ‘entry points’ they use to enter the country to sell their commodities.

The period between 2005 and 2009 saw farmers on the Zimbabwean side opting to sell their cotton to Mozambican merchants, albeit at a small scale. This was caused by the monumental collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar and the hyper-inflation that obtained during that time. Zimbabwean farmers would opt to get cash in the Mozambican currency as it

³⁴ Interview with Mr. Piano, a Mozambican farmer, 19 July 2011.

³⁵ Interview with Mr. Mamombe, a farmer, 19 July 2011.

was stronger than the Zimbabwean currency. It was the desire to get foreign currency that pushed these people to sell their crop in Mozambique. However, in doing this they were infringing on their contractual obligations since they obtained inputs from Zimbabwean companies in return for the crop. It is important, however, to note that the selling of Zimbabwean cotton in Mozambique was not as pronounced as the selling of Mozambican cotton in Zimbabwe as will be shown later.

The period after 2009 saw a reversal fortunes as Zimbabwe officially adopted the United States Dollar as its currency following the collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar. This saw an increase in the number of cotton growers as well as the growth in the Zimbabwean market for cotton produced in Mozambique. The same period also witnessed an increase in the number of Zimbabweans crossing the border to clear new lands for crop production. Therefore, land has been the chief motivator for the farmers to cross over as they believe that land is plentiful in Mozambique. Indeed the villages of Mukumbura and Mucumbura have close day-to-day ties with their equivalents on the other side of the boundary. There are other factors that motivate the crossing of the border like marriages, the search for basic commodities and even markets for perishables like tomatoes and vegetables. Martinez has argued that "the determining influence of the border makes the lives of border peoples functionally similar irrespective of location, nationality, ethnicity, culture, and language. In other words, all borderlanders share the border experience"³⁶ Although it is true that borders everywhere present people with similar structural constraints and processes, including international delimitations, cross-border trade, migration, and border conflict, people do not deal with these constraints and processes in the same way everywhere.

The lure of the US Dollar? Cotton ‘smuggling’ along the Border

In this section I discuss the marketing of cotton along the borderland areas of the two countries. I discuss how the farmers/entrepreneurs have negotiated through the challenges

³⁶ O. J. Martinez, *‘Border People’: Life and Society in the US.-Mexico Borderlands*, Tuscon, University of Arizona Press, 1994, p. xviii.

they face in order to make a living out of the opportunities presented by the border. The argument that I will thus proffer is that far from being a barrier, the Mukumbura border has afforded its inhabitants a better livelihood than people from far away from the border. Even though there are risks involved, people have by and large devised ways of circumventing them in order to make the most out of the opportunities provided by the border. I also discuss the complicity of the various cotton players in this fast flourishing business of cotton ‘smuggling’ as they seek to meet their targets in order to remain competitive. The role of the governments will be discussed, albeit in passing as it was difficult to get their voice on the trade.

With the liberalization of the cotton sector in Zimbabwe, a number of companies have entered into the fray, trying to both finance and buy the cotton. More than ten companies are at present buying cotton in Mashonaland Central province, where the Mukumbura Border is. Recently, companies in Mozambique have been claiming that Zimbabwean companies are not observing the border as they buy their cotton from Mozambican farmers. This ‘border dispute’ was reported to government officials; the Governor of Mashonaland Central (where Mukumbura fall) and Mozambican Ambassador to Zimbabwe. This however was not the first time that such disputes were reported. In 1997, Zimbabwean officials denied allegations of a border dispute with Mozambique in the Eastern Highlands.³⁷ The denials followed reports by the Maputo *Daily Noticias* that Zimbabwean farmers were altering border markers and pushing their lands deeper into Mozambique in an attempt to extend their farms for the production of tea and coffee on Mozambican soil.³⁸ This earlier dispute has some similarities with the current situation obtaining in Mukumbura except that the dispute has been blown out of proportion by the merchants who are losing out in the buying of cotton. Unlike the Eastern Highlands ‘border’ dispute that pitted farmers on both sides, this recent dispute pitted merchants against merchants.

³⁷ <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-18084222.html>. visited 9 august 2011.

³⁸ Ibid

The border issue was that the Mozambican cotton buyers were trying to stop the Mozambican farmers from delivering their cotton to Zimbabwean companies by using the politicians citing that they are getting into Mozambique illegally and taking the resources to Zimbabwe. However, according to Zimbabwean merchants, the issue of a border dispute was only an alibi and a smokescreen by the Mozambican companies who could not compete favourably with Zimbabwean companies. Their argument was that the cotton price in Mozambican currency is equivalent to US\$0.50c³⁹ while in Zimbabwe it was US\$0.85c per kilogram of cotton.⁴⁰ Thus, the issue was largely about the viability of cotton production by the farmers, and the Mozambican merchants's struggle to be competitive. Hence, Mozambican merchants' failure to offer competitive prices for cotton has resulted in them losing cotton to Zimbabwean merchants. The issue of currency also feature prominently in their marketing decisions. Ever since Zimbabwe began using the US dollar, many Mozambican farmers have been flocking to Zimbabwe. This has resonance with arguments that differences in national economic policies, regional resources, and monetary currencies make borders lucrative zones of exchange and trade, often illicit and clandestine.⁴¹ The market forces then forces these entrepreneurs to find the best market for their produce. Another angle to explore the border dispute between Mozambican and Zimbabwean cotton merchants is to look at it through the modus operandi of one Mozambican company. It is said a Zimbabwean called Mr. Chipisa working for Mozambican Cotton Company has been on the forefront of trying to stop these cross border cotton sales because he was failing to achieve his cotton volume target to justify the setting up of operations on the Mozambican side as all his anticipated volume was going to Zimbabwe.⁴² As noted by Baud and Schendel, members of local society at borderlands will try to use state institutions to their own ends and sometimes played off one state against another.⁴³ Besides, Mozambican farmers believe that the Mozambican companies' service delivery is very poor in that the inputs

³⁹ For 2011season, a kilogram of cotton was being sold for 15 meticaais (US\$0.50) which was considered to be the highest in two decades. This price was agreed upon by the National Forum of Cotton Producers and the Cotton Association of Mozambique, representing the buyers and producers respectively.

⁴⁰ Interview with Collen Mubaiwa, Transit Depot Manager for Cottco Mukumbura, 22 July 2011.

⁴¹ D. Flynn, "We are the border", p.

⁴² Interview with Mr. Mubaiwa, Cottco, 10 June 2011

⁴³ M, Baud and W, Van Schendel, 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands', *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1997, p. 215.

are distributed late well after the rains have started and chemicals always arrive to farmers when their crops have been damaged by pests forcing them to borrow from their relatives and friends on the Zimbabwe side.⁴⁴

At a meeting to discuss the border dispute between cotton merchants, government officials felt that there was no border issue at all, but noticed that it was one company that was failing to secure cotton because it offered poor prices compared to its competitors. They however didn't discuss this phenomenon of 'international trade' in cotton between the two countries. For the Mozambique ambassador, he was said to have been happy that his people were taking advantage of the opportunity to make extra cash for themselves by selling to the highest bidder, whilst the Governor of Mashonaland Central was happy that Zimbabwean companies were offering competitive prices for cotton. One farmer remarked at the meeting

I am not a dull farmer, I know who gives me the best price for my crop and if it means crossing the border to sell, let it be so. After all we have been crossing the border for ages, why is it a problem today? Because we are making money out of our cotton? We will continue selling our cotton to the one who appreciates our labour!⁴⁵

There are other factors that prompt Mozambican farmers to sell their produce to Zimbabwe companies such as Olam, Grafax and Cottco. As highlighted earlier, the merchants in Zimbabwe offer their farmers an inputs regime that allows the farmers to grow more cotton unlike the Mozambican merchants. Cottco and Olam are the two Zimbabwean companies that are on the fore-front in providing their farmers with input support. As a result, Mozambican companies will be at a disadvantage when it comes to buying as contractual obligations mean that a farmer has to sell to a financier to offset credit provided. Indeed some farmers in Mecumbura area are registered in the Cottco's Grower database and access planting seed, fertilizers and chemicals like Zimbabwean

⁴⁴ Interview with Mr. X, Mozambican farmer, 20 July 2011

⁴⁵ Interview with Mr. Chamunorwa, Mozambican farmer, 10 February 2011.

farmers. Collen Mubayiwa the Transit Depot Manager for Cottco Mukumbura showed me about five farmers who are from Mozambique, but are registered as Cottco farmers. These are the farmers; N. Manuel, P.O.MAPININGA, T.ALVELINO, F.TAITOSSE; and J.PIANO.⁴⁶ These are by no means the only farmers who opt to get inputs from Zimbabwe so as to market their produce to the lucrative Zimbabwe market. However, to some, this market since it is done across borders has been termed illegal. The provision of inputs to these farmers however does not guarantee the cotton merchants of the white gold as cotton is known within this region. There are instances when the farmers get inputs from merchant A but end up selling their produce to merchant B. This happens mostly when a company that would not have financed the farmers compete with the ones that would have financed the crop. Such companies usually will be offering more money compared to other companies and this leads to a phenomenon called side marketing, which has almost culminated into price wars.

The cotton companies involved are so quick to absolve themselves of any wrong doing in the trade. As pointed out, they will be seeking to meet their set targets for each growing year and they will buy even the cotton they did not finance. One merchant talking about the so-called smuggling saw nothing wrong with it. He argued;

As a buyer, my first instinct is to buy any cotton that comes my way. To me it's not smuggling at all because what I want is to meet my targets, and after all it is these farmers who approached my company for seed and chemical inputs. Why didn't people stop them from getting loans because they are from Mozambique? Besides, Mozambican cotton is of high grade, it will fetch us a lot of money.⁴⁷

The recent conflict over the way Mozambican farmers are dealing with Zimbabwean merchants has brought to the fore the weaknesses associated with the use of the term smuggling to characterize this trade. For the borderland inhabitants, the term smuggling has therefore been seen as inappropriate because it is a legitimate response to the failure

⁴⁶ Interview with Mr. Mubaiwa, 15 June 2011.

⁴⁷ Interview with Mr. Madesera, 15 June 2011.

of the state to meet people's basic needs. As one commentator asserts, "although border residents are fully aware that according to state laws it is illegal for them to sneak goods around the customs post, they do not regard it as morally wrong for them to do so."⁴⁸ This means that border residents believe that they have a right to move freely, and that guards are wrong to ask for bribes from them in the name of the state, for personal gain. The vocabulary for this kind of economic activity shows the acceptance, by the people, of smuggling as an important source of livelihood and wealth.⁴⁹ While the state is deprived of revenue from duty and taxes, this is often the only meaningful economic enterprise that marginalised border residents can undertake.

In situations where side marketing of cotton is rife, most farmers would dump their traditional financiers for the new buyers and this phenomenon is rife at the border communities. What the farmers would do is that they would smuggle their cotton across the border at night and task their friends and relatives across the border to sell their cotton to the highest bidder regardless of whether they financed or not. In some situations, the farmers would just abandon their homes early in the morning and return in the evenings leaving their wives at home to deal with the financiers and most companies complain that they would be told that '*baba havapo handinga kutengeserei donje ndongovawo mukadzi*' (the father is not around I can't sell you the cotton because I wasn't given that instruction).⁵⁰ Most border farmers have perfected the art of getting financed, and then dump the financiers opting to pay cash for the inputs later in the year. Whether it is criminal or not is another issue to them; the most daring wouldn't just pay while others will re-imburse the inputs given to them.

Most of these farmers have started many social networks within Zimbabwe and in Mozambique for their own benefits. For example, it is much cheaper and takes less time

⁴⁸ D. Flynn, "'We are the Border: Identity, Exchange and the State along the Benin-Nigeria Border'" *American Ethnologist* 24(2) (1997), p. 324.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Most cotton merchants are told these words mostly by women and also by children when they visit the farmers they would have financed. There are instances where women have been beaten up or divorced by their husbands for selling the cotton without the instruction of their husbands.

for the Mozambican farmers to travel to Harare to buy groceries and other necessities compared to travelling within Mozambique. One farmer argued;

It is easy for me to sell my cotton in Zimbabwe, and then proceed to Harare in one day to buy my children food and clothes. If I were to sell to these companies in my country [Mozambique], I will get less money and will struggle to go Tete or Beira or Maputo to buy goods. I will spend four days travelling! Does that make sense? So it makes a lot economic sense for me to sell my cotton in Zimbabwe and buy my goods from there.⁵¹

It also has to be remembered that most of these farmers send their children to Zimbabwean schools to learn English. As a result, most people from Mozambique who live along the border can write English better than they write Portuguese. Therefore, for most Mozambican farmers, their economic life may be rooted in their land, but most of their social activities are in Zimbabwe and as such they seek money that they will be able to use in Zimbabwe.

⁵¹ Interview with Mr. Madesera, a Mozambican farmer, 30 July 2011.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to show the entrepreneurial activities carried out by Zimbabwean and Mozambican farmers along the Mukumbura/Mucumbura border post. Most of these farmers are small scale producers who produce cotton primarily under the input credit scheme financed mostly by Zimbabwean companies. The unwritten agreement of this set up means that the farmers are supposed to sell their cotton to their respective financiers. This study has shown that there is no loyalty as far as marketing is concerned as the farmers seek to get the best prices for their crops. For Mozambican farmers, the lack of inputs from financiers on their side and the lack of competitive prices perpetually draw them to market their produce in Zimbabwe. Of course there are factors compel them to market in Zimbabwe like the distance to the towns for buying basic commodities, the lure of the United States Dollar, and more importantly the availability of financiers who also pay better prices compared to Mozambican merchants. All these factors put together means that Mozambican companies are at the losing end in the competition for cotton, thus the farmers are obliged to jump the border and smuggle their cotton.

The border, therefore has presented numerous financial opportunities for the borderland communities. Even though there are risks associated with smuggling cotton like the numerous landmines planted during the colonial period, the farmers still look forward to each next marketing season as they anticipate more opportunities to make money. As a result of this trade, many have managed to build proper houses, whilst others are sending their children to better schools in Zimbabwe. The threat by Mozambican firms to report the smuggling to the authorities was seen by most farmers as a threat to their source of income. It is therefore evident, from the foregoing analysis, that farmers at the border are real entrepreneurs who have taken advantage of the affordances of the border to eke out a living, and in some instances to make profits.

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‘I am From Busia!’: Making ‘Place’ Out of Partition at the Kenya-Uganda Border Through Everyday Practises and Activities

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Abstract

Although political geographers, anthropologists, and historians have contributed to understanding how local residents derive social and economic benefits from international borders, the resulting literature is less clear on what it means to ‘be at’ the border. Critical geographers use the spatial turn, or the idea that space produced through practises and perceptions can structure social action, to address this limitation, especially in African border contexts where state presence is often weakened or modified by local agendas. However, the links between border activities, perceptions, and location are not as well developed. This paper argues that, by augmenting geographic theory with ethnographic methods, border scholars can conceptualise border towns as dynamic ‘places’ where individuals impact and construct meanings from border spaces in different ways. Fieldwork conducted in adjacent border towns along one of the busiest trade corridors in East Africa uncovered local perceptions of the border and a range of activities occurring across it. When put within the context of the recently-launched East African Common Market, this study illustrates the continued relevance of border towns to wider social and economic development.

Introduction

The tracing and tracking of who we are and where we belong, has, for many of us, increasingly become a question rather than a priori given. It is not without coincidence perhaps that in this time of high trans-spatial mobility that questions like ‘where are you from?’, ‘where are you now?’ are so often heard these days. These are surely interesting geographical times. (Ernste et al., 2009: 578)

The border crossing at Busia, Uganda is busy with activity. Iron gates do little to slow the hurried flow of people moving back and forth. Officials dressed in olive green uniforms gesture at truckers to come down from their cabs for inspection. Bicyclists in bright pink shirts balance passengers and huge sacks while shouting to clear the way. I enter the Ugandan migration office with questions running through my mind. Who were these people? Why were they crossing? A migration official examines my passport, scanning its data into a computer. “Where are you going? Kampala?” she asks. “No, I am staying in Busia, Uganda, right across the border,” I replied. Incredulous, she looks up. “Why? There is nothing here!”

Juxtaposed with the vibrant reality outside the office, her words pointed to a critical question: what does it mean to be at a border? Equally, what feelings, experiences, and challenges contribute to these meanings? Social scientists have made some progress reorienting studies of borders towards such ground-level perceptions. Within political geography, critical interrogation of dominant, cartographic representations of territories via research in border communities has revealed how borders are not just ‘lines in the sand’ but also sites of contestation and cooperation (Scott, 2003). Anthropologists, concerned with variegated manifestations of power and identity, also have problematised linear conceptions of geopolitical borders (Donnan and Wilson, 2001), hinting at a deeper relationship between borders and residents that does not necessarily correspond to traditional notions of the

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'nation-state'. More generally, it is apparent that "borders increasingly are interfaces between people that show themselves and are represented contingently" (Ernste et al., 2009: 578).

Yet, assumptions of international borders as natural limits of territory (Agnew, 1994) or increasingly irrelevant in the face of globalisation (Ohmae, 1994) and transnational flows and networks (Castells, 2000) persist. These largely Eurocentric characterisations, relying on macro-level examples of regional integration and high levels of economic activity, are less readily applied in Africa where states' capacities to locate and enforce their borders are diminished (Bakewell, 2007). Coupled with historical evidence showing how colonial authorities tended to divide territories using astronomical meridians and arcs rather than physical landforms or in relation to pre-existing ethnic groups (Nugent and Asiwaju, 1996), there remains significant physical and social room at the local level for residents to manage, reshape, and ignore those clear lines on official maps. Indeed, as Flynn (1997) argues in her study of economic exchange among communities along the Benin-Nigeria border, activities can be shaped by a shared sense of 'being' the border. However, less border research explores the local significance of links between geographic location, activities, and perceptions: Megoran, Raballand, and Bouyuou rightly warn "it is always a danger that political-discursive studies of boundaries will overlook or displace economic considerations, fail to come to terms with everyday experiences of negotiating borders, or miss out important general elements in the equation that may be place specific" (2005: 735). As a result, Engel and Nugent observe, there is need for further understanding "the nature of material borders and the social processes around this" (2010a: 4), especially in African contexts.

Given the reality of de- and re-territorialisation processes in Africa, most notably through the formal introduction of the East African Common Market (EAC) in July 2010, I address this gap using a human geographic conceptualisation of 'place' to analyse activities and perceptions at a key crossing between Kenya and Uganda. I show how residents simultaneously derive and contest important material, social, and economic benefits related to their location. Busia, a set of contiguous towns, is situated along the Northern Corridor trucking route stretching from Nairobi to Kampala. The southern section of the boundary between the countries was set in 1902 when the former Eastern Province of Uganda was transferred to the East African Protectorate, now Kenya (Pirouet, 1995). Therefore, Samia and Teso ethnic groups present in the region continued to live on both sides (Soja, 1968). The contemporary political economic significance of this location is illustrated by the fact that, at least in the Ugandan case, the state elevated its status from Sub-District to a separate District in 1997 (BDLG, 2009). Furthermore, their location at the conjoining of two EAC member states increases their importance at the regional scale, drawing attention from past Ugandan and Kenyan presidents (Lorch, 1994) and state 'revenue protection units' of border security officers charged to crack down on undocumented trade (Whyte and Muyinda, 2007).

Ethnographic interviewing, focus groups, participant observation, and collection of printed materials were used to identify the range of activities and perceptions in the town councils. Transcripts were sorted using Nvivo software. Finally, a concluding focus group at the end of fieldwork brought together many of the participants to discuss preliminary findings and provide feedback as an informal validity check.

The paper is organised in the following way. First, I review how the concept of 'space' has been applied to study of African borders, focusing on the 'spatial turn', its contributions, and limitations to understanding everyday dimensions of border life. Then I go on to argue that, by adding a sufficiently dynamic conceptualisation of 'place' as articulated by human

geographers, sociologists, and anthropologists to the analytical toolkit of border scholars, the link between everyday activity and meanings of ‘the border’ is strengthened. I illustrate this link through three spheres of border activity that were especially salient in Busia, Uganda and Busia, Kenya: trade, secondary education, and health service provision. Finally, I conclude with discussion of how these findings and theoretical elements connect with wider territorial change occurring in East Africa.

African borders and the ‘spatial turn’

Arturo Escobar asserts that “Western philosophy...has enshrined space as the absolute, unlimited and universal, while banning place to the realm of the particular, the limited, the local and the bound” (2001: 143). Such treatment takes spatial units like territory as ‘natural’ objects of study. Until the 1990s, this was the dominant narrative on space, especially in political science and its sub-discipline of international relations; few research agendas attempted to systematically refute it.² Then, Agnew (1994) challenged international relations scholars to avoid this ‘territorial trap’. Brenner also called for space to be reconsidered “no longer as a static platform of social relations, but rather as one of their constitutive dimensions, itself historically produced, reconfigured, and transformed” (1999: 40). These developments prompted Edward Soja to make a provocative observation:

Contemporary critical studies in the humanities and social sciences have been experiencing an unprecedented spatial turn...Scholars have begun to interpret space and the spatiality of human life with the same critical insight and interpretive power that have traditionally been given to time and history on the one hand, and to social relations and society on the other (Soja, 1999: 261)

Constructivist geographers like Anssi Paasi furthered this theoretical perspective by arguing that space is actually socially constructed:

Territories are not frozen frameworks where social life occurs. Rather, they are made given meanings, and destroyed in social and individual action. Hence, they are typically contested and actively negotiated. Spatial organisations, meanings of space, and the territorial use of space are historically contingent and their histories are closely interrelated (Paasi, 2003: 110).

Therefore, in contemporary usage, the ‘spatial turn’ refers to the treatment of space as “the product of social practises and conventions which in themselves are the result of symbolic and discursive acts” (Engel and Nugent, 2010a: 2). Space is not ‘natural’ but rather created, modified, and undone by human activities (Cresswell, 2004: 30). ‘Critical’ geographers influenced by the spatial turn are concerned with processes that reinscribe as well as destabilise existing economic, social, and political configurations across a range of spaces (Engel and Nugent, 2010a: 4). Space in this sense is not a container or environment in which social activities occur: rather, it is actively appropriated and given meaning by people.

The spatial turn opened several avenues of research that are highly relevant for African border studies. First, it renewed critical interest in African borders altogether (Engel and Nugent, 2010a: 4). Now, with the fixity of territory questioned, the ‘ideal’ nation-state defined by physical land was subject to criticism. Coupled with the supposed ‘failure’ of

² Two notable exceptions are Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, both of whom influenced future constructivists. Lefebvre defined social space as an “outcome of a sequence and set of operations [that] permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others” (1991: 73). De Certeau, in his 1984 work, argued that urban spaces like streets were subject to human usage and creativity on an everyday basis.

African states, the spatial turn redirected vital attention towards the “emergence of new theatres where other [non-state led] agendas may thrive” (Engel and Nugent, 2010a: 3) especially at ‘margins’ like geographic borders. By documenting how official policies tended to break down in these locations, researchers began refuting Kopytoff’s assertion that African borderlands were politically empty (Nugent and Asiwaju, 1996). As a result, study of local practises and contestations by border residents hoping to extract some benefit is seen as a fruitful area of research (Feyissa and Hoehne, 2010).

Also, the spatial turn stimulated studies examining the transformation of African border towns and their relation to economic or political ‘centres’ (Engel and Nugent, 2010a: 4-5). People working in migration studies and urban studies saw that borders were “becom[ing] less a boundary dividing [twin towns] into two nations than a bridge linking them in mutual dependence...by centralising their marginality in their economic strategies and through common border experience” (Flynn, 1997: 315). This sense of ‘being at a margin’ is intensified by the fact that “for most African governments, central nation building is more important than incorporating borderlands and borderlanders, who experience central authority as oppressive” (Coplan, 2010: 2). Therefore, as Nugent and Asiwaju repeatedly show, Africans in these contexts can “exploit the ambiguities of their border location to the full” (1996: 9-10) in ways not be possible in interior settlements or capital cities (le Meur, 2006). Reconceptualisation of space as a dynamic and constituent element of social relations shed new light on differences *among* spaces, rather than treating territory as a uniform object.

However, the spatial turn is not a panacea for theorising borders. Analyses predicated upon socially constructed space are prone to significant risks. First, identification and repeated reference to a range of ‘spaces’ tends to reify categories like ‘centre’ and ‘margin’: by “encouraging us to look to space first, and borders second...the spatial turn may work to subordinate borders to spaces, as if the former were somehow dependent upon a prior spatial ordering” (Rumford, 2010: 166). Second, there is a tendency to ignore the material dimensions of some border crossings. This can reinscribe dominant, encompassing narratives of ‘disappearing borders’ via globalisation and cosmopolitanism—phenomena which are themselves contested and subject to localised constraints and contexts. Finally, geographers warn of going too far with this post-modern, constructivist enterprise altogether. Sack argues that “privileging the social in modern geography, and especially in the reductionist sense that ‘everything is socially constructed,’ does as much disservice to geographical analysis as a whole as has privileging the natural in the days of environmental determinism” (1997: 2). Heyman (1994) also cautions anthropologists from using the term ‘borderland’ to describe any interaction of social difference regardless of a spatial element. Such wide usage means that conceptions of space, as well as borders, have become “blurred in popular usage” (Alvarez Jr., 1995: 448).

When Rumford calls for social theorists to “think from borders” (2010: 167), he draws attention to the plurality of borders that increasingly come to bear upon lived experience. However, to claim that the only interesting questions left to geographers involve explaining *how* borders are constructed, or *how* space is constructed as Harvey provocatively does (1996: 261), is to ignore important enquiries into what it means to *be at* a particular border. In fact, Nugent and Asiwaju’s observation of ambiguity at borders opens a vital question: how is location linked with meanings and feelings? While the theoretical lens of the spatial turn is useful for understanding processes and activities in a critical sense, by itself it cannot fully deal with questions of ‘being’, or the “experiential fact of our existence” (Cresswell, 2004: : 32). In the next section, I argue that dynamic conceptualisations of ‘place’, generally existing

in the realm of human geography, can augment conventional social and economic analyses of borders by linking location, activities, and meanings.

'Placing' borders in geographic theory

Agnew (1993) articulates three fundamental features of all places. First, places have a geographic location, that is, regardless of scale or size, they exist somewhere in space. Second, they physically manifest the effects of wider economic and social processes: Gieryn explains that "place is stuff. It is a compilation of things or objects at some particular spot in the universe" (2000: 465). Finally, places are characterised by the investment of meanings, values, and memories; they are able to contain and convey subjective feelings. Summarily, 'place' as a concept "refers to discrete if 'elastic' areas in which settings for the constitution of social relations are located and with which people can identify" (Agnew, 1993: 263). This conceptualisation enhances Escobar's continuum earlier described, where space is empty and general, and place is full of meanings and specific.

How places are made and remade

Geographers explain that places come into existence as people "ascribe qualities to the material and social stuff gathered there: ours or theirs, safe or dangerous; public or private; unfamiliar or known; rich or poor; Black or White; beautiful or ugly; new or old; accessible or not" (Gieryn, 2000: 472). Processes of place-making are ripe for analysis because "it remains the case that where we are—the place we occupy, however briefly—has everything to do with what and who we are... Your locus deeply influences what you perceive and what you expect to be the case" (Casey, 1993: xiii). As people act upon these perceptions and expectations, they "stabilise and give durability to social structural categories, differences and hierarchies; arrange patterns of face-to-face interaction that constitute network-formation and collective action; [and] embody and secure otherwise intangible cultural norms" (Gieryn, 2000: 473). Everyday routines and activities, therefore, are like a practical 'glue' that holds places together (Pred, 1984). Put more fundamentally, the significance of place derives from the fact that "we do not live in 'space'" (Gibson, 1986) but rather 'in places'.

Strands of research on 'place'

Some geographers elaborated on how practises and processes bring definition to places (Cresswell, 2004: 33-39). Cultural geographers have long studied how the ways in which things and people are spatially organised reflect implicit perceptions and interpretations (Anderson and Gale, 1992). On the one hand, places can "sustain difference and hierarchy by routinising daily rounds in ways that exclude and segregate categories of people, and by embodying in visible and tangible ways the cultural meanings variously ascribed to them" (Gieryn, 2000: 473). For instance, McDowell (1999) shows how built environments can reinforce gendered definitions of which places are considered 'unsafe' or 'dangerous'. Halpern (1995) also demonstrates that places like slums can be perceived as locales of mental illnesses and addictions. Yet, on the other hand, places by definition bring people and objects together, leaving open the possibility of engagement and cooperation (Sennet, 1990).

Another area of research involves the subjective, emotional connections that people have to places. As a place accumulates definitions, memories, and expectations, it can generate bonds between itself and the people living there. One can see this in one's own experience: "we associate places with the fulfilling, terrifying, traumatic, triumphant, secret events that happened to us personally there" (Gieryn, 2000: 481). Places often contribute towards the formation of identities—a process at which the deceptively simple questions 'where are you from?' (Casey, 1993: xiv) and 'who are you?' (Keith and Pile, 1993) begin to hint. Reference

to places can stir up feelings of pride, as well as shame, by virtue of the fact that people had attachments and experiences there. This forms part of the basis of Casey's claim that places 'define who we are'.

However, this is not to argue that places are static or deterministic—that one is historically bound to where one came from. Rather, it is more accurate to think of places as 'becoming', as dynamic processes, just as identities can change and overlap. This is evidenced by research on place that focuses on differences *among* places, a dimension that becomes especially salient in the face of increasing globalisation. Doreen Massey captures this angle, explaining "there is the specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct *mixture* [emphasis original] of wider and more local social relations. There is the fact that this very mixture together in one place may produce effects which would not have happened otherwise" (1997: 323).³ Therefore, if places do indeed "gather things, thoughts, and memories in particular configurations" (Escobar, 2001: 143) within a wider spatial context, then a deeper appreciation of place will view them as dynamic events that are never quite identical or permanent over time.

By keeping their attention on the ways by which humans actively create places through their everyday activity, critical theorists employing the spatial turn emphasise the constructed nature of space as vital for understanding social phenomena. However, the act of social construction necessitates some sort of platform upon which it can occur. As philosophers like Casey argue, place is exactly such a platform—a way of 'being in the world' (Casey, 1993)—albeit unstable and itself the product of struggle and re-imagination (Cresswell, 2004: 39). The blocks of this platform consist of geographic location, physical things or objects that are manifestations of economic or social processes, and the investment of meanings, values, and memories. However, to analytically privilege or depend upon one of these building blocks of place ignores the fact that they cannot be understood apart from each other (Agnew, 1993).

Using a nuanced conception of place helps one to more fully analyse how geographic location, material forms, and intangible perceptions contribute towards a holistic 'sense of being' at borders. In the following section, I explore three spheres of activity that are salient for the everyday lives of people in Busia, Uganda and Busia, Kenya: trade, secondary education, and health service provision.

Going across the border: trade, secondary education, and health service provision

The concept of 'arbitrage economies' attempts to capture how residents derive benefits from borders. Arbitrage refers to the differential in prices and availability of goods and services on either side that causes buying and selling patterns to align themselves along these axes (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999). However, I argue this alignment is not always straightforward, especially when trying to negotiate access to services. Furthermore, this overly instrumental view of the border ignores deeper dimensions of place as manifested through observable activities and stated perceptions. By arranging these spheres along a spectrum ranging from the relatively impersonal level of exchanging goods to the very personal accessing of bodies, I show how arbitrage is complicated and sometimes halted by other social and economic factors. I conclude with a discussion of how it is during these moments of friction that expressions of the border's deeper significance with respect to 'place' emerge.

³ Even the translation of the Latin 'focus', meaning 'hearth' or 'fireplace', points to that quality of place which gathers people and objects around some uniquely shared interaction.

Trade as economic arbitrage

Trading practises feature prominently in the border literature. However, the treatment of economic exchange usually dwells on borders as interruptions of larger capital flows originating elsewhere (Leamer, 2007). This undermines an understanding of the ways in which border residents themselves negotiate with difference, although some scholars have begun turning their attention to this dimension in regions including eastern Uganda and western Kenya (Wekesa, 2010). In this section, I focus on two kinds of economic activity that depend on participants being able to ‘cross’ the border: open trade via truckers and market participation, and covert smuggling of goods to avoid taxation.

‘LEGAL’ TRADING ACTIVITY

The most visible kind of trading activity involves long-haul trucks. Trucking facilitates the exchange of largely agricultural goods grown in Uganda for manufactured goods made in Kenya. Busia, as a checkpoint along the Mombasa-Kampala route, is where goods are inspected and taxes are applied based on their declared value. Data describing the contents being transported is electronically transmitted by the sending company to the revenue collection authorities at the station. This information is compared to the actual truck in a ‘re-verification’ process that sometimes includes ‘spiking’, or the piercing of bags to check their contents. Electronic verification is relatively new in Busia, only introduced in 2009. Prior to this time, paper documents were physically sent to the revenue authorities. Delays in delivery, therefore, meant that truckers commonly waited up to five days in Busia before they could be ‘cleared’ for movement. Although some truckers expressed appreciation of the new system—overall stopping times have generally fallen to two days or lesss—there remain problems like frequent power outages that disrupt the service.

Trucks travelling eastward into Kenya deliver maize, beans, and soya to commodity markets in Busia, Uganda. Here, men pack them into 90 kilogram sacks and mark them with different coloured symbols depending on their origin and content. Observation at the Ugandan commodity market revealed how middlemen traders, primarily hired by purchasing companies in Kenya, negotiated with Ugandan sellers to buy these goods and transport them through the border. Middlemen like Jonas depend upon payment, often commissions, from buyers for their incomes.⁴ Giving a hypothetical example, he explained how fluctuations in price make his work as a middleman difficult. Sometimes, his buyer agrees to buy maize at a given price, say 11 Kenyan shillings (KSh) per kilogram. Yet, the price increases to 16 KSh later that day—before the maize can be shipped. Although he reports this difference to the buyer, it is unlikely to be paid because the buyer already agreed to the lower price. “So then I have to discuss with my partners,” he explained. “Ok, today we work for free. That money, that 5 shillings, has to come from our pay” (Jonas, interview). Yet, increases in Kenyan demand for agricultural goods means that the commodity market in Busia, Uganda is being expanded to accommodate higher volumes.

‘ILLEGAL’ TRADING ACTIVITIES

These ‘legal’ trading practises work well for larger companies sending high volumes of goods on a regular basis, or for regular, small-scale purchases. However, it is more cumbersome for businesses that may only need to send a few trucks every month. Furthermore, there are economic incentives for misrepresenting the actual value of goods

⁴ Given that sensitive subjects, such as illicit trade, arose during interviews, names and identifying characteristics have been changed to protect the privacy of informants.

being transported. Historically, Busia was a major ‘smuggling’ town; several informants reported that high value products like cigarettes regularly crossed without taxation.⁵ Smaller businesses employ *boda-boda* men to transport orders of agricultural goods stored in the commodity markets to the waiting trucks on the Kenyan side. By dividing these orders into smaller batches and moving around the customs checkpoint via *panyos*, or ‘rut’ paths in Kiswahili, they avoid having to use trucks that would be searched and taxed at the formal crossing. Though recent crackdowns by revenue authorities may aim to reduce this small-scale smuggling, it continues and thrives in different forms:

It [smuggling] is improving in its tactics. They’re using people with disabilities who have these tricycles. They know that even the enforcement officers will empathise with them...You’ll see they are using children for this smuggling (Gideon, interview)

Larger-scale smuggling, mostly via trucks, still occurs and is embedded into trading practises and the wider political economy of Busia. Jonas, the middleman with whom I spoke at the commodities market, explained how he and other agents modified paperwork to make it appear that a lower valued good like maize, taxed at 100 KSh per 90 kilograms, was inside a given truck, when in fact it carried a high value good like sugar, taxed at 468 Ksh per 50 kilograms.⁶ Pocketing the difference supplemented their income. To avoid its discovery via randomised spiking, sugar was packed in the back of a truck and covered by legitimate sacks of maize. However, Jonas was quick to differentiate between ‘tax dodging’, what he did, and true ‘smuggling’: “if you leave that job [smuggling] there will still be others who are willing to take that risk. Most of the agents are here to just dodge tax” (Jonas, interview). Furthermore, he reported bribes of 10,000 Kenyan shillings (KSh) were regularly paid by companies to police officials, a fact corroborated by other traders:

The police are weak. If they try to do their job, the tycoons [companies] say ‘or else we will eat your badge’. Police have to cooperate...The new ones [officers] going now, they are training with the older ones who have been doing this. It is a cycle (Jonas, interview).

These examples illustrate how cross-border trade proliferates throughout the town via residents’ negotiating with differences of availability, price, and tax that exist between the two countries. Regardless of the legality of the activities, it is apparent that a whole range of people are involved in the movement of commercial goods.

Accessing secondary education

Social goods like education also fit into an arbitrage economy if there are perceived differences in the cost, quality, or availability of opportunities between two sides of a border. Observation in the Ugandan town council revealed large numbers of students of a variety of ages—especially Kenyan children entering through the checkpoint in school uniforms. This section explores why, at the secondary level, Ugandan schools in Busia Town Council attract Kenyans. Informants provided a list of Ugandan secondary schools that tended to enroll larger numbers of Kenyan students. Interviews with administrators and teachers at the schools, as well as observation in head offices, produced data highlighting how these individuals responsible for the schools’ daily operation explained the presence of Kenyan

⁵ Yet, the term connotes particular conceptions of (il)legality: for some residents, especially those engaged in small-scale transportation of goods, their actions are not perceived as morally wrong. Rather, they generate needed income and fill a role in the immediate border trade economy.

⁶ Accurate as of 1 August 2010.

students, and their behaviour. Specifically, favourable exchange rates drive much of this decision, especially for students attending private, fee-paying institutions. However, this cross-border activity has practical and social challenges: non-payment of fees and negative perceptions of Kenyan children complicate this kind of arbitrage.

REASONS FOR UGANDAN SCHOOLS ATTRACTING KENYAN STUDENTS

A general reason for preferring Ugandan secondary schools stems from structural differences in the delivery of education. The Ugandan education system is structured as a 7-6-3 system, where students complete seven years of primary school, six years of secondary school, and three years of university. Kenyan students, meanwhile, undertake an 8-4-4 system. In terms of time, secondary schooling differs the most between the two countries; Ugandan students complete Senior 6, taking their A-level exams to secure a place in a university course. Kenyan students, however, only complete Senior 1 through Senior 4. Therefore, Kenyans who seek further preparation for university sometimes choose to go to school in Uganda because there is more time to study for A-level exams (James, interview).

Yet, the relatively low cost of education in Uganda was most cited among these individuals as the main factor that attracts Kenyan students across the border. The head teacher of one of the largest privately-run secondary schools in Busia, Uganda explained that “mostly it is the fees. They [Kenyans] are charging much higher fees than in Uganda. If they [families] fail to raise the sufficient fees there, they can come here” (Rose, interview). In her estimation, private fees could be three times greater in Kenya, providing incentive to cross. James, the deputy head teacher for another private secondary school in Busia, Uganda that features 25% Kenyan enrolment, added “the cost of education in Kenya is quite expensive, especially if they come here and exchange their money” (James, interview). Just as currency rates make certain goods cheaper in Kenya, they also expand the possibilities for Kenyan families to pay for education—so much, in fact, that students travel from Nairobi and Mombasa, choosing to board at the schools.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND PERCEPTIONS OF KENYAN STUDENTS

Despite the availability of relatively lower-cost education in Busia, Uganda, there are several practical and social challenges that complicate this picture of arbitrage. First, the inability of families to pay fees at private institutions remains one of the greatest challenges for administrators. Often, they prohibit students from attending classes if their account falls behind schedule. Then, when payments are made in Kenyan shillings, the school must convert them into Ugandan shillings; due to fluctuations in exchange rates, the actual amount paid can be significantly less than the original fee level (Rose, interview).

Social perceptions also map onto these economic exchanges. When asked to describe their Kenyan students, Ugandan administrators tended to use negative images, expressing how discipline was difficult to maintain. James, who had served as headmaster for seven years, explained the situation:

James: We have students who come from Kenya. I think most of them are very difficult—unruly.

Researcher: In what ways?

James: They are just difficult to manage. Some of them, they have a history of drug use and if you don't handle them with an iron hand, you will not manage them. And they are prone to wanting to strike and all that. So we need strictness with that. Our level of discipline is relatively better than other schools around here because we are strict with them and tell their parents when they come for enrolment. If they cannot

keep up with our standard of discipline, we would rather them go (James, interview).

His observations, delivered in a matter-of-fact manner, illustrate a perceived difference between Ugandan and Kenyan students. Whether or not they actually have histories of drug usage or are generally more unruly is beside the point: what matters here is a recognition that one kind of social border has hardened in the face of a physical border being relaxed. Amir, an HIV-AIDS education coordinator working among all the schools in Busia, Uganda, echoed “the way they [students] behave in school makes an imaginary border. There is inner thinking that ‘I am a Ugandan’ and ‘I am a Kenyan’” (Amir, focus group). Economic contexts enabling and encouraging students to cross an international border are also open to social pressures.

Health service provision: accessing and negotiating with difference

Moving further along the spectrum towards services involving the restoration of human bodies themselves also demonstrates that ‘crossing’ the border does not always result in straightforward outcomes. In this section, I show that the presence of the border both confers valuable benefits to residents in terms of accessing vital services and complicates their delivery by establishing boundaries around ‘who gets access’ at which price.

STATE OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE BORDER TOWNS

‘Health services’ encompasses the range of small clinics and medical facilities present in both town councils. Busia, Uganda organises its health services in numerical order, where higher Roman numerals indicate increases in the scale of available treatments and radius of service provision. Health Centre IV is the highest available centre in Busia District, Uganda. It contains inpatient and outpatient facilities for assessing patients as well as undertaking surgical operations that require teams of doctors. Furthermore, it houses an on-site maternity ward. Informal reports from nurses indicated that the centre regularly accommodated 24-30 patients in addition to up to 20 mothers a day. Meanwhile, in Busia, Kenya, services are administered through the Ministry of Health via the district hospital. Able to accommodate over 150 patients and perform diagnostic tests like X-rays, it is significantly larger in size than Health Centre IV. The range of available services and procedures, which is much more comprehensive than those offered in Busia, Uganda, are painted in black lettering on its outer walls next to the entrance gate.

In terms of funding these health services, the Kenyan hospital engages in a cost-sharing scheme whereby patients are expected to contribute towards a portion of their care. Drugs, if needed but not available in hospital, can be purchased from local chemists. Meanwhile, the Ugandan health system depends on medical supplies centrally distributed from the government in Kampala. In the opinion of a nurse at Health Centre IV, this approach compounds the effects of already-existent poverty levels, starving smaller, peripheral clinics for drugs and essential treatments: “if you go to the villages outside the town council, you will see the place yourself. That is not even third world country: you may call it fifth world!” (Anne, observation data).

REASONS FOR CROSSING THE BORDER TO ACCESS HEALTH SERVICES

Given these states of health services in the towns, Ugandans cross into Kenya for two major reasons. First, drugs and services are simply more available in Busia, Kenya than they are in Busia, Uganda. A doctor at Health Centre IV illustrated with situations from the clinic:

We know Kenya is just a stone throw away from here. So people who could not access medicine for tuberculosis in Uganda can access it in Kenya. It [the border] is

very good, because where you lack, the other people have. Also, in the area of blood transfusion. If we do not have blood in Busia, the nearest place is Tororo which is about 23 kilometres away from here, or you have to go to Mbale. Now look at a situation where you have a very sick child, you have a bleeding mother who needs [an] urgent transfusion, and here you don't have blood. And, there are some services which you can't really get unless you go to hospital. In this case, we don't have X-ray machines; ultrasound scanning facilities are not here. So if it were really necessary to have a scan done, you send them to Kenya. (Muhamed, interview).

More gravely, he expressed frustration and exhaustion at what he saw as a chronic lack of funding and distribution from the Ugandan government: “we have spent almost four months with any supplies. [pause.] Drugs aren't here; we sit and write and patients die” (Muhamed, interview). Of course, it was common knowledge among hospital staff that medical supplies, in addition to agricultural and manufactured goods, were smuggled on a daily basis into Uganda: a hospital worker at the Kenyan District Office admitted that “there's a lot of smuggling of drugs from Kenya to Uganda. I've never seen people smuggling drugs from Uganda to Kenya. Prices are very high” (Alfred, observation data).

Regardless of the legality of their acquisition, even if drugs were available in Uganda there are other factors driving movement across the border for access to health services. Unlike trade, and to a certain extent secondary education, where the act of crossing the border is precipitated and encouraged by a differential in price, health services are explicitly marked up in price for non-residents:

Researcher: If I were a Ugandan crossing over to Kenya, how would I pay?
Muhamed: It's written on the notice board: non-Kenyans, double. It's a fact. It is written there. If you are not a Kenyan, you pay double the price.
Researcher: What do you think of that scheme?
Muhamed: To me, it is a way of limiting non-Kenyans from accessing their services. Also, to ensure that resources are not taken by other people. It's a way of control.
Researcher: Do you find that Ugandans are still willing to pay that doubled rate?
Muhamed: Very willing. You are not going to waste time. This is a border town; people are busy doing business. I cannot afford to waste three hours because I'm sitting in a line waiting for service. People are willing to pay whatever amount for their health because they think 'if I get this service in time, I'll be able to compensate the money I've used'.

This suggests a second reason for crossing: perceptions of faster service and convenience in the Kenyan hospital, as well as the immediate availability of vital supplies, inform decisions even when the financial costs are greater. An administrator at the Kenyan District Hospital observed “services in Uganda are not as developed as here. Just going by what I normally see, if you go to outpatient care here, you will find so many Ugandans. But if you go to Uganda, and ask how many Kenyans, you may find two—unless it is specialised services like those in Tororo” (Farouk, interview).

HIGH CROSS-BORDER DEMAND AS A CHALLENGE FOR KENYAN HEALTH SERVICES DELIVERY
However, delivery of these services by the Kenyan hospital leads to tensions surrounding questions of what constitutes ‘fair’ practises. Practically, as reported by a Kenyan doctor, health services including the District Hospital struggle to accommodate the influx of additional patients within its annual budget that is based on Kenyan statistics:

We are making our budget based on the population of our district. If this is a person that we did not budget for, now he is coming for the same services. They are supposed to be charged higher. If we are not going to charge him a bit higher, we

are likely to have a deficit in covering our entire population...That is when you are planning for 80 people, but you may get 200, especially if there is an outbreak like cholera or TB (David, interview).

The two-tier pricing scheme, as a response to the reality of residents who cross for access to 'better' health services, is a fierce point of contention. At the final focus group, Farouk, a Kenyan, Bashir, a Ugandan representative for truckers, and Gideon, a Ugandan by birth but having family in Kenya, debated the usefulness and 'rightness' of the policy:

Farouk: We use this money to purchase health services, equipment, and materials. Look at the border crossers: they are not changing in numbers. But from a distance they are benefiting.

Bashir: But in our projects, we plan for visitors because they are a stone throw away. Put these people, these mobile populations, in the plan!

Gideon: Yes, there needs to be more focus on health. It's the truth, I'm sorry, but Kenyans don't farm! Yet they eat our Ugandan food. Suddenly it doesn't matter. We don't charge double for food!

This exchange illustrates how the functionality of the border remains central to health service provision. From the perspective of Ugandans who are willing and able to pay, the fact that much-needed tests and supplies are readily available just across the border draws them towards Kenya rather than to more distant Ugandan towns. Yet, Kenyan medical staff and administrators, trying to marshal limited resources in the service of 'their' district, invoke a particular function of the border as a marker of difference to delimit both a territorial and social claim. The expectations of 'easy' crossing with the outcome of receiving competitive prices that might hold in contexts of everyday trade do not necessarily carry over into other spheres like health service provision.

'Crossing' the border: significance of arbitrage for making 'place'

Reviewing these three spheres of activity, decisions to cross are actually quite complicated and not as straightforward as one might expect from a surface reading of how arbitrage theoretically works. Economists like Leamer (2007) suggest that borders function as barriers between two unequally 'filled' containers representing the need for goods and services. If the barrier is raised, then the levels should equalise. Until this happens, the logic goes, people will move between these containers to take advantage of both real and perceived differences.

To an extent, this is apparent in everyday instances of exchange as well as the service of transporting these goods. In many cases, the border is the very reason that exchange can even occur in the first place. Without differences in currency, prices, and availability, arbitrage in the economic sense would not occur. Furthermore, individuals seeking employment often migrate to Busia knowing that informal opportunities in auxiliary services like hotels, bars, and *boda-boda* transport are readily available.⁷ However, I argue that arbitrage practises in Busia are just not simple exchanges mapped onto a geographic feature called 'the border'. These exchanges are hardly simple: they involve a whole host of secondary players operating a variety of scales, including family members, companies in Kampala and Nairobi, and national education ministries that set regulations. Furthermore, using arbitrage as a kind of analytical shorthand ignores the range of feelings and perceptions associated with both crossing and living in the border towns.

⁷ For a further example, see Whyte and Muyinda's (2007) ethnography of disabled men migrating to Busia, Uganda for employment as *boda-bodas*.

Perceptions of economic and social life in the border towns

To capture these elements, I asked respondents to imagine how their lives might change if ‘the border’ were completely removed, suggesting that completely free movement between Uganda and Kenya would be possible with little in the way of obstruction or delay. Several chose to view the border through economic lenses: as one district official considered this situation, he worried that Busia would lose its uniqueness as the edge of Uganda:

The town will not gain anything from that...The maize is collected here because, under this arrangement, this is the end point of Uganda. It has to come here finally to be bulked for export. But if there is no revenue office...people will be at liberty to pick their maize, go and take it there, and other people will be at liberty to come here and pick the maize. It will remain like any other town (District Official #1, interview).

Furthermore, since the towns aggregated truckers together during periods of waiting, women engaged in commercial sex activities thought that removing the border would eliminate a pool of clients: “we need to feed our children. Life would be so hard. I would migrate to another town so that I can survive, such as Malaba, Namanga (Dorcas, Kenyan focus group). Ugandan women similarly concluded “we will die of hunger because it is the border that gives us money for food and rent” (Miriam, Ugandan focus group).

Yet, formally closing the border and building a wall that hindered movement was even more unfathomable. Truckers complained that it would slow down their business and delay their jobs. Teachers also said “we are blessed at the border because we can access goods more easily compared to those in the interior” (Benjamin, interview), partly because their students could access school uniforms at a lower cost from across the border in Kenya (Rose, interview). Medical authorities echoed this sentiment, observing that

if you compare those clients from the border and those that we are serving from the interior, there is that difference in payment. Those ones from the interior, they have it so hard compared to those ones in town...But these ones in town, because they interact with others across the border, they know. People are more aware” (David, interview).

The economic profile of Busia, oriented towards services like hotels, informal transport, and bars, attracts people who want to enhance or supplement their incomes. However, this quality was not unanimously viewed as an asset that made either town council a better ‘place’ in which to live and work: *boda-boda* drivers confided that living at the border entailed all sorts of risks including theft and assault because of the perception that residents were better off due to the constant transport business (Kenneth, focus group). In fact, the kernel that lies at the heart of this discussion is a deceptively simple question: what does it mean to ‘go across’ this border? By widening the concept of arbitrage to include the realisation that people carry with them ideas about what the ‘other side’ is like and subsequently make decisions informed by these ideas, one begins to see that reducing their agency to that of ‘making do’ misses the larger point: these perceptions and practises are both reflective of, and constitute Busia as a particular ‘place’ in which residents and migrants live.

The border towns as places of economic exchange and service provision

Recollection of Agnew’s three elements of place—location, expression of social and economic processes, ascribed meanings—directs discussion of how these elements connect to synthesise meanings of ‘the border’. First, the particular focus is on a bounded arena that is

understood to include the contiguous towns, the formal border crossing, and the *panyo* paths encircling it. Commodity markets, schools, and hospitals are further examples of places within this place. Second, social and economic activities like long-haul trucking, (il)legal commodity trading, students participating in classes, and medical treatment have tangible expression in physical objects: one can tell which side one is on, for instance, based on the general composition of goods present in a given market. As a point along the physical path of goods moving between the capital cities, both towns also visibly express the process of ‘waiting around’ and activities accompanying it. Third, people carry impressions, opinions, and memories associated with the ability to cross back and forth—sometimes so strongly that imagining otherwise is extremely difficult.

Yet, it would be incorrect to conclude that arbitrage activities are wholly socially constructed and limited in scope to this location. While these individuals do bring meaning into exchanges through their motivations for crossing at whichever frequency they choose, they cannot completely determine the ‘rules of the game’ set out by the states that also have an interest in monitoring the border. Furthermore, these players located in Busia are connected to other sellers, producers, and owners of capital located elsewhere—Kampala, Mombasa, Nairobi, ‘the interior’. Therefore, it is apparent that residents negotiate among competing perceptions, needs, and situations in an iterative fashion that occurs on an everyday basis. Through these processes, they help create and shape the border towns as dynamic, economic places characterised by permeability and mixed advantage.

‘I am from Busia!’: discussion and links to wider territorial change in East Africa

Trade, access to secondary education, and provision of health service are all examples of activities that, to some degree, involved going across the border. In this paper, I showed how residents viewed the border as a marker of differences in terms of price and availability of goods or services; yet, by modifying the concept of an ‘arbitrage economy’ to include social factors that complicate efforts to cross, I also demonstrated how ‘crossing’ the border for school or medical care also entailed crossing an important invisible boundary between ‘those people’ originating from the other side and ‘ourselves’—which, most explicitly in the case of the Kenyan two-tier pricing structure for health services, carried tangible and material consequences.

I advanced the concept of ‘place’ to address the wider significance of these multiple perceptions held within border communities. ‘Place’ offered the possibility of uncovering how residents and migrants derive meanings out of the everyday processes of going across the border. I showed how these border towns are more than mere locations along a busy trade route or territorial points of entry—characterisations that dwell too heavily on discrete and static evaluations. Rather, engagement with residents and migrants in this space revealed that their perceptions and practises conveyed deep attachments to the border.

Perhaps the best means of illustrating this conclusion is through the matter-of-fact, almost offhand, remarks of Bashir who represented truckers’ needs:

I move around with my business. People, they know I am from Busia, from a border town. So they always ask me, ‘Bashir, where are you from? Are you from Uganda, or are you from Kenya?’ I don’t know where I come from. I just say that I am from Busia! (Bashir, focus group)

Here was a trucker who, out of all of the focus group participants, probably knew best what it was like to move among and between places. Yet, when asked to choose between two

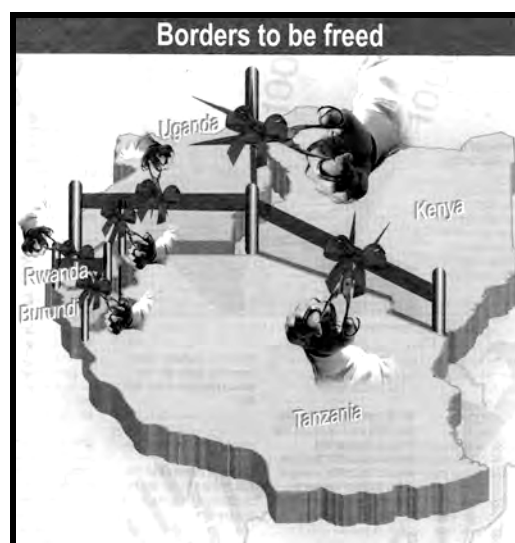
locations, he chose neither as his preferred origin.⁸ Instead, his comment revealed a connection to a place—one that, in his view, does not lie in either Uganda or Kenya. Others’ attempts to ‘pin him down’ to a country fail because traditional territorial ‘containers’ merge, fold, and interact to form a wholly different place at the border (Raeymaekers and Jourdan, 2009). Sometimes, as evidenced by the two-tier healthcare pricing scheme, this process is fraught with tensions and conflicts appealing to and reinscribing perceived differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’. At other times, people completely circumvent physical borders via *panyo* routes because landforms, legal loopholes, and economic imperatives form valuable conduits of stable, resilient connections. These processes stretch beyond the confines of a given arena—an observation implied through my first conversation at the Ugandan security office: ‘where are you going? There is nothing here!’ Only by interacting with other places and people does one become more aware of the perceptions, practises, and tensions that given meaning to being ‘here in place’.

Implications of territorial change for development, borders, and ‘border places’

Geographers using ‘place’ also demand that social scientists be sensitive to the fact that multiple scales overlap and intersect (McDowell, 1999). As Massey argues, phenomena occurring within ‘local’ border towns are also connected to other places. Furthermore, individual truckers moving goods across East Africa are situated within a transnational—even global—economic framework that links regions together. By way of conclusion, I turn attention to the EAC as a means of showing how my analysis has resonance in other border places beyond Busia.

When the EAC came online in July 2010, at least on paper it aimed to “eas[e] border crossing for member of Partner States...and harmonis[e] immigration procedures” (EAC, 2009: 6). NAs Ohmae and other ‘borderless world’ advocates predicted, removal of borders across East Africa was heralded as a necessary step in promoting the overall economic development of the region. One of Uganda’s leading daily newspapers captured this sentiment with an accompanying image seen in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Newspaper image of ‘cutting’ EAC borders (New Vision, 1 July 2010)



⁸ It could also be argued from a human geographical perspective that Bashir did indeed ‘choose between’ Uganda and Kenya by literally identifying with a liminal place between these countries.

At 3:00 PM today, a map of East Africa with ribbons on the borders will be presented before the ambassadors of Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda at the Kampala Sheraton Hotel. Each of the ambassadors will then cut the ribbon at the border post of their country...The picturesque gesture will symbolise the turning of a historic page in the region's long voyage to a single East African government with the commencement of the common market. Governments and responsible ministries across the region are embracing the epic moment with optimism because of the opportunity for growth and wealth it will present (Mugabe, 2010).

Clearly, this description portrays borders as discrete constraints that can be 'cut' to allow easier passage. Yet, given the conclusions of this study, if these territorial boundaries were indeed removed to promote greater exchange and trade, people living in border towns would still have ways of distinguishing where they were. Perceptions and practises built up over time would still be employed in the course of everyday life; differences in medical services and education will continue generating movement. Furthermore, expected increases in land trade would make service-oriented towns like Busia even more valuable to truckers as they travel more frequently across the road network. This is not to suggest that border town residents would carry on unchanged: border scholars, especially those using the spatial turn, argue that processes of de- and re-territorialisation have profound impacts on citizens and their everyday lives by changing their relationships with spaces and states alike (Engel and Nugent, 2010b). However, given more complicated realities present at borders, the extent to which regional integration will bring about the grand economic or social development promised—*especially* at borders—remains to be seen.

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**INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES AND DIVIDED PEOPLES:
FOCUS ON THE BOKI AND EJAGHAM COMMUNITIES
IN THE CROSS RIVER BORDERLANDS, 1884-1990'S**

Dr. M. O. Bonchuk

Abstract

The international boundaries bequeathed to the new African countries at independence by European colonialists, have until recently, been characterized by emphasis on two themes; namely, their functioning as precise lines of separation between the new states. These conclusions have arisen from the work of scholars who have imposed a State-Centric perspective on their understanding of Africa's inherited boundaries. This study of Boki and Ejagham, who were divided between Nigeria and Cameroon by international boundaries, first between the British and Germans, then British and French, now between Nigeria and Cameroon has critically examined the above theses and found them to be defective. For example, the British, unlike the Germans, desired to preserve the Boki and Ejagham as a unified culture area to be included within the Efik market sphere of Old Calabar. This study has emphasized that the Cross River borderlands between Nigeria and Cameroon have functioned more or less as "osmotic point" of contact between the divided peoples. This is manifested in the daily interactions of the Boki and Ejagham across the international boundaries separating them. Thus, despite the harsh boundary functions and divisive tendencies imposed by the colonialists and post colonial governments of Nigeria and Cameroon meant to separate the Boki and Ejagham from their kith and kin, the people have continued to carry on social and economic relations across borders. The boundary in this region has, thus, failed in its primary function as a line of separation between the divided peoples. These aspects of cross-border interactions between the peoples have often been treated as marginal in the overall interest of state-centric studies. Such attitudes have invariably deprived Nigeria and Cameroon of the needed vitality in trans-border co-operation. Thus, trans-border conflicts between the two nations can be considerably reduced and the border regions converted into frontiers of opportunities for both countries should the issues involved be approached from the grassroots rather than the state-centric levels of understanding.

Introduction

Studies of most of the International Boundaries bequeathed to the new African countries at independence by European colonialists have, until recently, been characterized by emphasis on two themes; namely, their indeterminate nature, and their functioning as precise lines of separation between the new states. These conclusions have arisen from the work of scholars who have imposed a state-centric perspective on their understanding of Africa's inherited boundaries. This paper on Boki and Ejagham, who were divided between Nigeria and Cameroon by international boundaries, first, between the British and Germans, then the British and French and now between Nigeria and Cameroon, has critically examined the above themes and found them to be defective. For example, the British, unlike the Germans, desired to preserve the Boki and Ejagham as a unified cultural area to be included within the Efik market sphere of Old Calabar.

The state-centric perspective focuses on "centralized states" that were partitioned or divided into two or more units; the politics of partition, boundary problems between states and the use of state power to maintain or reverse the boundary regime. The border populations immediately vivisected by the political surgery of 1884-5 have often been treated as marginal in the overall interests of such scholars.

This paper sets out to demonstrate that though the 1913 Anglo-German boundary divided the Boki and Ejagham in the Cross River region and placed them in two antagonistic systems, the boundary in this region has failed to function as precise lines of separation between the divided peoples using the grassroots perspective as the principal mode of analysis.

As indicated in the paper, in spite of the conflictual nature of the boundary regime at the state-centric level, there is much co-operation and interaction at the grassroots level. This is manifested in trade and commercial contacts, ancestral worship, divinity consultation, burial rites, attendance at “national festivals”, marriage, etc. between the divided peoples.

These aspects of micro-integration at the grassroots level have been neglected or treated with levity by state-centric scholars and policy makers. Such attitudes have invariably deprived Nigeria and Cameroon of the needed vitality in transborder co-operation. The paper concludes that transborder conflicts between the two countries can be considerably reduced and the border region converted into frontiers of opportunities for both states should the issues involved be approached from the grassroots rather than the state-centric level of understanding.

Geographical Background and Identity of Boki and Ejagham

The Boki and Ejagham communities now live in two neighbouring nation states – Nigeria and Cameroon. Bonchuk (1997) indicated that within Nigeria, these communities occupy the eastern section of the Cross River region (in Cross River State). The Ejagham in Nigeria have a wider spatial location, spreading from Calabar through Akamkpa, Ikom, Etung to Ogoja in the Northern part of the state. The Boki in Nigeria are domiciled in one Local Government Area (Boki Local Government Area) with headquarters at Boje, North of the Cross River bend.

Similarly, the Boki in Cameroon are found in Manyu Division, South West Cameroon. On the other hand, the Ejagham are also part of Manyu Division, South West Cameroon. The Boki and

Ejagham have been misunderstood by many scholars including Professor J. C. Anene. The diversity of ethnic composition in the Cross River region made them submit that they lacked group identity, political consciousness and organization.

Anene (1970:153) in particular, referred to the coast from Old Calabar to Duala as a “Political no man’s land”, since there was no dominant potentate to control or impose its hegemony over the numerous groups, and concluded that the term “tribe” or “clan” should not be used to address these groups, but that the term “cluster” was a more appropriate description of the peoples who occupy this border region.

This thinking has led to the erroneous belief that the region’s linguistic pattern is complex due to the diversity of origin which is “perhaps unparalleled in any African territory; and that the question of ethnic demarcation is difficult and meaningless since the people did not occupy homogenous and distinct territories. Anene, assumed that it would be wrong to suppose that the international boundary disrupted any homogenous ethnic groups.

Contrary to the above assertion, the Boki and Ejagham are related linguistically, and have historically lived together over the centuries and developed similar visible socio-cultural, religious and political institutions. These institutions have enabled them to maintain law and order and regulate the segmentary nature of their societies.

The Boki and Ejagham share a contiguous stretch of territory between themselves in the Cross River region and their kith and kin in South West Cameroon. Bonchuk (1997:112) and Onor (1994:127) demonstrated that they were originally settled in Cameroon from pre-colonial times in the vicinity of *Nchang and*

Mbankang respectively. A combination of internal conflicts, population pressure, economic factors such as the search for salt ponds and the Bantu expansion, must have facilitated their dispersal to found settlements in Nigeria.

The imposition of the international boundary in this region in 1884-1913 by the British and Germans resulted in the division of Boki and Ejagham, a culturally coherent area, with well established lines of transport and communication, and placed them in two antagonistic systems. Atem (1986:137) submitted that Britain and Germany imposed and foisted on the people different orthographic traditions and new notion of citizenship. They now became subjects of only one colony or the other – Britain or Germany. The latter erected boundary pillars, walls, cairns, etc. and defined in treaties, and also put in place other measures, mostly physical to prevent or control movements across the new boundary.

Weladji (1987:24) commented that the colonial period witnessed two boundary phases – the Anglo-German period 1884-1913, the Anglo-French period, 1916-1961. The various border policies have determined the Boki and Ejagham reaction to the imposed boundary since colonial times.



Map 1

Evolution of the Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary and the Division of Boki and Ejagham

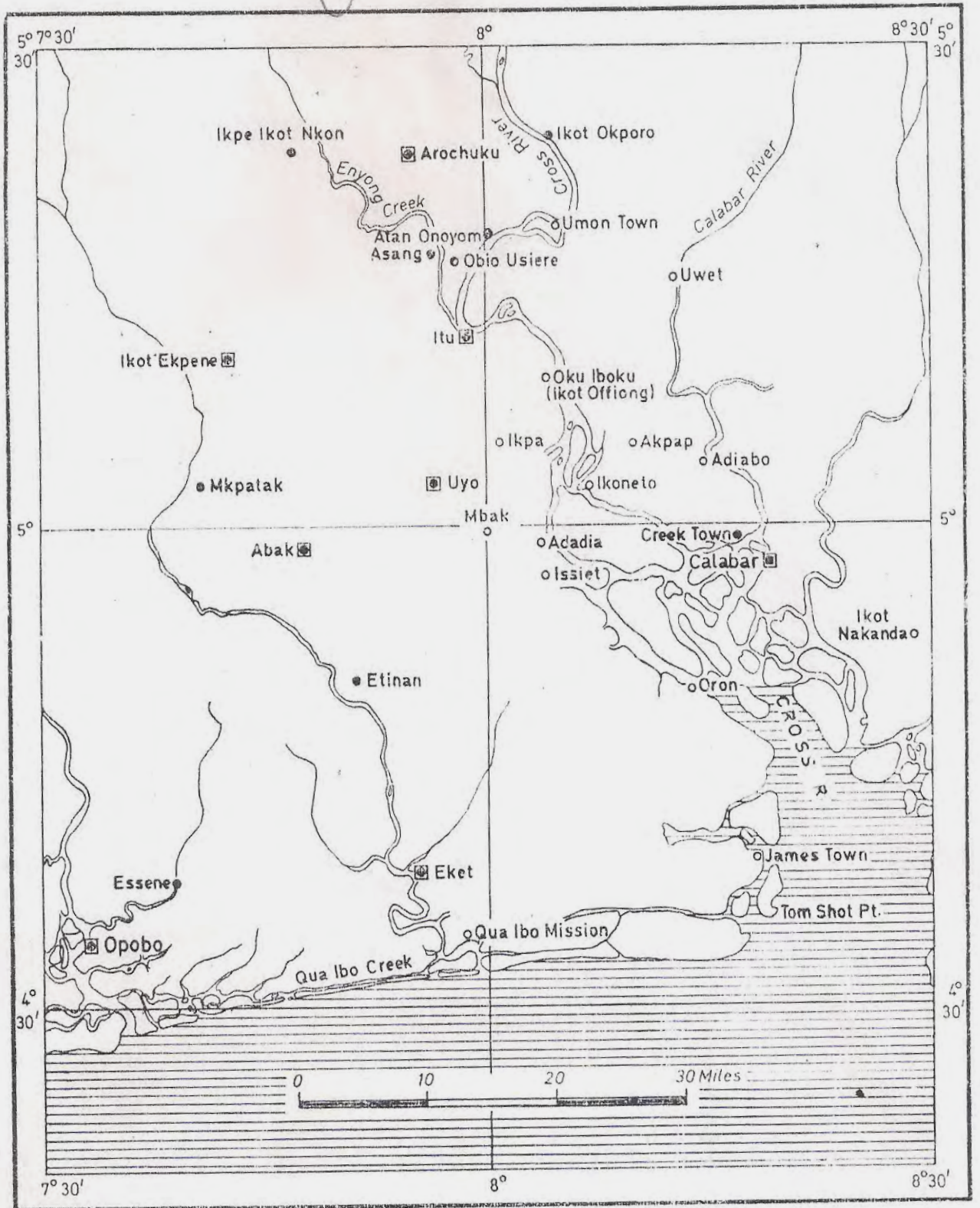
Ardener, S. G. (1960:230) indicated that British and German boundary relations began in 1884 during the scramble for and partition of Africa and the Cross River region in particular. Boundary relations were bound to generate controversies which centred on the conflicting claims and ambitions of the two powers. Old Calabar and Duala were the termini that formed the basis for future boundary negotiations from the coast to the Upper Cross River and South West Cameroon.

The Baptist mission at Victoria, the Cameroon Mountain, the extent of Efik commercial empire, including the ethnological spread of the Boki and Ejagham the dominant groups in the border zone, presented problems to the colonial powers. When the British and Germans could not resolve the boundary on the basis of ethnology, they resorted to the river systems particularly the Rio del Rey, Akpafaye, Ndian and the Cross River "Rapids". In the account of Herslet, E. (1940:560) between 1885 and 1913, Boundary Commissions were set up to define, delineate and demarcate the boundary. Britain and Germany signed about ten major agreements covering the three major segments of the boundary from the sea to the Lake Chad. Subsequent boundary negotiations in the coast centred on the Ndiana and Akpafaye controversy. Anene (1970:230) observed that in the 1893 boundary negotiations, the British undertook excursions into the Ejagham, and non-Ejagham areas which they termed non "Ekoï". These excursions were meant to collect data on the ethnology of the area and the spread of Boki and Ejagham communities. Another consideration was whether the

boundary should be altered north of the Rio del Rey or the Boki and Ejagham should be split.

In his memoranda to the Foreign Office, Ralph Moor suggested that the boundary should be negotiated to skip Boki and Ejagham groups in favour of Britain in order to preserve both Boki and Ejagham unity and Efik markets. R. Moor's views were in consonance with the British War Office which expressed the desire that Boki and Ejagham should not be split. The British officials become habituated to addressing these groups according to their ethnic background and issued testimonials to reflect such as British Boki or British Ejagham.

In spite of the monumental problems encountered in the definition and delineation of the boundary, the British and Germans reached an agreement in 1901 and made the Akpafaye the boundary on the coast. The final agreement was signed in 1913, and this superseded the earlier agreements. The 1913 agreements were believed to have addressed the inadequacies contained in the previous ones. With these developments, both powers erected cairns, pillars, walls and other boundary vistas in the Upper Cross River region which were meant to separate the Boki and Ejagham from their kith and kin in South West Cameroon. Abongwa, P. A. (1985:55) observed that when Germany lost the First World War, the Boki and Ejagham were re-united during the Anglo-French condominium over Cameroon; since the Milner-Simon Agreement (1919) established a new international boundary between British and French Cameroon, this unity did not last long as they were "re-divided" during the 1961 plebiscite in Northern and Southern Cameroon when Southern Cameroonians opted for unification with French Cameroon.



The Efik-Ibibio Area of South-Eastern Nigeria

Map 2:

The Divided Peoples and Border Interaction at the Grassroots Level

According to Rudin, H. R., (pp. 224-230) the first noticeable sign of the boundary regime was the establishment of “precise” political boundaries for administrative competence. The international boundary offensively determined the national identity of the Boki and Ejagham. Rules and regulations including customs preventive posts which were military in character were established to deal with those who crossed or “loitered” around the boundary.

Bonchuk, M. O. (2000:230) observed that the boundary elicited co-operation between the divided peoples and conflicts between them and the Europeans. In spite of the state-centric policies imposed by the colonialists and post-colonial governments, the Boki and Ejagham continued to resist the imposition of the boundary. Due to the harsh German policies the divided peoples in German Cameroon migrated to the Nigerian side of the border. During tax collection periods, they exchanged their tax receipts and moved to either side as it suited them. Those who migrated from the German side due to the German policy of forced labour and the squeezing of wild rubber were gladly accommodated by their kith and kin in Nigeria.

Bonchuk, M. O. (1997:140) demonstrated that the post-colonial governments of Nigeria and Cameroon operate on the basis of organic solidarity. The local communities operate on primordial solidarity. The nation state organizes for participation in terms of contract. Loyalty to the state implies that decisions taken by the state are binding on all and that when extra-national activities are conducted, they are done by the arm of the state responsible for dealing with international nations.

Local communities organize for participation on the principles of kinship. Networks of relations which endure and oblige loyalty are seen as superior to the artificial boundary lines which is the case of Boki and Ejagham are said not to divide them but the British and Germans or Nigeria and Cameroon. This network of kinship relations form the structure of the enduring pattern of cross border interaction including trade across borders from colonial times to date. Thus, kinship patterns and internalized belief in ancestral sanction constitutes a fundamental ideological underpinning that has informed the vibrant border interaction between the divided peoples.

Though the Boki and Ejagham are subordinated to their central authorities, they, in practice, feel at liberty to carry on social and trade relations as they please. The presence of customs preventive posts, police, immigration, coastal guards and military personnel have not affected negatively interaction between the divided peoples.

Egba, N. (1979:24) demonstrated that during the colonial period, European currencies including tariff policies especially in the form of differential duties were introduced and imposed on both sides of the divide. The existence of a competitive price system in a contiguous environment induced trade across the inter-colonial boundary. During the colonial period, the policy of restricting trade and diverting same from one colonial sphere to another worked in favour of local interests in the development of cross border commercial activities at the grassroots.

The practice of smuggling is as old as the colonial boundary. Though the German destroyed Efik, Ejagham and Boki trade frontiers, the motley of Creeks, swamps, thick forest and hills

including the Cross river and the riverine areas in the border, example, Effraya, Ajassor, Agbokim (waterfall) in Nigeria, and Agbokim Osifing, Nsanakang, Eyumojock and Mfum in Cameroon have been playing intermediary roles in the smuggling across borders.

The lack of precise demarcation of the boundary on the ground and the various conduits along and astride the border accelerated this development. The instability of the border and the limited means for both countries to ensure its policing have overtime, permitted and maintained fluidity of movement across the countries border to and fro the other. The presence of related but divided groups has often confused law enforcement agents who would hardly know who is a Nigerian or Cameroonian since Boki and Ejagham languages are spoken on both sides of the divide, neither do they have a different cultural orientation.

This has led to a symmetry of wants which has brought the divided peoples together in one form or another to aggregate their survival instinct in matters of “illegal” trade and ‘smuggling” across the borders. Thus, from colonial days to the present, and despite the state-centric measures of border maintenance it was inevitable for the divided peoples to move across the border and this has reduced the effectiveness of the boundary as a line of administrative and jurisdictional competence. One important corollary of the socio-economic interaction and transaction in this border region was the evolution of a new settlement pattern – the development of border markets and trade centres. These developed along parallel positions situated along the international boundary. In the North of the Cross River are the Mfum-Ekok-Ajassor, Agbokim, Danare and Wula markets. In these markets goods from Nigeria and Cameroon

are exchanged freely and even displayed in shops. The items smuggled include cocoa, coffee, petroleum products, electronics, video cassettes, shoes, drugs including foodstuff such as cassava, plantain, banana, etc. Bonchuk, M. O. (1986:260) observed that apart from linguistic, cultural and historical affinities that exist between the Boki and Ejagham, there exists a distinct border “Pidgin English”, spoken especially in the border markets. The “Pidgin English” is different from the conventional Pidgin English spoken in most parts of Nigeria. The “creolisation” of the borderlands is an amalgam of both English, the local languages and in some cases words from the French language. This has become the “secret language” used in commercial transactions.

In Boki and Ejagham societies, colonial rule was often seen by informants as the watershed that resulted in the indigenous culture being partially or completely burned away. In the Boki and Ejagham political systems, the clan was the highest level of government which centred on the *OTU EMANG (BOKI) AND NTUFAM EMANG (EJAGHAM)* respectively. Bisong, O. (1977:30) noted that the both institutions were associated with rituals and they were regarded as sacrosanct. The British and Germans tore apart these indigenous systems that were based on the peoples belief systems.

The changes brought in the physical and cultural landscape undermined the Boki and Ejagham political and religious institutions. By this fact, the sovereignty which the Boki and Ejagham believed resided with their gods and spirits and exercised through the divine rights of the *OTU EMANG* and *NTUFAM EMANG* was seized by the new European powers.

Binang, A. (1987:77) argued that consequently, and along with the loss of sovereignty, and political influence of *Otu* and *Ntufam*, the influence of various magico-religious institutions, priesthood and the secret societies became substantially eroded.

Bonchuk, M. O. (2001:18) indicated that during the colonial period, the Germans attempted to ban the Leopard Secret Society *Mgbe* (Ejgham), *Nyamngbe* (Boki), *Ekpe* (Efik) and *Atam*. Socio-cultural and religious institutions such as *Agrinya*, *Atamabi*, *Okpimon*, *Eja*, *Obol*, *Ekpa*, *Ngbu Keichi*, *Kapen*, *Obasi Njom*, etc. survived in spite of the fact that attempts were made to ban their operations across borders. The *Mgbe*, *Nyangbe*, *Keichi Obol*, *Atam*, *Obasi Njom* and *Kapen* operated mostly in secret across borders during the colonial period. Their decline was due mainly to the advent of Christianity than their division because the *Mgbe*, *Nyangbe Ocham* (hall) and *Atam* shrines can still be located along and astride the borderlands. The *Kapen*, a magico-religious institution in Danare (Nigeria) is still being consulted by the divided peoples in Nigeria and Cameroon.

Intermarriages across the borders and visits by vivisected families especially during “national festivals” (such as new yam festival) have continued in spite of the boundary. Most people in the borderlands are agreed that there are frequent inter-ethnic visits especially during funerals rites that affect members of such families.

The divided peoples live in isolation from modernity and are exposed to many hazards and security problems usually not reported in the mass media. The climate conditions of rainfall intensity, duration and periodicity reflected in the incidence of rain squalls often very violent and accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning cause a lot of damage to life, buildings, while the sudden

torrential rainfall wash away make-shift bridges and personal goods which their isolation from modernity and great distance from officialdom may never help to replace.

Bonchuk, M. O. (1979:230) reported that in 1988 elephants invaded Boki border villages at Danare destroying crops and this was never reported in the media. Furthermore, the Cameroon gendarmes usually invaded these border villages extorting taxes from the people and seizing their precious properties. In moments like this the people ponder as to which country they really belong. The post-colonial governments of Nigeria-Cameroon inherited the “fortress mentality” and attempts to restrict their movements by customs, immigration, police, the army and the gendamarie reinforces this mentality. This often lead to serious clashes between the divided people who perceive the border not as dividing lines.

The most serious and dramatic security problem was posed in these borderlands in 1991, when a Bamieke Chief, Fon Goji Dinka, attempted to secede from Cameroon. His intention was to unite the divided peoples in his envisaged “*ABMBAZONIAN*” Republic. With the activities of the Southern Cameroon National Congress (SCNC) which predicate its activities on similar grounds, the divided peoples would remain part of a serious security concern to either states.

Thus, if national security is more than territorial defence and should focus on the physical, social and psychological quality of life of a society and its members, both in the domestic setting and within the larger regional and global system, the plight of these neglected “national minorities” should be seriously taken into consideration. After all, the domestic socio-economic and political environment of a sovereign state is the all important and critical

factors in national security considerations. A situation where the “national minorities” have been removed from the “national mind” and national symbols of both countries as a result of the border paradox does not augur well and this could complicate their relations.

It is therefore urgent and imperative for both states to take the problems of their borders from a trans-national perspective. This paradigm is the best panacea since the problems of one side of the border affect the other. Given the conflictual nature of border relations at the state-centric level the grassroots (transactional) represent the reality of the situation. These sovereignty percolation realities as manifested in border interaction at the grassroots could usher in the much needed vitality in transborder co-operation between the two states as evidenced by the European transboundary co-operation.

Conclusion

The paper examined international boundaries, and divided peoples focusing on the Boki and Ejagham communities in the Cross River borderlands with South West Cameroon. Unlike the more familiar works on the politics of partition, relations between Nigeria and Cameroon, this paper focused on Boki and Ejagham from the grassroots perspective.

It was indicated that contrary to the generalized view that African boundaries were arbitrarily imposed without regard to the local situation, the British attempted to evolve an ethnolinguistic boundary that would preserve Boki and Ejagham unity. Failure to convince the Germans to accept an ethnolinguistic boundary

informed their opinion to rely on river systems which has proved unreliable.

Though the Boki and Ejagham were divided in 1913 and placed in two antagonistic nation states of Nigeria and Cameroon, they continued to interact freely as was the case during the pre-colonial times in matters of trade and commercial contacts, ancestral worship, divinity consultation, etc. These aspects of micro-diplomacy or micro-integration have often been glossed over by the two states in their boundary management and co-operation agreements.

Since the Nigeria and Cameroon boundary relations at the state-centric level is conflictual it is instructive for the two countries to utilize the grassroots as flash points for their border management.

The central problem of Nigeria and Cameroon is still with sovereignty assertions and related territorial claims and counter claims. However, these assertions have continued to detract attention from the more crucial question of development, especially trans-border, co-operation and planning and larger integration projects which have become far more urgent now.

It has become imperative to understand that any rigid attachment to the notion of sovereignty would produce far reaching effect for the future co-operation and integration between divided peoples and their core states. Such attachment to the notion will perpetuate the constraint of artificial barriers witnessed by divided peoples, and will continue to keep divided peoples separated from their kith and kin.

Therefore, Nigeria and Cameroon should embrace the idea of refounding African regional integration endeavours on the cornerstone of trans-border co-operation between adjacent states based on a realization of the grassroots realities of cross border historical, socio-economic and environment of linkages.

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An international border or just a territorial limit? Joola dynamics between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau

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Introduction

This paper aims to present an ongoing research about the dynamics of Joola population in the border between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal (more specifically from the Atlantic Ocean to the Niambalang river). We would like to tell you about how Joola Ajamaat (near the main town of Susanna, Guinea-Bissau) and Joola Huluf (near the main town of Oussouye, Senegal) define the border and, especially, how they use this border in their daily lives¹.

As most borderland regions in the Upper Guinea Coast, this international border separates two areas that have been economically and politically marginalised within their respective national contexts (Senegal and Guinea-Bissau) in colonial and postcolonial times. Moreover, from 1982 –that is, for almost 30 years– this border area has suffered the conflict between the separatist MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) and the Senegalese army (and, in the last few years, the Bissau-Guinean army as well). Despite this situation, the links between the population on both sides are still alive, as we will show later on.

After a short historical presentation, we would like to focus on three main subjects. First, to show concrete examples of everyday life gathered during our fieldwork. Secondly, to see how the conflict have affected the relationship between the Joola from both sides of

¹ This paper has been made possible thanks to a postdoctoral scholarship granted by FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia). My deep gratefulness goes to this institution as well as the Center of African Studies at ISCTE, Lisbon. Most of the data used in this text has been gathered especially in Oussouye and other neighbouring Joola villages (Senegal) and in Essukujak, Kerouhey and Varela (Guinea-Bissau) during my fieldwork of almost 3 years between January 2000 and June 2011. This text is in line with the project "Identities and borders" coordinated by Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues (PTDC/AFR/098339/2008).

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the international border. Finally, we aim to analyse how the border is defined by the population².

1.The international border: a brief approach

1.1. The birth of a border

The Portuguese were the first European to arrive in the Casamance area during the 16th and 17th centuries. They founded the town of Ziguinchor in 1645, but they never controlled all the Casamance region³. The French began to be interested in the Casamance from the 1820s⁴. In 1886, one year after the 1885 Berlin Conference, the French and the Portuguese defined the international border, and negotiated the incorporation of the town of Ziguinchor to the French Empire⁵. Nevertheless, some parts of the treaty were not clear, and both colonial governments signed two more accords concerning this border in 1932 and in 1951⁶. As most part of the borders in Africa, the local population was never consulted⁷.

1.2.The border and the Joola population during the colonial period.

From the beginning, the local populations understood that they could use the international border to their own benefit. As far back as 1903, when the French, coming from Karabane Island, decided on the military penetration in Oussouye (the main city of the Joola Huluf Kingdom), some of its inhabitants fled to the South, to the former Portuguese Guinea, with their cattle.

In fact, from the end of the 19th century to the Second World War we can find a lot of examples of how the Joola crossed from one side to the other, depending on the

² For the Joola culture and society consult Thomas (1959), N. Diatta (1998), C.S. Diatta (1998), Journet-Diallo (2007, 2010), Tomàs (2005a and b, 2006, 2008a and b, 2009), Mark and Tomàs (2010), Davidson (2007), among others.

³ For the history of Ajamaat, in Portuguese Guinea, see Lemnos Coelho (1990), Taborda (1950a and b)Carreira (1964), Journet Diallo (2007, 2010), Juillard (2000), Lopes de Lima, Pelissier (1997).

⁴ For more information you may see Bocandé (1856), Simon (1859), Bour (1883), Brosselard-Faidherbe (1892-1894), Maclaud (1907).

⁵ See Esteves (1988), Tomàs (2006). For the Gambian-Casamance border, please read Kébé (1997), Nugent (2007).

⁶ The sea delimitation is another question. See ONU (2006).

⁷ For more information on this period of Casamance history look at Roche (1970, 1985), Mark (1976), Trincaz (1981), Baum (1986, 1999).

NOT FOR CITATION OR CIRCULATION WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION, PLEASE colonial policies⁸. One of the most common reasons for crossing the border was when the colonial armies went to the villages to collect tax (especially rice).

Another reason was the recruitment of "volunteers" for going to Europe to fight against the German army: in 1941, the French decided to recruit soldiers for the II World War in Casamance. Several young men fled to Gambia or to Portuguese Guinea.

During the revolt organized by Alinsitowe (also transcribed as Aliin Sitoué) against the French colonial power during 1942 and 1943, the border became a solution for escaping from the French: several Joola went to the villages of their relatives in the Portuguese Guinea, South of the international border⁹. The same year, 1943, after the defeat of Alinsitowe and her companions, another prophetess, Gnacoufoussou, organized different prayers against the French. Finally she fled to the Portuguese Guinea as a refugee.

1. 3. The border after the independence of Senegal

Senegal became independent from France in 1960. From 1961 to 1974 the Joola Ajamaat people began to cross from South to North: the Ajamaat people fled from the Portuguese army and refuged in Senegalese villages. The liberation war in Guinea began in 1961. In fact, already in 1961, the king of Kerouhey, Cecakosel (which may also be transcribed as Sikakusel), abandoned his natal village and crossed the border to go to Oussouye, where he was taken in by his counterpart in Oussouye, the king Sibakuyan, and his family.

In 1964, soldiers from the Portuguese army crossed the border searching for members of the Guinean guerrilla.

During the struggle for the liberation of Guinea, one of the most important waves of refugees took place in 1973, when thousands of people from Portuguese Guinea, went to Ziguinchor, Brin, Oussouye and other Senegalese villages escaping from the Portuguese.

1.4. The border and the conflict between MFDC and the Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau armies.

⁸ See the French colonial explanations in Archives Nationales du Sénégal (ANS): I3G507 (1895-1904): Journaux de poste de la Basse Casamance (4) Oussouye; I3G502: (1903) Opération de police contre les Floups d'Oussouye (4) Résidence d'Oussouye; 2G3/50 (1903) Rapports politiques mensuels: avril-décembre; 2G4/43 (1904) Rapports politiques mensuels: janvier-septembre; I3G375 (1904) Attaque dirigée contre le résident d'Oussouye en tournée à Kerouhaye; 2G9/44 (1909) Rapports mensuels d'ensemble: janvier-décembre; 11D1.226 (1944-1964) Contrôle des étrangers. Affaires de frontières.

⁹ See also Baum (1986, 2001), Tolliver-Diallo (2005).

As you may already know, in 1982 a conflict between a separatist movement (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) and the Senegalese government began¹⁰. The military actions on a large scale began in 1990, when the military conflict between the rebels of MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) and the Senegalese army broke out. The separatist combatants used the border to protect themselves from the Senegalese army attacks, even using anti-personal mines. This conflict provoked a deep crisis in the border area, causing thousand of refugees to flee to other cities, abandoning their native villages and, as a consequence, abandoning all their social, economical and ritual practices. The Senegalese army went to the villages closest to the border and installed permanent troops there. One of the most significant cases is that of Effok, in which the army settled in the school.

It could seem that the armies of both countries respected the international border. The border that, officially, we can assume they protect. According to several informants, the Guinea-Bissau troops crossed the international border and penetrated to Senegalese territory when they were persecuting a faction of the MFDC in 2006. In November 2009, the Senegalese army was accused of crossing the border to the South, and a serious diplomatic conflict started between both governments.

2. The border today: examples from the everyday life¹¹

Despite the conflict, the relationship between the Joola Ajamaat and Huluf communities continues. As we have explained, it is also true that due to the conflict daily life has been affected and people do not cross the border as often as they did before 1990. Anyhow, the practices that entail people from both sides are alive. So, we would like to present some cases that are still common in this area today.

2.1. Kinship

The Joola people are a patrilineal and virilocal society. This means that women move to their husband's village to start a family, to work in their husband's rice-fields, to

¹⁰ A lot of books and articles have been published on this subject. You may see Marut (2010), Foucher (2007), Evans (2004), Robin (2006), among others.

¹¹ The most part of the data used in this section have been gathered during my fieldwork (see note 1).

educate their children, etc. Different women from both sides of the border have married men from the other side. Once the family is established, women must participate in different events (social and ritual, especially) in both villages (their native one, and their husband's). So, for example, when a child is born, his/her mother must go to her native village to organize a ceremony called *kasabo* in her father's house shrine (called *kuhulung*) to introduce her son or daughter to the community. The same happens when someone from the woman's family dies: the presence of that woman in the funerary ritual (*ñukul*) is definitely expected by all. This means that -when she's from the other side, that happens especially in villages such as Youtou, Effok, Emaye, Essaout...- she must cross the border.

2.2.-Economy

Before the beginning of the conflict between the MFDC and Senegal, people easily crossed the border for economic purposes. As all informants confirmed, the economic relationship between villages from North and South were really strong. Today, the situation is completely different. Nevertheless, the Joola still cross the border for some economic reasons. For example, during the preparation of religious ceremonies (such as men's initiation, organization of wedding rituals, etc.), a lot of palm wine, or a large number of pigs or goats is needed. So, if there aren't enough products in the village, people must go to neighbouring villages to obtain them (including the villages on the other side of the border).

Another remarkable example is that of the rice-field farming. The border established in 1886 separated family rice-lands in two, one ended up in Senegal and the other in the former Portuguese Guinea. But these rice-fields remained property of the ancient families. So every year women and men went to the other side of the border to farm their rice-fields. As we have already mentioned, during the most serious clashes between the military and the rebels most part of the villages were abandoned, as well as these economic practices. Recently, especially after the signature of the peace accords of 2004, some of the families have gone back to their villages and started working on their rice-fields on the other side of the border¹².

Crossing the border was not only a matter of agriculture and cattle. Before the beginning of the conflict, people from Oussouye went to Suzanna to buy some manufactured products in the market that were cheaper in Guinea-Bissau. People from

¹² See, on refugees returned to the border area, Labonia (2006).

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Guinea-Bissau also went to Oussouye to buy some products that could not be found in Suzanna.

2.3.-Education

In this case, the people cross the border from the South to the North because Casamance is a reputed region when it comes to schools and education. In some Casamance regions, such as the Joola Huluf area, primary education schooling rate are 100%, and 70% in the case of secondary education. Most part of this scholar institutions were founded by missionaries just after the Senegal's Independence (1960). Others are state schools the Senegalese state. In the Oussouye Department we found schools in the main towns and villages: Kabrousse, Diembereng, Oukout, Oussouye, M'Lomp... On the other side of the border, there are only schools in Suzanna.

We have gathered several examples of Joola Bissau-Guinean families that have sent their children to Senegalese schools. In the schools of Kabrousse, Diembereng or Oussouye it is easy to find some students from Guinea-Bissau. Some of them leave with their relatives during the week and they go back to their natal villages during the weekend, if their villages are not far from the border, such Essukujak or Tenhate (Guinea-Bissau), not far from Kabrousse (Senegal)... Others live in Senegalese towns during the academic year and they go back to their native villages at Christmas and during summer holidays.

2.4.-Health and Traditional Health

Another interesting contact between populations from both sides of the border, is related to health. Some Joola from the South usually go to the Oussouye hospital to be treated. On the other hand, according to our informants, traditional medicine is better in some villages in the South. So, some Joola Huluf people go to the Joola Guinea-Bissau villages to receive treatment from traditional specialists.

2.5.-Ritual and religion

As we have shown in other articles, Joola traditional religion is such a net. Several villages are included in the same rituals for a shared shrine. In some cases, especially for women shrines, the women's priest must organize some of the initiation steps in other villages before its definitive entrenchment as a *anahan báciin* (shrine priest). For the

women of Oussouye (in Senegal) some of these ceremonies take place in villages in Guinea-Bissau.

2.6.-The Joola kings and the border

The kingdoms of Oussouye and Essaout (today in Senegal) and Kerouhey and Essukujak (in Guinea-Bissau) are closely linked. According to all our informants, historically, the Kingdom of Oussouye comes from the town of Kerouhey. According to the same sources, Kerouhey is the oldest Joola kingdom. During the major ceremonies organized by the king of Oussouye (who was proclaimed in 2000) the presence of the king of Kerouhey is definitely expected. Some years ago, the king of Kerouhey died and today the people in this town are awaiting the proclamation of a new king. Meanwhile, the protocolary functions of the Kerouhey king during the Oussouye royal ceremonies are carried out by the king of Essukujak. (The Kerouhey kingdom belongs to a bigger area called Hassouka, made up of by several villages –all in Guinea-Bissau– including Essukujak). This means that in the last 10 years the king of Essukujak has attended several ceremonies in Oussouye such as Humabel (an annual royal ceremony, celebrated almost every year from 2003) and Ewaang (the men's initiation to the royal shrine, celebrated in June, 2011).

On the other hand, the king of Oussouye hasn't ever visited the villages of Kerouhey or Essukujak. According to his council, this is due to security reasons.

2.7.-Spare time.

Two of the greatest festive events for the Joola people are *ekonkon* (dance) and *kataj* (wrestling). These events take place especially during the rainy season -but not only- and are practised by young people (boys and girls). Young people from different villages go to other villages for a day, or even for some days, to share these events with one another. These festivities are, in fact, a way to make it possible for young people from different villages to meet. During the *ekonkon* and *kataj*, people from the same generations but from different villages strengthen bonds. There are some villages, those closest to the border, that usually wrest and dance with the villages of the other side. For example, people from Effok and Youtou (in Senegal) usually go to Bugim and Ejatem (in Guinea-Bissau), and vice-versa.

3. The international border defined by local populations

The Joola populations have a word, in Joola language, to define all the territorial limits: *álinga*. This word is used for all the territorial separations: between houses, between village lands, between rice-fields, etc.

For some Joola population, especially (but not only) the elderly, the international border is just a territorial limit, just “*álinga*”. As we have already mentioned, they usually go to the villages situated on the other side of the border for kinship, economic, political, ritual, educational and wealth reasons.

For young people, educated in Senegalese schools, the perception of the border is becoming different. They use the same word, *álinga*, but the values attributed to it are different from those used by the elderly and by the traditional authorities. For security reasons (MFDC-Senegalese army) most of them have not visited some of the neighbouring villages on the other side of the border. On the other hand, for many years they have been to Senegalese schools. And there they are integrating concepts such as: “nation”, “territory”, “sovereignty”, and, logically, “international border”.

Conclusion

The border between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Niambalang river, has been a porous border –to a different degree– for the last 125 years (1886-2011), that is, from the date of its creation. Joola population understood this permeability from the beginning and they used the border to their own benefit for more than a century (1886-1990). During that time the Joola population crossed this border for different reasons: for kinship obligations, for economic interests, for political strategies, for religious and rituals reasons, for educational needs, even for spare time activities.

These dynamics have changed from 1982 and especially from 1990, when the military conflict between the rebels of MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) and the Senegalese army broke out. The separatists combatants used the border to protect themselves from the Senegalese army attacks, even using anti-personal mines. This conflict provoked a deep crisis in the border area, causing thousand of refugees to flee to other cities. Abandoned villages and a mined border as well caused a crisis at all levels and provoked a progressive decrease of relationships between both

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sides of the international border. Here is the paradox: at the beginning of the conflict the MFDC fought for a great Casamance, defined as “from the South of the Gambia river to the North of Cacheu River” (in Guinea-Bissau), trying to redefine international borders. But, after almost three decades of conflict, the effect was the opposite: never, until now, have the borders been so rigid.

On the other hand, the dominant ideas of the State (such as “sovereignty”, “Nation”, “citizenship” and “international border”, to mention but a few) are progressively being integrated by the younger generations through different mechanisms (such as the school, for example).

In spite of this insecurity and in spite of the State's interest in creating a Senegalese/Guinea-Bissau national identity, some Joola have continued and continue to cross the border because for them this line –used by the Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau states as well as by the MFDC–, is just a territorial limit, just “álinga”.

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Commuter migration across artificial and arbitrary borders: The story of Partitioned Communities along the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border

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Abstract

This paper explores how partitioned borderland African communities view and use by the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border. Using participant observation among the communities straddled across the border, it analyses why commuter migration across this boundary is rampant. It observes that to the borderland communities, the border is non-existent. They have traditionally viewed it as an imagined boundary or a transnational environment without borders where social interconnections, movements and trade can be made without restrictions. Thus, they daily practice commuter migration on foot using illegal crossing points scattered across the mountain chain. Most Mozambicans prefer commuting to the better Zimbabwean schools and hospitals across the border, while most shopping and kinship rites are conducted in Mozambique. Likewise, the some divided communities recognize and use single traditional authorities. In the process, the Zimbabwe-Mozambican border has been reduced to an artificial and arbitrary boundary which does not respond to what the local people believe to be rational boundaries. Consequently, the border has become highly fluid and elastic as it constantly shifts according to the dictates of the partitioned communities.

Introduction

The Zimbabwe-Mozambique border is one of the most unique but less-researched borders in Southern Africa. It has been a haven of many intriguing and complex narratives and activities that are characteristic of these terrains on the African landscape. While some research has been carried out along this border focusing mainly on the problem of smuggling, very little is known about how the borderland communities perceive and relate to the boundary. Therefore, the study attempts to explain the prevalence of commuter migration along the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border in the context of people's views and uses/abuses of the demarcation. It observes that just like in other African border areas, the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border consist of partitioned communities who continue to view and treat the boundary as artificial and non-existent. The communities perceive it as an imagined boundary or a transnational environment without borders where social interconnections and movements can be made without inhibitions. In the process this has determined and dictated their use or misuse of the border in pursuit of education, health, trade and other shared socio-cultural relations which in the end have enmeshed the border into the everyday social life of the partitioned borderland communities.

Research into these dynamics was achieved principally from ethnographic sojourns conducted by the author and a research assistant, namely Thomas Dube along the border between April and August 2011. We interacted with various communities noting how they view, relate and use the border. Much of the ethnography targeted the people who crossed the border on a daily basis, particularly traders, schoolchildren, health patients, traders and, chiefs, most of whom were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The ethnographic research did not cover the whole length of the border (1231km), but concentrated on a stretch of about 120km between Mt Selinda in Chipinge and Rusitu in the Chimanimani area. This area has tea estates, forestry plantations, villages and small towns that provided the necessary data for the research. More precisely, research was conducted in such places as Mt Selinda, Mabheka, Rusitu and Mutsvangwa on the Zimbabwean side and Espungabera, Chambuta and Maridheya on the Mozambican side. Most of the settlements are very close to each other which makes commuter migration easy and common. Hence, for example, the distance between Mt Selinda and Espungabera where much of the research was done, is about 7km. The research tools that were used included oral interviews and, participant observations along the border.

Artificial Borderlands and Partitioned Communities: A Theoretical Overview

For long, borders and borderlands have been treated as peripheral zones with little or no stories to tell. As such scholars have had little interest in these marginal areas so much that even the people living in these zones have been treated as such. This is despite the fact that borderland environments have continued to produce interesting and unique scholarly material of study. These borders exist as real or imagined boundaries or demarcations of a country or state. They appear in various forms, three of which are widely recognized, geometric, natural and cultural. Geometric borders, which are also known as straight-line borders, are cartographically drawn on maps or nautical charts as straight lines following the cartographer's intentions or latitude curves (Pophiwa 2007). Such borders are found within the colonial map of Africa drawn in 1884-85 at the Berlin Conference during the partition of the continent. Hence about 44% of African borders are straight-lines that either correspond to an astrologic measurement or are parallel to some other set of lines (Herbst 1989; 676). Cultural borders follow imagined boundaries between homelands of different communities or ethnicities. Lastly, natural borders are usually defined by the physical landscape and usually follow natural geographic landscapes, such as rivers and mountain chains. The 1231km Zimbabwe-Mozambique border is a typical natural border as it is demarcated by the Limpopo Inyanga and Udizi Mountains (<http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/geolanbouborcou-geography-land-boundaries-border-countries>). However, what is interesting to note is that borders are part of the paraphernalia of what is generally termed a borderland. In this light, a borderland is a conglomerate constituting anything that is physically or mutually associated with the border (Momoh 1989). This includes the physical landscape, the people or communities who reside near or along the border as well as their activities and behavior in relation to their border. All these forms of borders are, according to Jeffrey Herbst (1989), "often artificial and arbitrary because they do not respond to what people believe to be rational, demographic, ethnographic and topographic boundaries." Consequently, they are also constantly shifting and are very fluid in nature as people relate or use the border variously.

These borderland dynamics and debates can be analysed in the context of the nation-state in Africa. The article thus fuses theories on borderlands and nation-state as popularized by Asiwaju, Davidson, Herbst and Mamdani. It is a fact that without the creation of nation states during the European partition of Africa, borderland studies would not have been as prolific and

popular as they are today. The partition of Africa in 1884-85 created nation-states, whose boundaries continue to provide a rich corpus of data for researchers. Connor (1978) and Idowu (1999) defines a nation is a large group of people sharing the same ideological, cultural and possibly ethnic or racial heritage whilst a state can be conceptualized in terms of the territories over which institutional authorities exercise legitimate control. This nation-statism, built around the problematic frontiers associated with Africa's partition, not only reproduced the subjection of Africa but also produced of ethnic ostracisation and despondency that has been inherited by post-colonial regimes. Mamhood Mamdani (2001) further adds, "the Pan-Africanists believe that state crisis is a crisis of colonial boundaries, because these boundaries were and are artificial since they were drawn up with a pencil and a ruler on a map at a conference table in Berlin without considering the ethnic and cultural heterogeneous of African societies. This has led to what Basil Davidson (1992) terms the 'curse of a nation state' in which the colonisers imposed nation-states where there were no nation states. Hence, the colonial partition had inserted the continent into a framework of purely artificial frontiers that disregarded ethnic homogeneity. Thus post-colonial states are, due to the colonial legacy based on very artificial boundaries, which either split ethnicities or place people of different ethnicities into one state, thereby accentuating ethnic tension that created a dilemma and chaos for later African leaders (Davidson 1992). While much of the observations by Mamdani and Davidson focused on how the artificial boundaries created post-colonial instability due to tensions and internal conflicts caused by the coalescence of diverse ethnic groups, this paper is more interested in examining how the divided borderland ethnicities have perceived and used the border in the present.

Many African borderland communities consist of these partitioned ethnicities who continue to view and treat their country borders as artificial and non-existent. Adu Boahen (1987) contends that the borders ignored any well-defined criteria and did not take into account the ethno-cultural, geographical and ecological realities of Africa. This shows that borders are always artificial because states are not natural creations. Likewise the arbitrariness of the partition has remained very contentious and has determined how borderland communities relate to their border. This therefore creates a state of crisis along the border as governments try to control the border and to preserve their nation-state territorial boundaries. The people, on the other hand, perceive the border simply as an "artificial" obstacle whose fluidity and porosity

offers opportunities for survival. This is typical the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border which split a homogenous ethno-cultural space creating two the nation-states of Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

The Establishment and Nature of the Border

The Zimbabwe-Mozambique border is one of the longest boundaries in Southern Africa. Spanning about 1231km, it divides the eastern part of Zimbabwe and central Mozambique. The establishment of the border was a protracted affair between the Portuguese and the British. The border was established after a bitter struggle between the two imperial powers that culminated in the settlement of 3 July 1891 (Warhurst, 1962:71–72). While the 1891 agreement dwelt on the major demarcations of the boundary, subsequent treaties up to 1937 completed the delimitation process (Duri 2010; United States Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 1971: 2–5). The chaos associated with the demarcation of this border created a lot of confusion among the partitioned African communities. For example, as late as 1898 there was no clear indication as to where the Anglo-Portuguese frontier lay and many chiefs were uncertain of which side they belonged to (Pophiwa 2007). This delay had complications in dealing territorial issues for example those that overlapped into the areas that were disputed as to what side they belonged to.

Nonetheless, unlike other national boundaries that are clearly demarcated and protected, this border is emblematic of the infinite arbitrary, artificial and fluid national boundaries that characterize the African continent. It is simply an expansive line covered by a rugged terrain comprising of the Inyanga and Udizi mountain range. The no-man's land is sporadically marked by a 20 metre fireguard and is patrolled by both Zimbabwean and Mozambican police border patrols. The border is also characterized by minefields or wartime landmines from the 1972-79 Zimbabwean liberation struggle (Rupiya 1998). The demarcation is also dotted with a few official border posts and an infinite/innumerable illegal crossing points used by the partitioned communities for their daily cross-border commuter migration.

Therefore most of the borderland settlements and communities are connected by a web of bush trails/tracks that facilitate daily commuter migration between the two countries. Some of the popular routes along the 120km stretch include *Muchakata* and *Nzira yekubridge* (the bridge road), which are popular with people commuting between Mt Selinda and Espungabera (Interview with Tendai Machaza, 16 May 2011). In the Mabheka area, locals use the *Chambuta* route and, the *Mugavhe* route which according to Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana, is a name

coined in connection with a farm formerly owned by a white farmer known as Government, through which the route passes (Interview with Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana, 15 May 2011). In Tani estate, commuters have popularized a route that passes through the King trigonometrical beacon into Mozambique which is popularly known as *Nzira yekuchiKing* (the King road) (Interview with Tonderai Musamira, 16 May 2011). Its popularity is due to the fact that it is usually unguarded such that people move freely.

The Partitioned Borderland Communities

As is characteristic of many arbitrary borders that were born out of the 1884-85 Berlin conference, the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border dissected homogenous African communities between the two states. Eastern Zimbabwe and central Mozambique were part of the pre-colonial Zimbabwean plateau that was occupied by the Shona people of various ethnic dialects (Beach 1992; 1994). With the establishment of the border by the British and Portuguese colonizers, the Shona communities straddling along the border were split leaving about five major Shona groups in Mozambique namely the Manyika, Barwe, Teve, Zezuru and Ndau (Beach 1992; Duri 2010, 134; Samuels and Bailey, 1969: 126). As a result the border split the Shona territory into two zones which ironically continue to be known by the same name that is, Manyika on the Zimbabwean side and Manica on the Mozambican side. The divided communities only differ in citizenship but have identical ties of religion, culture, ethnicity, language and dialects, marriage, kinship and, chieftaincies. David Hughes (2008) observes that the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border is what Africanists constantly term, an ‘artificial border’ as it cuts across an ethno-linguistic area and across numerous bi-national kindreds. Hence the border thus was drawn without respect for social, cultural and linguistic groupings (Herbst 1989; 2). Pophiwa (2007) sums up this stating that people of a common culture and language live on both sides of the border, sharing intimate knowledge of the numerous bush trails connecting neighbouring markets and villages across the boundary. There is an intriguing continuity in the border landscape; the climate, and crops that are grown such as maize and groundnuts, as well as language and culture, such that the two areas seem to be one territory.

Politically, the border also dissected African political systems, particularly chieftaincies. Many African chiefly polities were greatly affected by the arbitrary Anglo-Portuguese partition of the border in pursuit of nation-states. Of note was the chieftaincy of the Tangwena people in

the north-western part of Manicaland province who were split by what was to them ‘an unknown line on the map’ (Duri 2010; 134). About seventy families belonging to the Tangwena chieftaincy were isolated in Mozambique whilst their chief resided in Zimbabwe. In 1902, Dzeka Chigumira, the Tangwena chief, successfully sought permission from colonial officials to bring around 70 Tangwena families from Mozambique and join the rest of the group in colonial Zimbabwe (Duri 2010, Davies, 1975: 262). Likewise, the territory of headman Nyangani, immediately to the south of the Tangwena chiefdom, was also split resulting in village head Mafufu’s homestead falling in Portuguese territory leaving the rest of his people over the border (Duri 2010). Headwoman Nyakuwanikwa, aunt and sub-chief of Chief Mutasa, lost many villages that stretched into the Revue valley and Manica in Mozambique when the border confined her to the lands on the Zimbabwean side (Blennerhassett and Sleeman, 1969: 152). Other traditional authorities who were affected include Chief Gwenzi and, Chief Mapungwana near Mt. Selinda; Chief Ndima and Chief Mutsvangwa near Rusitu (Beach 1992; 1994). The arbitrary partitioning of these homogenous communities and chieftaincies has informed and determined the way the affected people view and use the border.

Community Perceptions about the Zimbabwe-Mozambique Border

The dissection of a people with a common identity, culture and history has dictated the general perceptions that resonate along the border. The communities simply view it as an artificial border that was imposed without considering their opinions and interests. To many the border does not exist. It is just a line without distinct barriers or pegs to deter them from their ancient commuting activities. Certainly with the absence of natural or man-made barriers, not much has changed for the partitioned communities since the pre-colonial times. The bush-trails that most of their ancestors used have continued to exist in the present, showing that the border is non-existent. The border demarcation itself is not clear; it has no clear visible barriers to mark it except for the inconsistent 20 metre fireguard. This is the case with the towns of Mt. Selinda and Espungabera which are situated on top of mountain ridges and the fireguard is located in the valley between. Thomas Dube observed that both towns are very close to one another so much that people see them as belonging to one territory and they rely on one another for various services (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). Hence, as noted by Asiwaju (1985), judged from the viewpoint of the border society life in many parts of Africa, the European

partition can hardly be said to have taken place. Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana asserted that the border is there just for administrative purposes at national level, but to them it does not exist (Interview with Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana, 16 May 2011). Nothing has changed in terms of people's interaction and ties and the frequency of crossing the border. In fact people view their interaction and ties as natural and undisturbed. Muchuchu from Mutsvangwa in Chimanimani reiterated that there is no border to talk about; everyone and cattle move freely (Interview with Gerald Muchuchu, 15 May 2011). The common phrase that shows people's disregard of the border is "*ndichambobira mhiri kuMoza, ndodzoka masikati*" (I am going to Mozambique and will come back in the afternoon) (Interview with Gerald Muchuchu, 15 May 2011).

The presence of the fireguard in some sections of the border has also added to the confusion and debates over the border. Most people believe the fireguard was not meant to mark the border at all as evidenced by its inconsistency along the border. In fact Chengetai Mapungwana argued that many residents are of the opinion that the fireguard or the clearing is meant to control the spread of sleeping sickness between the two states (Interview with Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana, 16 May 2011). The area is ravaged by tsetse flies that cause sleeping sickness. Thomas Dube adds that this belief was due to the tsetse trapping activities conducted by white commercial estate owners along the fireguards (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). He further noted that the farmers used to place their trapping cages with meat baits along the fireguard to attract the tsetse flies and thus control the disease (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). As a result, many residents therefore thought that the fireguard was to control the disease as well as the threat of fire from the plantations and estates and thus it was not a border.

There are also large remote areas stretches along the border without this fireguard, which makes it difficult to determine the boundary. This is where people are left to guess where the border is. Such is the case of the Mutsvangwa in Chimanimani. Muchuchu noted that Mutsvangwa is the worst of all areas as it is difficult to see the border area and many cannot distinguish whether they are in Zimbabwe or Mozambique (Interview with Gerald Muchuchu, 15 May 2011). He argued that it is difficult to tell whether we are in Mozambique or Zimbabwe as there are no clear markings for the border and we thus move freely (Interview with Gerald Muchuchu, 15 May 2011). Despite this the people in the area have ways of telling the boundaries. One of these is soil colour differences. Muchuchu reported that only the type of soil

can tell us that we are in a different country, thus we know we are in Zimbabwe with its red soils and Mozambique with its black soils (Interview with Gerald Muchuchu, 15 May 2011). People from Tani estate, which is adjacent Mozambique resettlement, also find it difficult to tell the border location. This is because there is also no fireguard. In fact the border line is deep in the forest. Hence the locals use the King trigonometrical beacon to mark the border.

The uncertainty and confusion surrounding the location of the border has led people to give a human face. Hence, the border has come to exist where they meet/encounter border patrol and National Park officers or where they start seeing or hearing English or Portuguese language speakers. According to Popiwa (2007), in this way the border is personified; for many people, border posts and patrols are the border, for they epitomize the presence of the state and the dividing line between the countries. The borderland residents are also “the border” because they know how to access the other side by circumventing the officers who patrol it; they have tactics and routes to avoid being caught. Because they have been living in this area for a long time, they utilize their knowledge by offering services to outsiders who want to cross the border clandestinely. At the centre of this are the local touts collectively known as *matunge* in Zimbabwe and *majorijo* in Mozambique (Popiwa 2007; Duri 2010). They spend the day monitoring movements on the border and since their village is a passage way they ensure that they are well-informed of the passers-by’s destination and purpose of visit.

These perceptions about the border have also been consolidated by the nature of the relations between the borderland communities and the border control officials. The border is occasionally patrolled by the Mozambican patrol police known as the “*Gwaridhadha* or *Matembeya*” while the border posts are manned by customs officials. The guards determine whether the border is “hard” or “soft.” Tornimbeni (2004) points out that today the majority of international borders in Southern Africa are not well-guarded have become increasingly ‘soft’. Locals fear most the National Parks officers who protect wildlife along the border. Russell Kapumha says that these are very strict and many people avoid using routes within the reserves for fear of being mistaken as poachers (Interview with Russell Kapumha, 29 July 2011). On the other hand the *gwaridhadha* are less strict and can be easily bribed especially by traders. They are not very strict with local communities most of whom they know were dissected and have relatives on both sides of the border. Hence, local people are allowed to cross the border on a daily basis without many restrictions. Dube adds that local people just pass through the border

posts without passports as long as they are not cross-border traders (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). On arrival at the border posts one has to simply request to pass and no paperwork is required for the purpose and duration of your stay. Most simply say they are going to see their relatives and can pass as frequent as they want (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). This is different from the Zimbabwe-Zambian border, for instance, where both Zimbabwean and Zambian communities along the border have to seek for a stamped/authorized 24 hour duration pass to and fro; an event that the author witnessed at the Kariba border post near Zambia.

Arrangements and agreements at a national level between the Zimbabwean and Mozambican governments have also propagated the general misconceptions about the border. For example, coalitions between state institutions in Mt Selinda and Espungabera have contributed to the disregard of the border concept. Dube notes that the town of Espungabera and other nearby Mozambican settlements are connected to the Zimbabwean electricity power grid through Mt Selinda which portrays these areas as belonging to one country or territory (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). Zimbabwe provides electricity to Espungabera because the town is isolated from the major Mozambican towns and is therefore cheaper to be connected to the Zimbabwe power grid. There is also the Chimanimani National Park near Rusitu whose wildlife also spills into the Mozambican side. Such scenarios dispel the border concept as local people end up viewing themselves as one since they share almost everything including electricity, education, hospitals and shops. Therefore, this portrays the border as an imagined boundary or a transnational environment without borders where social interconnections, movements and trade can be made without restrictions. It is these perceptions and arrangements that have in turn dictated the way the locals relate to the border in terms of activities or use or misuse/abuse of the boundary.

Relations with a Non-existent border: Uses and Abuses

The general disregard of the border has shaped the manner in which borderland communities relate and use or abuse it. It has been the primary cause of commuter migration between the partitioned communities as locals interact and seek necessary services or facilities that are absent on their side. This interaction is reciprocal and mutual and bonded by their shared values and beliefs. Nonetheless, Mozambicans daily migrate in pursuit of Zimbabwean

education, employment and health facilities. Popphiwa (2007) says that migration is thus encouraged by the lack of social infrastructure and marketing channels on the Mozambican side, and the physical proximity of the Zimbabwean services. Most Zimbabweans on the other hand, prefer Mozambican shopping and trading services as well as family and cultural ties.

Education/schooling is a major phenomenon within the Zimbabwe-Mozambique borderland. Zimbabwe provides the service while Mozambique provides the human resource or clientele. Musamira asserts that Mozambican parents prefer Zimbabwean education because they believe it is of better quality and is delivered in the more marketable English language whereas theirs is in Portuguese; is not well developed and a bit expensive (Interview with Tonderai Musamira, 16 May 2011). Hence, for example, there is great interaction between Mt. Selinda and Espungabera in this regard. Tendai Machaza testified that most students from Espungabera daily attend school at Mt Selinda primary and secondary schools. Dube added that most Mozambican pupils do not attend the boarding school in Espungabera because it is very expensive such that it is usually attended by children from rich parents in the big Mozambican cities, particularly Chimoio, Beira and Maputo (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). Other than Mt Selinda, some pupils also attend schools in such tea estates and plantations like Zona, Tani and Jersey. Such schools include Beacon Hill and Gwenzi. Mozambican students from the Chambuta area also commute daily to Mafumise High School in Mabheka. In the Mutsvangwa area, G. Muchuchu reported that schools like Rusitu mission, Mutsvangwa and Hlabiso also have large numbers of Mozambican day scholars. Not all pupils commute daily to Zimbabwean schools, According to Wesley Mwatwara some of them have attended school in Zimbabwe all their life and only go back home during holidays or weekends and when they come to Zimbabwe they do not parade themselves as Mozambicans but pretend to be Zimbabweans (Interview with Wesley Mwatwara, 26 July 2011). Like many other local commuters, these pupils are not prevented from crossing the border by patrol or custom officials. Actually they do not seek for permission to cross because of the obvious nature of their activity. The fact that they are young and mostly in school uniforms, it is therefore given that they have to cross the border whenever they wish to do so. As a result for many of these pupils the border does not exist at all as they view their communities as one territory that is only separated by valleys and mountains.

Zimbabwean health facilities are also a favorite of many Mozambicans. The Zimbabwean border area has many mission hospitals and clinics that cater for the borderland communities.

Such health facilities include Mt Selinda, Mapangwe, Muziti and Rusitu mission hospitals. Tendai Machaza observed that beside education, people from Espungabera get health services from Mt Selinda mission hospital and this is not to say that Espungabera does not have its own hospitals and clinics but Zimbabwean hospitals are a bit more advanced while Mozambican health services are also expensive. This was reiterated by Thomas Dube when he observed that for a patient to get good treatment in Mozambican hospitals he/she has to bribe the nurses (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). Consequently, many patients flock to Zimbabwe for better and cheaper health facilities. As a result, many view the Zimbabwean hospitals as part of services belonging to a single transnational territory or environment. They therefore do not distinguish between the two states and thus commute to and fro to use them when necessary and this has enmeshed the border into the social life of the borderland communities.

Commuter migration is further stimulated by the various employment opportunities along the border. Mozambique has traditionally acted as a labour reservoir for Zimbabwean estates and plantations. As mentioned before, the area is inundated with tea estates and forestry plantations. Examples of tea estates include Jersey, Zona, Tani, Good Hope, Southdown, Stirling, East Leigh, Helveta, Ratelshoek and Mayfield. Forestry plantations include Gungunyana, Chirinda in Chipinge and Glenco in Chimanimani. All these estates and plantations have high labour requirements and have traditionally relied on the cheap labour offered by Mozambicans. Therefore, tractors from the farm usually cross the border daily to ferry Mozambican workers. Musamira further adds that some Mozambicans employed on farms stay temporarily in Zimbabwe and cross the border into Mozambique every weekend to see their families (Interview with Tonderai Musamira, 16 May 2011). Other than the farms some are employed in the towns, schools and hospitals doing menial jobs as gardeners, cleaners and private security guards.

Zimbabweans have also negotiated the border seeking informal employment in Mozambique. This process became common during the 2000-10 Zimbabwean crisis period when many people lost their means of livelihood due to a general economic meltdown characterized by a hyper-inflationary environment. According to Duri (2010), most work-seekers had lost their jobs as a result of industrial closures since 2000; others had had their informal sources of income destroyed by Operation Murambatsvina, while some sought to supplement their incomes in view of the hyper-inflationary environment that prevailed in the country. Some civil servants, especially teachers, abandoned their professions altogether. Most socio-economic refugees from

Mutare were informally employed as seasonal agricultural workers in Mozambican communal farms along the border receiving an average daily wage of 30 meticals with lunch but no accommodation, breakfast and supper (Duri 2010; 150). Some seasonal agricultural workers preferred to travel between Mutare and their workplaces in Mozambique on a daily or weekly basis, often by foot while others often contributed to book communal overnight huts in the villages, which in most cases had no bedding and toilet facilities (Duri 2010; 150). After 2005, it became common for some Mutare school children, even those at the primary level, to cross into Mozambique to seek piece job employment during weekends and school holidays. Most of them joined some of their relatives and family members already employed in agriculture in the villages stretching between Machipanda and Manica (Duri 2010). Many unemployed youths also found employment as potters of cross-border smugglers. In 2001, some potters were as young as 11 years, most of them being school dropouts due to the socio-economic hardships (Post Reporter, 2001e: 3).

While Mozambicans prefer Zimbabwean schools, hospitals and employment, Zimbabweans prefer shopping and trading various goods which are cheaper in Mozambique. For example, people from Tani estate usually visit the Mozambican town of Maridheya to shop for cheap basic food especially rice, soap and clothes. Musamira report that one of the most popular commodities that Zimbabweans buy in Mozambique is an intoxicating beer known as *Lawidzani*. Beer induced commuter migration has been a common phenomenon along the border. Since its establishment, the border was a familiar terrain for both Zimbabwean and Mozambican traffickers of alcohol. Mutare's African residents frequently crossed the border clandestinely and entered Mozambican villages to drink beer, especially the banned *nipa*, some of which they smuggled back for resale and consumption (Duri 2010; 135). As early as 1905, the Mining Commissioner for Mutare reported that Africans were 'in the habit of crossing the border to obtain drink...I know that drink has been brought back from these places' (Duri 2010; 135). Mozambican shops proved crucial during the period of Zimbabwean economic meltdown between 2000-10, when many basic commodities were in shortage and Zimbabweans commuted across for the goods. Despite this, some Mozambicans also shop on the Zimbabwean side. Mapungwana said that Mozambicans adjacent Mabheka buy most of their goods from supermarkets in Mabheka, Tingamira and Avontuur and some go as far as Chipinge town (Interview with Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana, 15 May 2011). Muchuchu added that

Mozambicans also rely on shops in Rusitu, Kurwaisimba and Copper. Mozambican villagers near Tani estate use the grinding mill from the estate because their town of Maridheya is very far (Interview with Gerald Muchuchu, 15 May 2011). Some also dip their livestock at various dip tanks near Mutsvangwa. In most cases the commodities that are in short supply on either side are what the traders specialize in. Mozambicans usually want the cheaper Zimbabwean sugar whilst Zimbabweans want soap for resale back home (Pophiwa 2007).

In the process such trading connections have stimulated rampant smuggling along the border which many researchers have dealt with in detail (Pophiwa 2007; Duri 2010). Certainly, smuggling has been common along the Zimbabwean-Mozambican border, with the main culprits being cross border traders and local farmers and dealers and the *matunge* and *majorijo* touts. These people are well informed about the happenings on the border and the routes that avoid meeting with the police. They sometimes work in complicity with customs/immigration officials and border patrol forces. However, these officers harass and sometimes abuse power by demanding bribes from traders crossing the border for exceeding the required quantity of goods. So the traders resort to border jumping and smuggling of goods late at night when it becomes difficult for the police patrols to see them, in other words when the border moves at night (Pophiwa 2007). The contraband that is smuggled across the border such agricultural commodities as sugar, maize, prawns and fish, meat, peanuts, Irish potatoes, beans and vegetables. Among the non-agricultural goods traded are beer, shoes, wood products, building materials, bicycles, bicycle and car parts, and electrical goods.

The smuggling problem has also been exacerbated by the discovery of the rich alluvial diamonds in the Zimbabwean Marange/Chiadzwa diamond fields in 2006. Many diamond dealers have flocked to the area with the main Lebanese and Indian buyers operating from the Mozambican side, especially in the town of Villa de Manica. The middlemen mainly Zimbabweans, who smuggle the minerals reside mainly in the towns of Mutare and Chipinge, but they get the minerals from panners or miners based at the diamond fields. Hundreds of Mutare residents, mainly the unemployed youths, have joined the illegal panning of diamonds and some of the proceeds are smuggled into Mozambique where they fetch high prices. One source close to Mutare's border with Mozambique told the *Manica Post* in June 2007 that "There are...diamond buyers camped near the border area on the Mozambican side and they are paying handsomely for the smuggled diamonds...The foreigners could not continue operating in

Zimbabwe following a recent blitz, which netted hundreds of illegal...diamond dealers. In Mozambique, they were operating freely, but of late, the Mozambican police are now working hard to flush out the illegal dealers. (Duri 2010: 145)

What is however crucial to note is that this rampant smuggling of contraband is viewed as noble or normal by borderland communities. Most of these people view smuggling as an acceptable source of livelihood. In fact Musamira argued that since they do not recognize the border they are not smuggling at all but simply moving or trading goods within the same territory (Interview with Tonderai Musamira, 16 May 2011). Hence, cross-border traders, criminals, dealers, touts and vendors form part of the paraphernalia of the borderland as they engage in illicit activities. The smugglers thrive along the borderland and in more extreme cases they become conduits or victims of human trafficking (Daimon 2010). Many anthropologists have castigated the term “smuggling” as inappropriate because it does not reflect the perspective of borderland communities since it criminalizes the activities of communities that have no other meaningful livelihood strategies in the so-called “margins of the state” (Daimon 2010). Donna Flynn (1997) observes that although border residents are fully aware that according to state laws it is illegal for them to sneak goods around the customs post, they do not regard it as morally wrong for them to do so. As a result smuggling has remained a common component of the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border where the state and the smuggling rackets continue to play cat and mouse in an attempt to define their space of control and survival.

While the border cut spheres of influence for many traditional authorities along the border, there are a few Zimbabwean chieftaincies that continue to exert some influence on subjects on the Mozambican side. Chief Mutsvangwa is an example. Muchuchu observes that Chief Mutsvangwa exercises control even over people on the Mozambican side and he presides over various cases and disputes that affect his related people (Interview with Gerald Muchuchu, 15 May 2011). This chiefly control is also made possible by the close family and kinship ties existing between the partitioned communities. Muchuchu further noted that locals share a lot in terms of their culture, dress codes, language, totems and marriage customs (Interview with Gerald Muchuchu, 15 May 2011). Mapungwana adds that most people are related and a good example is the Mapungwana people who share the Dube/Mbizi/Zebra totem with their counterparts in Mozambique (Interview with Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana, 15 May 2011). He argues that it was only the division caused by the erection of the border which separated us from

our totemic relatives (Interview with Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana, 15 May 2011). This was echoed by Dube who asserted that most of his relatives live in Mozambique and only four families are in Zimbabwe including his parents and aunt (Interview with Thomas Dube, 29 July 2011). In fact his father has a residential stand in Mozambique, whilst his mother and other relatives usually go to Mozambique for farming and then harvest the crops to consume and sale in Zimbabwe. Most of the borderland people also have dual citizenship. They possess identity cards and passports from both countries and thus shift identities whenever convenient. Marriage ties are also informed by these border perceptions as well as the fact that many communities practice endogamous marriages. They marry from within their ethnic families. This erases the border concept especially in circumstances where the families live in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Mapungwana notes that it is not possible for a son from the family in Zimbabwe to marry without actually informing those in Mozambique because the people are the same and contribute to all family matters (Interview with Chengetai Ziroro Mapungwana, 15 May 2011). So this shows that the border is nothing but an artificial aspect of life along the Zimbabwe Mozambique border.

Conclusion

This paper has shown the prevalent perceptions of African communities that were partitioned by the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border showing how their views stimulated daily commuter migration and informed or determined their relations in terms of use and abuse of the boundary. It has focused on a 120km stretch of the border between Mt Selinda in Chipinge and Rusitu in Chimanimani on the Zimbabwean side which is adjacent to Espungabera, Chambuta and Maridheya on the Mozambican side. It has revealed that the divided communities generally believe that the border is non-existent and artificial because of its arbitrariness and its lack of distinctive markings or location. This disregard of the border concept has also been promoted by bi-lateral relations between Zimbabwe and Mozambique for electrical power supply and the shared socio-cultural ties (family, language, kinship and chieftainship linkages) between the dissected communities. Therefore, the borderland communities have continued to view the area as a single territory and this has been played or shown in the way they relate or use the border in their daily transnational activities. The paper has thus delved into the various activities that have made commuter migration a common phenomenon of the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border.

Hence it has shown that borderland people commute using various routes in pursuit of schooling/education, health, trade, kinship ties and employment opportunities. All these activities have enmeshed the border into their social life and have also helped in showing why they believe they live in a transnational environment where the border is artificial, arbitrary, imaginary and non-existent.

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Strategies and shifting identities in Northern Ethiopia's borderlands: perspectives of a borderland group Irob¹

The border between Eritrea and Ethiopia changed status frequently since the 19th century up to Eritrea's independence (Triulzi 2006: 7). With the creation of Eritrea as an Italian colony and prior to the incorporation of Ethiopia into the Italian East African Empire, the border defined according to the colonial treaties had crystallized by 1936. However, the border waxed and waned over the decades of their political coexistence. Indeed, the border status shifted from mere internal-administrative marker, to a colonial border, to dissolution, to inter-state border during the one-decade Federation, becoming an internal border again, going through a phase of contested no-man's-land during the civil war and, finally, acquiring the status of an international border between two sovereign states. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in May 1998 the border had never been delimited or demarcated. For all practical purposes the ethnic groups straddling the border continued with usual daily business regardless of the borderline. For borderland groups Eritrea's independence was of secondary importance in the face of the general sense of security generated by the end of the civil war against the *Derg*.

In the aftermath of the 1998-2000 interstate war between Eritrea and Ethiopia the porous border was transformed into a wall leading to its closure and to the hampering of established movements of people and goods across the border. The ethnic groups straddling the borders particularly affected were those of Northern Ethiopia from Tigray and Afar Regions.

This article draws on original empirical research among a partitioned group, the Saho on the Ethiopian side of the border, the ethnic group referred to as the Irob. The article will shed light on the strategies and shifting identities that a borderland group created in order to adapt to the closure of a previously porous border.

The first part of the article characterizes the borderland group and the places which fall under traditional Irob territory in relation to the process of state formation in Ethiopia and in Eritrea, the state's trajectory and the extension of its institutions to the rural area under focus: the current Irob woreda.² The second part will assess the legacy of armed conflicts: the civil war that opposed insurgent movements, straddling the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, to the Marxist military regime known as the *Derg* and the 1998-2000 inter-state border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The article will show that the two armed conflicts left different legacies in the rural area and impacted differently in the local social actors' daily lives. Finally, against the background of the two preceding parts the article will analyse the borderland group's strategies and the changes with regard to identities since the one-decade long closure of the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia (2000-2011).

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² Woreda is the administrative unit which corresponds to a local district under the new post-1991 Federal model dispensation in Ethiopia. The administrative units are as follows in descending order: Region-Zone-Woreda-Tabia-Kushet.

1) The state's trajectory and the extension of state institutions to a rural area: Irob woreda (district)

The local district presently known as Irob woreda is located in Tigray's Region, in the Eastern Zone and its population numbers 31.000, which represents 1.3% of Ethiopia's population. The definition of a local district with the name of the majority ethnic group in this area, the ethnic group referred to as the Irob, corresponds to the political project of state building which the Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) introduced in post-1991 after the overthrow of the *Derg*.



Map 1: Tigray Region (capital : Mekele) Eastern Zone (capital: Adigrat) and Local District (Irob woreda, capital : Dawhan)

The capital of the Tigray Regional State of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is Mekele. Tigray's Region is divided in four administrative Zones and the capital corresponds to the fifth Zone. The five Zones, which are referred to as Zoba, are as follows: Western, Eastern, North, South and the Capital. Irob woreda falls under the Eastern Zone. Eastern Zone's capital is in Adigrat. Currently, the Irob woreda has seven "tabias" and twenty eight

"kushets". The "tabias" are as follows: Alitena, Indalgueda, Agara Lakoma, Ará, Endamosa, Haraza Sabata and Weratle. The old capital of traditional Irob territory - Alitena – was replaced by a newly built capital in the vicinity in 1997 : Dawhan. But this was not always the case. Indeed, the recognition of Irob's land within the state's administrative structure was a novelty introduced in the context of the EPRDF's political project of state building. In the Imperial Period (Haile Selassie) Ethiopia was divided in 14 Provinces, Tigray was a Province at that time. Tigray was divided in 8 administrative units called "Awaraja". The Areas where traditional Irob land is located were under the administration of Agame "awaraja" with Adigrat as the capital. In the Derg Period Tigray was divided in 11 "awarajas". Due to the intensity of insurgent movements in Eritrea, Tigray and in the Ogaden in 1987 the Derg created 5 autonomous administrative regions: Eritrea, Tigray, Assab, Dire Dawa and Ogaden (Bureau, 1988: 13-16). During this period Tigray, due to the rise of insurgent movements in Tigray , their increasing ascendancy and legitimacy, was submitted to a tripartite- administration: 1) the urban areas along the limited infra-structure of roads which remained under the Derg's control; 2) the villages (tabias) and small places (kushets) which were under the main insurgent movement's control, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and 3) *terra nullis* (no man's land) which comprised peripheral and remote areas of very difficult access. Many of the localities under current Irob *woreda* fell under either category 2 or 3.

The post-1991 Federal model marks a significant rupture with the previous political projects of state building and had manifold implication for Irob as this part of the article will show. The post-1991 transition envisaged the implementation of an ethnic-based Federal model. This model was based on the principle of equality between the diversity of groups which compose Ethiopia's social formation. The model's aim was to reflect the multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character of Ethiopia's state. In order to overcome the centrifugal pull exercised by the periphery over the centre the Federal model was based on the principle of autonomy's devolution to the regions and local districts under the banner of decentralization.

The ethnic-based federal model aimed to rebuild the state in a way that would reflect the distribution of the various nationalities of Ethiopia. Article 39 of the new Constitution recognised even the right of secession to the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. In this sense, the nationalities' concept in the 1994 Constitution implies the recognition of the multinational character of the state. In practice, the Constitution recognizes each citizen as an Ethiopian (national identity) and as identified with the majority ethnic group in its Region, Zone or local district – *woreda*. In this sense nationalities should be interpreted as sub-nationalities as synonymous of ethnic groups. The different administrative units and the internal boundaries between them were redefined and delimited in accordance with the distribution of the different ethnic groups in each Region and local administrative units. However, in Ethiopia's case the ethnic distribution is not geographically consolidated or in an homogenous fashion in each region. The logic underlying the expansion of the state since the 19th century, namely with Emperor Menelik II, was one of subordinating the *foci* of opposition to the central state through expansion and incorporation of peripheral groups. This logic was reproduced and consolidated by the subsequent regimes. Adding to this logic of expansion, the voluntary and forced processes of migration during the imperial regimes, the Italian occupation (1936-1941) and the Marxist military regime resulted in the geographical scattering of various ethnic groups (Donham and James, 1986; James et al., 2002; Turton, 2006). Finally, the previous political projects of statebuilding were framed around the principle of subordinating all other sources of identity to the national identity and Amharic took precedence over all other languages as the *lingua franca* of the Ethiopian state.

The Irob and their traditional territory had remained in the periphery of the state until very recently, as the next section of the article will show. In order to understanding the process of extending the state's institutions and representatives to this rural borderland area both the relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea's state trajectories and the positioning of this ethnic group vis-à-vis the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea are central. But, first, the next section will introduce the Irob's myth of origins, their sources of identification and the sub-group of the Bukenayto. This clan is of particular importance as the author gathered most of the data for the present article

through participant observation, group and semi-structured interviews among the Irob Bukenayto during fieldwork in November 2010, as mentioned in the introductory section.

The Irob's myth(s) of origin and sources of identity

In the 19th century one of Irob's families, that of Soubagadis, played a critical role in Tigray's power reconfiguration and in the regional history of political rivalries. *Dedjatch* Soubagadis (1816-1830) managed to gain ascendancy over other potential candidates through his warrior's skills and political astuteness. For Irob, as a minority group in Tigray, this marked a moment of political ascendancy in a region dominated by the majority ethnic group: the Tigrayans.

The sources and contemporary oral narratives differ in terms of the origins of the Irob. The Irob do not identify themselves with the other seven Saho clans that converted to Islam. One line defends that they are the descendants of Greeks who arrived in the current Eritrean port – Adulis- and hence their name Irob which in local pronunciation resembles the word Europe. Another line of oral tradition links them to the word Rome. A last line links Irob to the word in Saho which means: return to the origins. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the myth of origins links Irob to Europe, as one of its lineages (Irob Bukenayto) converted to Catholicism since the foundation of a Lazarist mission by French priests in the traditional capital of their homeland – in Alitena – circa 1846. The other two lineages, Irob Adgade and Irob Hasaballa remain loyal to the Christian Orthodox tradition of the Ethiopian state and part of Irob Hasaballa converted to Islam (Irob, 2007: 187).³

The regional political ascendancy of one of Irob's families' representative, as mentioned before, marked a positive affirmation of members of this group as social actors in Tigray's political space. Soubagadis's father had the merit of bringing together supporters from the three Irob families - Bukenayto, Hasaballa and Adgade (Coulbeaux, 1929: 381). The division in three families of this sub-group of the Saho follows the principle of descent of one of the three brothers and leaders of the aforementioned clans.

In terms of social organization and of the lineage traditional political units the three families are referred to as "Are" which literally means House or place of residence according to the tradition of descent of one of the three lineages' traditional authorities. The leader of each clan is referred to as "Ona" and is elected for life. A council of five elders or of other members' of recognized prestige within the group is responsible for the final decision. This position of "Ona" has predominantly remained within certain families and/or sub-clans in a line of continuity. The assemblage of the representatives of each group and other important meetings and ceremonies has traditionally been held in the old capital of Irob – Alitena⁴ – in a place called Dalubeta. In another place within Irob traditional territory, in Weratle, this traditional place of assemblage is located by the clinic under a centenary-old tree and is known as Indharta Daga.

In terms of socio-economic organization, in distinction with other Saho sub-groups that tend to remain nomads and dedicated to transhumant pastoralist activities, the Irob are sedentary and engaged in agriculture and cattle breeding.

Their language Saho is a Cushitic language, as is the case with Somali, Oromifa, Afar and other languages in the Horn of Africa (Lewis, 1998: 176). Indeed, their language is very close to Afar. However, while Afar follows the Latin script, Saho follows the Ge'ez script.

³ The only mosque in Irob woreda was built recently in the new capital – Dawhan. In Weratle families who identify themselves with Islam and follow the religion live peacefully with those who identify themselves with Catholicism. However, the only public place of religious profession and cult is a Catholic church.

⁴ See map 2 to identify Alitena's geographical location in relation to the new woreda capital – Dawhan – to the Eastern Zone capital – Adigrat – and to the Eritrean town of Senafe.

More recently, especially since the international recognition of Eritrea as a sovereign state (formally in 1993) an interesting distinction has emerged according to one local informant:

“ In Eritrea, Saho refers to people and language. In Ethiopia, Saho means language, not people.⁵”

In order to understanding another source of identity of this group and the emergency and consolidation of a distinction of the Saho who remained associated with the Ethiopian state, as the Irob (Lewis, 1998: 176), the next section will look into the divergent state trajectories’ of the Ethiopian and Eritrean states.

The Irob in relation to Ethiopia and Eritrea states’ trajectories and to the border

Ethiopia with the exception of the period of Italian occupation (1936-1941) was not under colonial rule as the majority of the states in Sub-Sahara Africa. Eritrea, in contrast, embarked upon a divergent trajectory of state formation with the beginning of Italian colonial rule in 1890.

Ethiopia and Eritrea were both part of the Abyssinian Empire thus sharing a common history, among other traits⁶, until Italy colonized Eritrea (1890-1941). However, as Jacquin-Berdal rightly claims (quoting Halliday and Molyneux, 1981) “neither Eritrea nor Ethiopia as presently constituted existed in the pre-colonial period” (Halliday and Molyneux cited in Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, p. 85). When Ethiopia defeated the invading Italian Army at the historical battle of Adwa (1896) and Italy was forced to shelve its plan to expand further south of the Mereb river (the river between Eritrea and Ethiopia) the two countries followed divergent trajectories. However, the groups north and south of the Mereb, especially the ones based in the Ethiopian region of Tigray continued to cross the border to inter-marry, to visit relatives, to attend weddings and funerals, to worship, to seek for job opportunities beyond agriculture, to trade and to search for pasture and water (Alemseged Abbay, 1997). In summary, the creation of the Italian colony did not prevent groups who were separated by the border (which similarly to other ex-colonies in Africa remained porous) from continuing with their daily lives among their kin across the border. But the period of Italian colonial rule did transform Eritrean society and contributed to the creation of a sense of difference among groups within Eritrea with regard to the southern neighbouring country.

Between 1936 and 1941, when Italy invaded and occupied Ethiopia, although Addis Ababa was the capital of the Italian East African Empire, Eritrea remained the main commercial and economic centre. Indeed, by 1940, 54,8 percent of the industrial firms of the Italian Empire were located in Eritrea, while 30,6 percent were located in the remaining Ethiopian Provinces (‘Shewa, Harar, Amara and Oromo & Sidamo’) and the remaining 14,6 percent were located in Somalia’s Italian colony. With regard to commercial firms Eritrea’s economic prominence within the Italian East African Empire was again undisputable: 56,2 percent of the firms were located in Eritrea, with 30 percent in the remaining Ethiopian Provinces and 13,8 percent in Somalia.

As a consequence of the opportunities available in the Italian Eritrean colony, for most of the twentieth century the peasants from neighbouring Ethiopia, mainly from Tigray, also migrated North (to Eritrea and especially to the capital, Asmara) when in need of supplementary income (Young, 1997, p. 72).

⁵ Interview with the author. Irob woreda. November 2010.

⁶ Although Eritrea’s coastal regions were subjected to several external influences throughout the centuries, Eritrea’s highlands were closely bound to Ethiopia’s Tigray. Indeed, the Eritrean Tigrinya are ethnically linked to the Ethiopian Tigrayans. The leaders of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), hold currently the positions of Heads of States. President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, are both Tigrayans. The Eritrean Tigrinya and the Ethiopian Tigrayans speak the same language- Tigrinya-, follow the same religious allegiance- Orthodox Christianity- among other features. (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, pp. 82-83). The EPLF and the TPLF are locally referred as *shabya* and *woyane* respectively.

The borderland groups, like the Tigrayans, the Kunama, the Saho-Irob and the Saho-Afar, as was the case in other borderland areas in Africa, were artificially divided by the border introduced with the creation of the Italian colony of Eritrea.

Indeed, as several interviewees mentioned reflecting local interpretations and narratives: "Eritrea did not exist. It was Ethiopia⁷."

With Italy's defeat during World War II, Britain administered the ex-Italian colony until Eritrea's future was determined (1941-1952). The destiny of Eritrea was fixed by the United Nations Resolution 390 A (V) of 1952 which established its status as an autonomous region within the Federation with Ethiopia (1952-1962). However, the progressive deterioration of the federal arrangements and Ethiopia's final abrogation of the Federation sparked dissent and contributed to the emergency of the armed struggle. Ethiopia forcefully incorporated Eritrea as its fourteenth Governorate or Province.

The war for Eritrea's independence lasted until the defeat of the *Derg* regime by the combined forces of the EPLF and the TPLF in 1991. Eritrea's independence was formally recognized in 1993 in the aftermath of a referendum that consecrated its three-decade long plight for self-determination. At this stage Eritrea's independence had no ramifications for the daily lives of borderland groups. Indeed, borderland groups continued with their daily business regardless of the border as had been the case in different periods, as mentioned in the introductory section.

As several Irob living in rural remote areas closer to markets in Eritrea than in Ethiopia mentioned: "All the people used to go to Senafe, not Ethiopia. Our town before the war was Senafe. We are farmers. We sent honey (baska), butter (subay), ox (Aurr), cows(saga), goats (Lahe) and sheeps to the market in Senafe. In Senafe we bought clothes, shoes, food and wheat." However, this situation changed dramatically with the outbreak of hostilities between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998. In the aftermath of the 1998-2000 interstate war between Eritrea and Ethiopia the porous border was transformed into a wall leading to its closure and to the hampering of established movements of people and goods across the border.

The next section will provide an analysis of the legacy of both the civil war and the inter-state war (1998-2000) for several Irob living in the borderland area.

2) The legacy of armed conflicts in a rural borderland area

During the Imperial period in Ethiopia, Irob traditional territory remained in the periphery of the state. The mountainous nature of the landscape and its topographical location contributed to its isolation. Indeed, as late as 1969 (still during the imperial regime) Alitena, the old capital of Irob land, remained inaccessible via road. In this year were carried the first efforts to build a road linking the border town of Zalambessa to Alitena. This corresponds to an estimated distance of 35 kilometres or a 5-6 hour walking journey. Most residents of this area are used to carrying out and calculating their daily activities in terms of walking distances and hours, and this is still the case in other localities within Irob woreda. The project of building a road was followed by a combined initiative of an international Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Caritas-Switzerland, and a local NGO, the Action for the Development of Adigrat Diocese (ADDA) to build a dam near the location of the present woreda capital, Dawhan. The Project to build Assabol Dam was initiated in the 1970s in the aftermath of the internationally disseminated famine during the 1973-75 drought. The drought combined with poverty, difficulty of access to many areas in Tigray and the political situation contributed to this large scale famine. During the *Derg* period and with the increasing presence of insurgent movements in this area, the Assabol Dam Project was interrupted. The Dam was only officially inaugurated on 12 October 2008 (ADDA, 2009). The difficulties of building roads and of completing the mentioned project further confirm the peripheral status of the area.

⁷ Interview with the author. Irob woreda. November 2010.

The first insurgent movement that emerged in Irob traditional territory was named after one of its mountains: Assimba. The movement was created circa 1974 (1967 in accordance with the Ethiopian Calendar⁸) and mobilized support among various Ethiopian groups. The movement also mobilized supporters among the Irob and its leader Tesfay Debrassae identified with the Irob. The movement evolved to become the Ethiopia People's Party and its base was in another well-known remote location in Irob's traditional territory: Gamada. Even the TPLF used Irob traditional territory as a rear base and its combatants were based in several remote locations, namely near Weratle, and in one well-known mountain in Irob traditional territory: Dambakoma. However, during the civil war period, characterised by the armed opposition of insurgent movements against the Derg regime, Irob traditional territory due to its peripheral position at a remote borderland area was not the centre stage or the theatre of armed conflict. The insurgent movements took advantage of this area's remoteness and peripheral situation to rest, re-assemble, escape, move freely, organise and prepare their combat operations against the Derg. This context further highlights the isolation of Irob traditional territory in relation to the state's institutions and agents.

The Derg military socialist regime launched the first campaign to teach Saho language in the context of the national campaign which came to be known as *zemacha*. The National Working Campaign (*zemacha*) was part of the Derg's national policy of promoting literacy. It envisaged the distribution of university students across the country, and particularly in rural areas, in a one-year voluntary regime to contribute for the "campaign against generalised illiteracy" and to promote teaching in local languages. The first manual written for the purposes of teaching Saho, which was written in the Ge'ez script, dates from this period⁹. But during the Derg period the presence of state's institutions or agents was kept to a minimum and their visits to the area remained sporadic. For all purposes this borderland area retained its peripheral situation in relation to the state.

The outbreak of hostilities between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998 and the armed confrontation between the combatants for the Eritrean Defence Force (EDF) and the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) marked a significant rupture with previous periods. Between when day and the next, Irob traditional territory became the theatre of armed conflict and was under effective occupation, and in some areas closer to the border, as Weratle, the EDF remained until the end of hostilities (2000).

3) Strategies and shifting identities of a borderland group in a post-conflict context (2000-2011)

The leaderships of the two countries proceeded with negotiations while fighting. What had begun as a minor border dispute in a borderland area, Badme, escalated to a proportion beyond any expectations; leading to an estimated 100,000 death toll (Steves, 2003). The analysis of the causes of the war have led to divergent interpretations, with some placing emphasis on the political dimension and on the fell out between the leaderships of the two countries (Tekeste Negash & Tronvoll, 2000; Abbink, 1998) and others putting forth the argument that territory was the central bone of contention (Dias, 2008; Jacquin-Berdal & Plaut, 2005). Indeed, with Eritrea's independence Ethiopia became a landlocked country. The Eritrean Assab port remained central to all import-export movements from and to Ethiopia.

According to local accounts, when the hostilities began, the Irob residents were taken by surprise and many took up arms in order to hamper the advance of the EDF into traditional Irob territory. For the first time, Irob traditional

⁸ The Ethiopian Calendar differs from the Gregorian calendar. One needs to bear in mind the following differences: the calendar has a total of 12 months with 30 days and a 13th month, referred to as Pagume, which has only 5 or 6 days, in the case of bisect years, and is 7-8 years behind the Gregorian calendar.

⁹ The official dictionary was finally launched in 2008 in the context of the political project of the EPRDF of promoting the learning in local languages. In the current education system, first grade students learn in Saho. After grade 1 up to grade 8 they learn in Tigrinya, and among other subjects they learn Saho. In grade 9 up to University all the subjects are taught in English.

territory was the theatre of armed conflict. The trenches carved in the mountainous terrain remain the physical marker of the 2,5 year border war. At the time of the first Eritrean offensive the EDF had the upper hand. Indeed, continuous and compulsory military service in Eritrea meant that the EPLF/ People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) regime could count on at least 150,000 new conscripts, trained, equipped and ready for deployment; whereas Ethiopia needed to recruit and train new contingents of troops.¹⁰ The Final Ethiopian Offensive launched on 12 May 2000 allowed the EPRDF to vindicate on the battlefield an indisputable victory.

During hostilities, Irob woreda's residents and other groups at the borderland areas sought for refuge regardless of the border. As the intensity of the fighting escalated they started to fear reprisals from the EDF and sought for alternatives routes to return to Ethiopia (Dias, 2008; Behailu Abebe, 2004).

As the EDF was forced to withdraw from several locations deep inside Eritrean territory on the celebration of the 7th anniversary of Eritrea's Independence (24th May 2000), the Eritrean government announced its troops had withdrawn from all disputed border areas that were occupied after the 6 May incident in Badme. The cease- fire agreement was signed on 18 June 2000. The Peace Agreement was finally signed in Algiers on 12 December 2000.

In the context of the Algiers Peace Agreement the parties agreed on the creation of a United Nations Mission for Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) whose mandate was to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement and of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). The TSZ was a buffer zone along the 1.000 kilometre-border, with a margin of 25 kilometres which remained mostly within Eritrean territory. The parties also agreed to create two independent commission. The first, the Eritrea- Ethiopia Border Commission (EEBC) had total independence and autonomy to decide on the delimitation of the border on the basis of the colonial treaties of 1900, 1902 and 1908. The second Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission had to decide on compensation claims by both sides.

Initially, the good-will line, which was unconditionally accepted by Eritrea, left Irob land inside the TSZ. Ethiopia's failure to provide a map of the borderline with precise coordinates led the UNMEE to include large swathes of territory which had been previously administered by Ethiopia, within the Temporary Security Zone. After realising this inaccuracy, Ethiopia complained and urged UNMEE to redraw the line, placing it further north. UNMEE was later able to provide an operational map that already included Irob land within Ethiopia's territorial jurisdiction. Local actors contested the EEBC decision of recognising Eritrea's jurisdiction over places in Indalgueda which are considered traditional Irob territory. In this respect, the role of a transnational non-state actor, the local representatives of the Catholic Church played a critical role in mediating between UNMEE, the local representatives of the state and the local group.

This redrawing of the line according to Ethiopia's later coordinates led Eritrea to protest and to claim that Ethiopia had not withdrawn from 'occupied territory'. Eventually, this misunderstanding raised Eritrea's suspicions in relation to UNMEE's impartiality in the dealings with both states. Finally, the TSZ was formally declared in mid-April 2001.

¹⁰ Interview, Addis Ababa July 2005.



Map 2: Areas of contested sovereignty according to the EEBC decision.

The creation of the independent Boundary Commission to decide on the border's delimitation and demarcation (EEBC) was set up on the premise that the final decision on the disputed border areas would be final and binding. The EEBC finally announced its decision on 13 April 2002. After the initial euphoria and claims of outstanding victory by both parties, ambiguities contributed to an exacerbation of suspicion and animosity between the parties. The key problem was the ambiguity with which the award of Badme was approached. The EEBC only mentioned Badme twice and both parties manipulated this initial ambiguity to claim that the town had been awarded to itself. Badme is the place where the incident which had triggered the crisis had happened. In the end, the contentious situation surrounding Badme took precedence over the extensive areas where agreement could have been reached, and which offered promising areas for incremental measures towards a rapprochement between the parties. This initial resistance led both parties to submit their own observations and evidence to contest the EEBC April 2002 Decision. After revision of the processes submitted by the parties, the EEBC announced on 21 March 2003 the final and binding decision to recognize Eritrea's legitimate sovereignty over Badme on the basis of the Colonial Treaty and, especially, on the basis of the juridical line which had crystallized in 1935, prior to Italy's invasion and forcible occupation of Ethiopia.

Due to the problems between UNMEE and Eritrea's government, the UNMEE civilian and military staff left Eritrea on January 2008 and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1827 of 30 July 2008 formally extinguished the mission. As a consequence, the Temporary Security Zone ceased to exist and at the time of writing the EDF and ENDF still keep the deployed soldiers along the international border. In some places the soldiers are literally face-to-face.

For Irob, EDF's occupation of the area was resented because of the destruction and looting of property and the disrespect of places of religious practice, such as churches. A sense of security was recovered when the Eritrean troops were finally dislodged by the Ethiopian army. However, communities in the central sector still resent the persisting militarization of the border. The frontier has been transformed into a garrison area and the continuous presence of soldiers in the region was a transformation wrought about by the war with significant social implications for the borderland group in this sector.

The movements of goods and people have been formally hampered by the closure of the border. As one local interviewee mentioned: "We don't go to Eritrea because the soldiers are there. They are dangerous. If we go there we are enemies". Another one added that: "If I go to Eritrea, I am treated as the enemy. They can come

here. If we go there we are treated as spies.¹¹” Indeed, the movement of people across the border has not been totally curtailed. Many have taken the risky option of crossing the border under the cover of night time. Since 2000 the number of Eritreans who have been conferred the status of refugees in Ethiopia has been steadily increasing. Unofficially, the estimates point to a total of 20.000 Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia.

For Irob citizens living at the borderland their daily business has become more difficult as they have to face between 5 and 8 hours of walking journey to go to the market in Adigrat, whereas before the war it would take them between 30 minutes and one hour to go to the Eritrean market of Senafe.

In addition, those who embark in the long journey of irregular migration either to Saudi Arabia, Israel or Europe have been forced to attempt much more difficult itineraries and fall prey to criminal networks organised around the irregular migrants. Whereas before the closure of the border they would take boats from small Eritrean ports near Adulis, presently they either take the dangerous itinerary across Somaliland and Puntland (Somalia) to reach the Bosasso port, or they go via Sudan and attempt to reach Europe or follow the dangerous journey through the Sinai Desert to reach Israel.

The development of the region remains hostage of the “no peace, no war” situation. Although the border war contributed to the extension of the state’s institutions and agents to the borderland continuous militarization of the border and its closure leads to continuous isolation of the several locations within Irob woreda near the border.

In the beginning of the war and in its immediate aftermath many would claim that they and the Eritreans were the same people, even repeating their astonishment with affirmations such as the following: “How can we fight our brothers? We are the same people”¹². Presently the notion of Eritreans as foreign citizens is more engrained and mentioned frequently. The whereabouts of almost 100 Irob citizens remain unknown as they were forcefully taken to Eritrea when the EDF withdrew from Irob traditional territory¹³.

¹¹ Interview, Irob woreda, November 2010.

¹² Interview, Irob woreda July 2005.

¹³ Interview, Irob woreda November 2010.

Conclusion

The process of state formation and of extending the state's institutions to a peripheral area was accelerated and consolidated with the armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia (1998-2000). However, the absence of normalization of relations between the ruling parties in Asmara (Eritrea) and Addis Abeba (Ethiopia) compromises the region's development and the borderland group's daily activities.

The borderland group remains hostage of the contested status of the international border and of the absence of normalization of relations between the two executives.

From a porous border, the post-conflict situation changed it into an invisible wall.

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Narrating and practising the state border between Uganda and Southern Sudan

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Introduction

This paper focuses on the reconfigurations and dynamics around the state border between Uganda and today's independent Southern Sudan in the pre-referendum period. The border separates two regions which for much of their colonial and postcolonial history have been politically and economically marginalised within their respective national contexts and have for several decades experienced a considerable amount of conflict and civil war. Within the alleviation of conflict-related tensions instituted by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan and a new dynamism in cross-border relations, it takes a look at the state border as both institution and social construct, based on empirical research at a border crossing between Uganda's West Nile and Southern Sudan's Equatoria region¹. By looking at border people's everyday practices and narratives and border management performances it seeks to lay bare multiple meanings and the symbolic functions of the border.

In doing so, I will first sketch the conceptual and methodological approach, before briefly outlining the historical context of the border. In the main part of this paper, I will present empirical material by linking dominant views and attitudes towards the border - and the other side of it - to the practises of the border management and border people.

Border studies and research on African borderlands: Studying border-related narratives and practices

Related to major questions posed in the panel abstract, in here I want to adopt a perspective on the border which focuses on the manifold ways in which people (and the state, too) attribute meaning, make sense and use of the border.

African borders have for long adhered a "consistently poor reputation" , regarded by many border scholars as either severe obstacles to the African continent or as quasi non-existent in practice (Nugent 1996: 35). Recent work however goes well beyond the clichée of the artificiality of Africa's colonial and postcolonial boundaries, suggesting that there is actually some common ground to suggest that "African border are often now an accepted, even actively reproduced ground of social and economic life for borderlanders" as they use them, exploit them and interpret them in many various ways (Coplan 2010: 2; see also

¹ Fieldwork was conducted between December 2009 and February 2010 as part of a Bachelors thesis in Geography at the University of Bayreuth.

Ramutsindela 1999; Miles 2005). Particular attention is paid to borderlands as specific functional and social spaces, which are 'typically distant' from the center (Engel&Nugent 2010; Coplan 2010). As regions of strong economic (both formal and informal), ethnic and cultural cross border linkages a major theme in this context are the various opportunities these frontiers offer for people in the borderlands (Nugent and Asiwaju 1996; Egg&Herrera 1998; Pederby 2000; Konings 2005; Feiyissa&Hoehne 2008).

In line with the growing amount of work on borders - rather than borderlands - in Africa (Brambilla 2007; Raeymaekers 2009; Doevenspeck 2011; Doevenspeck&Mwanabiningo forthcoming), I intend to study the Sudan/Uganda border as both institution and social construct. In doing so, I will draw on recent conceptual developments of border studies in Political Geography which, informed by notions of borders as discourse and practice (Paasi 1996;1999), foreground the dynamic and processual nature of borders. Rather than fixed and static political dividing lines demarcating sovereign state territories, the border is here understood "a site at and through which socio-spatial differences are communicated" (Van Houtum 2005: 672).

In here, I will therefore focus on the 'small discourses' of border people, their practices and the performative aspects of the border management operating at a 'micro-level'. In this conception, the border is understood as part of the daily life of borderlanders, where its impact and effects - be they material or symbolic - might be most obviously visible. Following Newman in his suggestion that "[if] we really want to know what borders mean to people, we need to listen to their personal and group narratives, collecting border narratives and pooling together similar views and dominant attitudes towards the border might help revealing its different barrier and interaction functions and lay bare the lines of inclusion and exclusion that they inherit (Newman 2006: 154)

In detail, I will look at how those people who live at, work at, deal with, and cross or don't cross the border 'story' their way of seeing and experiencing the border - and the other side of it. In doing so empirically, I conducted 46 interviews with different kinds of individuals from both sides of the border², ranging from small-scale and mobile traders, businesspeople, local border residents from different generations, lorry drivers, clearing agents, shop owners, moneychangers and local commuters to border officials.

Most of the interviews and less formal conversations were conducted at or in close proximity to the border, sometimes even while crossing it. Spending a considerable amount of time at and in between the border crossing in search for talk on the border and frequently crossing the border back and fourth - whether alone or with borderlanders - were strategies employed to observe, find out and talk about the practices of border crossers, and the performance and constant negotiations of the border management. In order to situate the findings, I will first briefly outline the historical context of the border.

Placing the border in context: rebels, refugees and trade

2 In numbers, 17 of my interviewees were Sudanese and 28 came from Uganda, while one allegedly had double citizenship. This imbalance reflects the challenges of gaining access to Southern Sudanese more generally, a fact which may also have impacted on the quality of some of the interview data.

Basically agreed upon between the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and the British Protectorate of Uganda in 1914, the border and the areas close to it have been of marginal interest to the colonial powers. While the negligibility of the border area in colonial times is in some way be illustrated by the frequent exchange of the 'Lado enclave' (comprising today's West Nile in Uganda and adjacent territories in Congo and Sudan) between the Belgian Congo, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and the Protectorate of Uganda, of which it has been successively part, the marginalisation of the borderlands persisted in the postcolonial period (Leopold 2009).

With initial tensions erupting as early as at the dawn Sudan's independence, causing large scale migration from Sudan to Uganda began in the late 50's, and continuing as refugee movements during the first Sudanese Civil War, the borderland has been characterised by persistent conflict with the frequent crossing of rebels, large numbers refugees on either side and large-scale cross-border informal trade (Leopold 2009). Shortly after the return of many Sudanese refugees in the 70's, they were soon followed by nearly 80% of West Nile's total population when Ugandan dictator Idi Amin - a West Niler from Koboko - was ousted from power in 1979, and soldiers of former and later president Obote engaged in massive revenge killings, collectively holding guilty West Nilers for Amin's atrocities (Lomo&Hovil 2004). Regrouping under two different rebel movements, former Amin soldiers subsequently launched attacks on Obote's troops from bases in Sudan (Hovil&Okello 2007). Shortly afterwards the outbreak of the second Sudanese Civil War between the SPLA and the Khartoum government again caused major refugee streams into Uganda.

Alongside the intense refugee movements across the border also came an increasingly flourishing 'informal' triangular trade between Uganda, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo from the 70s onwards. Commonly referred to as the 'magendo' trade, which goes back to collapse of the Ugandan economy under Idi Amin and persisted during the war years, this trade consisted of "legal goods illegally traded and illegal goods illegally traded" and included goods such as gold, coffee, minerals, diamonds, tropical timbers and petroleum products (Leopold 2009: 473; Meagher 1990).

Initially rooted in internal struggles and causing only minor interferences between Khartoum and Kampala governments, conflicts in the borderland became part of wider cross-border phenomena as both governments started to support rebel groups operating on the other side from the 90's onwards. Besides the Lord's Resistance Army, the Khartoum government helped the less well-known West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) and the the UNRF II (a reformed rebel group of former Amin soldiers) to form and launch attacks in West Nile, while the Ugandan government backed the SPLA. Having abandoned international relations between 1994 and 1999, Sudan and Uganda "were running an undeclared war on their common border" using the rebel groups as proxies to destabilise each other (Prunier 2004: 359). At the border in Kaya, first captured by the SPLA in 1990, government armies started overtly fighting alongside each others enemies. While the Sudan army recaptured Kaya in 1995, the WNBF briefly occupied the border post in Oraba, before in 1997 the SPLA and the Uganda army launched a joint offensive from the border, soon taking over large

parts of Sudan's Equatoria region. While the Kaya border has since then been controlled and administered - allegedly quite arbitrarily - by the SPLA, the situation in West Nile and Sudan's Equatoria regions slightly eased in 2002 due to commencing peace talks in Sudan and the final surrender of the WNUF (Johnson 2003; Ofcansky 2000; Lomo&Hovil 2004).

With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan in 2005, international relations across the border suddenly changed. Building on mutual alliances during the war years, the government of Uganda and its 'new' neighbour Southern Sudan were quick in establishing consulates and signing a memorandum of understanding to expand and strengthen their already close bilateral ties in the post-CPA era.

The cross-border trade has also taken on a new dimension, not least because, as Leopold observes, much of the current trade "seems to be legitimate business" (2009: 474). Though largely 'informal' in nature³, major export goods include a wide range of general merchandise and basic commodities such as construction materials, clothes, diverse foodstuffs, and agricultural products, electric appliances and vehicle spareparts (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2009a). The volume of cross-border trade has increased more than tenfold since 2005 which suddenly made Sudan Uganda's major export destination and, due to ongoing LRA activity around the Bibia/Nimule border crossing on the most direct route between between Kampala and Juba, helped to turn the Kaya/Oraba border into a busy transport hub between the two countries (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2010).

Setting the Scene: the Kaya/Oraba border crossing

„After the total ceasefire, that's when i came. Otherwise there was nothing here completely. It was a no-go area, just some local trade on a very low scale, local people walking. The border trade was limited to military convoys and those people were then handled from only Koboko. This was rebel area, a real bush. In fact, in the past there wasn't even this Kaya, there was nothing like those thatched houses, it was more like a camp. When I came all these things were not here. I would work here, and sleep in Koboko. This was just a bushy place“ (Ugandan border official).

The above citation of a Ugandan border official who was the first to arrive in Oraba might be illustrative of the reconfigurations at the border crossing since the CPA. In Oraba, a newly constructed parking yard serves to accommodate vehicles of long-distance trade, and local commuter vehicles frequently shuttle between the town of Koboko, the final stopping point of regular bus transport in Uganda located around 25 kilometers from the border, and Kaya and Yei in Southern Sudan. Several old and new permanent houses lined up along the roadside host a number of shops serving daily needs, a few basic guesthouses and several bars. Few meters across the border, the Sudanese border village Kaya is slightly bigger in population size and accommodates a wider range of shopping and lodging facilities. According to several informants, the majority of the local population in the two border villages returned only gradually after the Comprehensive

3 'Informal' here refers to trade which is not cleared and recorded by the Ugandan revenue authority. Data on this trade is however collected by staff of the Uganda of Bureau of Statistics and Bank of Uganda who record goods and volumes carried across the border.

Peace Agreement. Besides local border residents, Ugandans and Southern Sudanese from different parts of the two countries have come to run some kind of business at the border and seem to dominate public life in the villages.

Alongside the return of much of the economic life also seems to come a heightened presence of state authority on either side. Recently constructed buildings of border agencies on both sides of the border point towards a renewed sense of state control and illustrate the relative 'newness' of the current regime. Being transferred to Koboko during the war, Ugandan authorities were gradually relocated to their present location just in front of the small bridge crossing the borderline of river Kaya into Southern Sudan. Across the border in Kaya, the independent Southern Sudan under SPLM rule takes on a concrete form as will be outlined below.

"This is our border" - the Kaya border in the wake of state building

"Well, in the past the border was controlled by the Arabs and the taxation was so high. That's why there is also less development in Southern Sudan and that's one of the reasons why we took arms and fought. Because we have been marginalised, we haven't been given the same share. [...] So, at the time the peace agreement was signed, we said no. We are the government, we're in charge of the border, we are in charge of everything. And that's why the Southern Sudanese government decided to improve the situation in the border. Even in the past, I am telling you, to take an iron sheet across the border as a black man is not easy. They have to doublecharge you. It was very difficult" (GoSS official)

Though at the time of fieldwork, the border was officially still part of a united Sudan under the Government of National Unity, this was hardly ever visible at first sight. Instead, a large signpost announcing the entry to 'Southern Sudan' and several flags and symbols of the 'New Sudan' under the leadership of the SPLM and president Salva Kiir made eminently clear, who is really in control of the border.

There is, however, some irony in the above statement of the GoSS official, as the 'improvement of the situation' comes along with considerably complex border management instituted by the CPA and Southern Sudanese authorities. As the Daily Monitor (2008) reported, up to 16 different taxes and tolls needed to be paid upon entering Sudan, and customs tariffs have been constantly increased (especially for those goods now producible inside Southern Sudan).

While this may already illustrate the new state 'in the making', state building processes of an autonomous Southern Sudan are also felt in the everyday practice of the border management where former rebels are now acting as today's state officials. In the offices of the various border agencies, former soldiers of the SPLA are taking on their work as civil servants of the current political regime, and did in the afternoon hours attend UN-implemented advanced training in 'Administration', treating 'intercultural communication' at one of the days I have been there. In carrying out their bureaucratic tasks, there is still a way in which state power is largely understood as personalised power symbolising the ongoing transformation from military government into a civil administration. As the statement of a senior head of a border agency whose first words to me were *'I am the boss here, welcome to my area'* makes once again clear, the border - as may be

the case for the entire state - belongs to the personal hands of the SPLA/M.

This notion of 'our border' also resonates in the attitudes and views of many Southerners who frequently referred to the need of 'their' border as an inevitable necessity of any real state. As 'every state needs borders', Southern Sudan should definitely have them, too. Though revealing a strong identification with the idea of an autonomous Southern Sudan, here too, the border remains closely associated with the state. Rather than personal experiences on the border, they often foregrounded the importance of the border as an institution of the government, pointing towards a continuing state/society divide. Stressing the use of tax collection and state revenue as a potential resource for development, stories center around the hope (and also the expectations) for development in Southern Sudan, related to its existence independently from the South. This may provide a glimpse on what future legitimacy of SPLM rule in an autonomous Southern Sudan will rest on, since claims to power have so far been largely dominated by the aim of achieving independence from the north.

"We are here to protect" - Demonstrating strengths and presence at the Ugandan border

Compared to the border in Sudan, the border post in Oraba is more modest both materially as well as in terms of state authorities present at the border. Ugandan border controls are however frequently referred to as quite tight and rigid. Peculiar to the border crossing is the presence of soldiers:

„You know, at other borders you don't see soldiers, but this one is unique, because these ones [Sudanese] are still militant. So if you bring civilians here [to work at the border], you will never collect immigration. They will never go there inside [the immigration office] to stamp the passport. They are very aggressive, they are very militant. In their culture they are pastoralists, nomadists, and now, with their hangover of bush war, that combination now, becomes very dangerous“ (Ugandan border official).

As the citation indicates, security is an important concern for Ugandan authorities. As storied above, protection at the Ugandan border is seen in light of prevailing aggressions and violence of people from the other side, and are here seen as an unwanted threat. Stories of Sudanese trying to carry guns into Uganda are frequent, and a recent gunshooting at a Koboko nightclub might be evidence of this. There is a way in which behaviours of Southern Sudanese are perceived as dangers in Ugandan territory, and border control seems to be a means to impose and demonstrate 'law and order' to those entering so that Southern Sudanese '*internalise the Ugandan policies*', as a Ugandan border official has formulated.

However, the 'securitisation' of the border can not be fully understood as a mere response to real or perceived threats, but can be read as a medium of the Ugandan state to effectively communicate a sense of security and protection to the people in the borderland, which it has long failed to guarantee in this part of the country. This becomes especially apparent with respect to the way in which threats to security in Uganda are discursively externalised: from ordinary Sudanese carrying guns to a potential return of the LRA

now operating in the areas of Sudan and Central African Republic and the fragile security situation in Sudan which now poses a major threat to long lasting stability in the region.

As such, the Oraba border may figuratively express the recurrent strengths of the Ugandan central state in Northern Uganda, however spatially and temporarily limited this may in reality may be.

Performing sovereignty - border management at the Kaya/Oraba border crossing

The recourse to the particular manifestations of state power on both sides already points to the relevance and distinct symbolic functions of exercising their power through borders.

Though they are numerous strategies and tactics to reduce and dodge fees for both people and trade "that serve to bend and escape boundaries" (Raeymaekers 2009: 63), the state border becomes quite manifest at the Kaya and Oraba posts, not least in the constant negotiations of exit and entry arrangements between border officials and those, whereas the latter are often involved quite unwillingly into face-to-face discussions with border officials.

Though very few people would need to show any identity document at the time of crossing, soldiers and officials in front of the immigration offices 'verified' whether people were allowed to pass freely or if they were supposed to pay. What is interesting about these control measures is that they often depended on outer appearances such as the general look or skin colour as well as on categories such as language to decide if someone was Ugandan and Sudanese. One could observe that 'tall' and 'black' Dinka were especially targeted by the Ugandan regime, and Southern Sudanese officials setted their their primarily on 'lighter' and less taller people which were then harsh and roughly made to pay, being reminded of their different nationality.

This notion of a 'celebration of difference' in the border management performances may be further illustrated in an occasion when large numbers of Sudanese school children made their way into Uganda at the beginning of the school term.

Ugandan immigration authorities subsequently enforced their immigration controls asking a 50 dollar visa fee for everyone passing which triggered widespread incomprehension and caused major discussions among many Sudanese in Kaya. As a consequence, immigration officials from Kaya in turn rigidly controlled their border asking every Ugandan entering Kaya for his '*waraga*' (Juba Arabic for the necessary travel document).

This occasional 'border tightening', to whatever extent real or perceived, is a vivid expression of how border management can be used by either state to demonstrate its sovereign and territorial powers to both in- and outsiders, promoting a sense of difference and (not) belonging. As such, the border may be seen as a stage for the performace of stateness and as such is a key site "where governments of newly independent states can assert identities as sovereign 'players' in the post-colonial context" (Megoran et al. 2005: 723).

"There is the taste of money in Sudan" - border crossing as a resource and opportunity

One dominant narrative of the border refers to border crossing to Sudan as a resource and is prominent especially among Ugandans who engage in business and trading across. They foreground the attractiveness of business opportunities of the border and the other side of it, referring to the benefits they are drawing from the profitability of the Southern Sudanese market.

"I quit [my job] just because of a money thing, you know. There were stories going around that Sudan, it was vibrant. There was money there. So the only thing I knew, there was money in Sudan. So I went for the money and it is paying off. That business gave me more money than I've ever got in my life" (Ugandan trader).

Stories of vast amount of money in circulation, and brisk spending behaviors after the CPA underpin that the Southern Sudanese market turned out as a new "El Dorado" for traders and businesspeople of all kinds (Titeca 2009).

As post-conflict reconstruction had to start from the ground up (Denu 2009), high demand in all kinds of consumer goods, building materials and foodstuffs for the returning population and, as a consequence, high prices accounted for huge profit margins. For those people who storied the border in this way, the border acts as a doorway to the "virgin market" Southern Sudan (Titeca 2009) which offers a lucrative and viable option to increase personal economic benefits.

This is also the case for more localised forms of trade and business which was all mainly in one direction entering Southern Sudan. Everyday in the morning, mobile traders and local market women together with a number of Ugandans running shops or being employed on the other side, crossed the border to sell their products on the market and in the streets of Kaya.

Instead of seeing the trade as a simple consequence of price differentials, the border seems to separate two very distinct economic settings. Many Ugandans point out the advantages of doing business the other side compared to several restrictions and challenges they face in Uganda.

"In Sudan, with the little money you have, you can start up a business. Within one year, you can hit your target and go back, in Uganda you'll never. You have to stick to what you've been trained. But in Sudan, you can do many businesses, there are many opportunities. You just do what you're doing, you try your luck, an opportunity you'll never do in Uganda" (Ugandan businessman).

Referring to the greater economic and entrepreneurial freedom, the Sudan market is storied as open for the realisation of manyfold business concepts, of which a former school director who quit his job to buy a truck to sell water from river Nile for hundreds of dollars a day and a tourist agent working temporarily as a graphic designer and IT-specialist are only two examples.

The loose economic regulations in Southern Sudan also featured prominently in the narratives (though to the regret of many of the businesspeople, authorities started issuing licenses for shops in Kaya during the

time of research), while the Ugandan market is often referred to as congested, saturated and restrictive. Despite the economic growth in terms of macroeconomic figures, this may point to the fact that Ugandans increasingly need this export market to secure their economic livelihoods which is especially the case for mobile and petty traders, which is especially the case for small-scale and petty traders and local transporters.

Through their making use of the different opportunities across the border, Titeca has argued that the traders and businesspeople "create a de facto regional integration" economically. That we might not speak of a fully integrated borderland, however, may become obvious in the following group of stories which were common among many and often the same people who storied the border as a resource.

"In Sudan there is no law" - insecurity and and the experience of violence

"There are people who buy there [in Kaya]. But anyway, we have challenges, but we just endure. If you go to Sudan there, they [people at the border] arrest things, they want you to pay, you pay, you do what. Now if you reach there, there is a way they treat us, they don't sympathise us. You know, people of Sudan the majority they are hostile. So if you reach there, it is easy to kill you. Secondly it is easy to beat you. If you're a foreigner, they don't handle you in a good way" (Ugandan Mobile Trader)

Besides the business opportunities, another particularly strong narrative revolves around challenges and difficulties many Ugandans are experiencing across the border. These include stories of harassment by officials, soldiers and police personnel, personal insecurity and feelings of discomfort on the other side, and the attribution of negative stereotypes to Southern Sudanese more generally.

Frequently, Ugandans crossing the border talked about the harsh and sometimes even violent treatment by Southern Sudanese officials in day to day situations, and they felt that they are especially targeted by Southern Sudan authorities. One taxi driver reported that he was beaten by a police officer for having parked wrongly in the parking yard of Kaya. Indeed, there are numerous reports of Ugandans being attacked, murdered or going missing in Southern Sudan pointing towards a severe lack of public security and law enforcement in Southern Sudan where authorities are - in contrary to granting protection and justice - are themselves contributing to injustice and to "exacerbate further violence" (Schomerus&Allen 2010: 7) While stories about harassments are often closely tied to soldiers and officials, more general resentments against people from Sudan are also common.

"I don't like Sudan, we don't like this place. I spent here four months, but I don't sleep here, I sleep in Uganda. I just go out for business, then I come back. When you tell someone in Western Uganda that you are going to work in Southern Sudan, they will say why? Why are you going there? That is not a good place. Mostly, what pains us, you know, they are still backwards. [...] So like that, like me, ever since I've been moving down this place, I don't like it. I better go back to Arua. We are more comfortable than here. But here people they are still backwards"

(Ugandan businesswoman and shop owner).

'Backwardness' is one of the attributions often ascribed to Southern Sudanese generally, and Ugandans often stereotyped them as being 'rude', 'crude', and 'aggressive'. Constantly referring to their 'uncivilised behaviours', some even equated them with being animal-like. This harsh and racist terminology illustrates well the construction of people from Sudan as a 'threatening other'. It is within the first time crossing experience that difference between the two sides is initially experienced and perpetuated, and in which the border "becomes a place where the animosity and dislike for the other which, in the past, may have been based on invisibility and lack of knowledge, now takes on a concrete form" (Newman 2006: 152).

The personal and collective othering of those Ugandans who storied the border in this way becomes most obvious in the stories of the moment they return to Uganda. Many of those who stayed in Sudan or regularly go to Sudan refer to feelings of relief and coming home into certainty when reaching back to their own side of the border.

„The time you reach the border, you know you're home. You're relieved. And you're feeling the atmosphere. And some of them [people at the border], when you reach they say: ah, welcome back, welcome back. People at the border there, because they know us there, and they always sympathise with people going the other side“ (Ugandan truck driver).

"Lifeline Uganda" - the border as a gateway to survival

In contrast to many Ugandans, Southern Sudanese mainly talked in a positive way about their experiences with the other side of the border. Their stories stress the significance of bordering Uganda in several different regards.

„If the border closes, no food. The food I eat, the clothes I wear, is from Uganda. So that is the relation we have. Even the education we got, we got it in Uganda“ (Sudanese youth working in Kaya)

A first dominant narrative of the border refers to the border as a lifeline. It expresses the important role of the Ugandan neighbour to cater for existential needs of many Southern Sudanese. Besides all kinds of consumer goods which make their way across the border from Uganda, Sudanese frequently crossed the border to access basic services such as medical treatment and schooling which to date remain scarce in Southern Sudan.

Though in between the lines there is a sense in which they find themselves uncomfortable with the heavy dependency and reliance on support from the other side, there is a general affiliation to Uganda. This may be understood in the context of former reliance on Khartoum, to which the turn to Uganda offers an alternative way of orientation. In terms of trade, Uganda is not only spatially closer than the 'distant' Khartoum, but the turn to goods from East Africa also entails a symbolical dimension. They prefer the 'freely' chosen and fruitful reliance on its neighbour in the south rather than a forced dependence on Khartoum which never had a real interest the south. Rumours and beliefs of rotten and poisoned foodstuffs from

Khartoum are quite common with many Southerners. In turn, goods from East Africa are highly valued, and are appreciated as a contribution to the process of developing an emancipated autonomous Southern Sudan. In this way, the border, used as a gateway to East Africa, can be seen as an instrument to enhance and turn into reality their autonomy.

Another common theme among many Sudanese was the other side of the border as an the opportunity of recreation and.

"I usually go there [to Uganda] to wander and stroll around, just for fun. Why staying here in this naked place of ours? In Uganda, we can enjoy life!" (Sudanese shop owner in Kaya)

When the trade to Sudan severely lessened over evenings and weekends, cross-border movement seemed to reverse and one could regularly observe smartly dressed Sudanese coming across to have a couple of drinks and play a game of pool in one of the several bars in Oraba or going onwards to Koboko for a nightout.

Even if Kaya is more busy generally, especially in terms of shopping and employment options, paradoxically Oraba outstrips Kaya with regard to entertainment establishments. The frequent border crossing for leisure purposes may however not only be understood as a mere consequence of missing facilities. Using the border selectively for leisure activities offers an opportunity to temporarily escape the prevailing living conditions and take a break from strained life in Sudan where social life is still characterised by mutual mistrust and a fragile security situation. Many 'ordinary' civilians find themselves in an uneasy relationship with its own government, especially with the soldiers of the SPLA (Schomerus 2008). Stories of former rebels and today's government soldiers and officials who easily turn to violent means when feeling provoked point towards continuing tense relations between state authorities and civil society. Crossing the border to Uganda as a safe haven is a possibility to leave aside for a while the uncertainties of everyday life they are facing at home.

"The border is a difficult place" - West Nilers in between the wars

"You know, the border is a difficult place. Being in the border, you're being affected. If war starts there [in Sudan], first of all it affects us here. When it again starts there [in Uganda], it affects us here. So the thing is we to run" (Oraba resident)

Referring to the border as a difficult place is a peculiar narrative of older Oraba residents. These narratives foreground the experiences of conflict at the border and include stories of marginalisation, emphasising difficult relations with the Ugandan centre on one hand, and expressing mistrust in the current peace in Sudan on the other. For those who experienced the wars, living at the border does primarily mean to be caught in the middle of conflict from either side. In the citation above, the border is storied as an interface of the conflictous entanglements in the borderland and the border is being quite literally placed at the centre of the wars.

In the stories, the several conflicts are presented as ceaselessly accompanying and affecting life at the border where leaving the border forms a significant part of living at it.

The fact, that the current situation is not referred to as peaceful reveals the resignation of hope and the general disbelief in an enduring peace of Ugandan West Nilers. While the danger and threat to peace is now ascribed to come from Sudan, they lack confidence in the security provided by the Ugandan central government at the border. Despite the return of Ugandan state control at the border, they doubt being protected at all. Memories of absconding police personnel in previous times illustrate their view of being left alone and forgotten by the Ugandan government.

These narratives point to the persistent sense of marginality which shapes the view of many West Niler's whose relationships within the Ugandan central state "has [...] remained an uneasy one" (Leopold in Hovil&Okello 2007: 1; Leopold 2005).

"For me there is no difference" - a common borderland identity

„For me, there is no difference except that Kaya is more lively" (Oraba youth working as a clearing agent in Kaya)

A fifth narrative which was common on both sides of the border, most notably among borderland youth and people with a long experience in cross-border trade and business, abates distinctions between the two sides. They emphasise commonalities rather than differences across the border. For those who storied the border in this way, there is no sharp differentiation between the 'us' and 'them'. They rather refer to people across as "*brothers and sisters*" and "*one people*", emphasising intermarriages and family relations across the border.

Relations between people from both sides are rendered unproblematic at the local level, and they emphasise the mutual benefits Ugandans and Sudanese derive from each other, e.g. that Uganda is the "*land of education*", and Sudan the "*land of business*" mirroring dominant patterns of cross-border exchange phenomena.

Profiting from employment opportunities the border offers, working as moneychangers, engaging in small-scale smuggling of cigarettes, or doing some work across the border, they frequently cross the border and easily find their way on both sides of it. Most of the youth have had no or little problems with authorities of the other side, as they are well known to them, or as many of them were saying, they could easily mask themselves as either Ugandans or Sudanese, strategically using different languages on the two different sides of the border. The border as a usual fact of life without constituting any hindrance to cross-border activity may be expressive of a common borderland identity.

"The border is a sign of love for me, really. Even I am married across. I have a Sudanese wife, I can even stay more safe on the other side. And when I cross there [in Kaya] I can take twenty minutes talking to people before I reach where I wanted some few hundred meters ahead"

(Ugandan businessman).

Conclusion

Two contradictory processes may be emphasised with regard the above outlined observations in the post-CPA period. On one hand, we can see a border 'opening' in the sense that the border is increasingly crossed and frequented for peaceful cross-border exchange, while at the same time cross-border flows are channeled through heightened border controls within the (re)building of Ugandan and Southern Sudanese state authority in the borderland.

By focusing on the everyday narratives and practices of borderlanders, we might reveal the multiple meanings borders have for different individuals and groups of people and better understand the patterns of how the border is being used selectively to navigate and manoeuvre between two very distinct political and economic orders. As in the case of many Ugandans, for whom the border to Sudan provides an opportunity economically, but at the same time crossing the border remains a step into uncertainty and insecurity, and notions of difference are not only becoming apparent but perpetuated. The emerging post-CPA cross-border trade has created new tensions between Ugandans and Sudanese. Especially Ugandan traders who have recently crossed the border for the first time ascribe hostility to people from the other side, and in turn themselves show a latent hostility towards their neighbours.

However, perceptions of 'the other' as not really different common among 'experienced borderlanders' reveal the potential that these tensions may be overcome in the long-term. For many Sudanese, the border to Uganda in the context of an upcoming Southern Sudan remains of particular importance. Whether in terms of the provision of goods and services, or escaping the prevailing insecurity and uncertainty which characterises both the political situation and everyday life, the border as a gateway to Uganda remains of crucial importance for independent existence from the North, both in a material and a symbolic way.

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Partitioned Africans, poisoned water and the production of national identities: refugee movements and commodity trade in the South Sudan-Uganda borderlands

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PANEL 7: PARTITIONED AFRICANS

One of the cases examined in Asiwaju's classic *Partitioned Africans* was that of the Kakwa, split by the colonial Sudan-Uganda border (Adefuye 1985). The rest of the border west of the Nile was defined by 'the southern boundary of the Kuku tribe' – this international border thus bisects one ethnic group and is defined by the supposed limits of another. Adefuye focused on Kakwa resistance to the border and preservation of cross-border social and spiritual communities. But this paper will explore the complex interplay of national with ethnic and local identities, arguing that Kuku and Kakwa have indeed maintained a range of cross-border relations, but that nationality has nevertheless gained increasing salience in the borderlands since the late colonial period.

The paper explores perceptions of nationality in the South Sudanese borderlands of Yei and Kajokeji through the recent sense of threat and crisis over deaths from poisoning and witchcraft. These phenomena have long been associated with this border region, and the paper will focus on ideas about poisoning produced through South Sudanese experiences of refuge, trade and employment in Uganda. It offers very preliminary thoughts on an area of research that I intend to pursue further in collaboration with Dr Leben Moro of the University of Juba, to whom I am grateful for some of the material discussed here.¹ The paper will suggest firstly that the commonly-ascribed Ugandan origin of poison is connected to the historical and present context of Uganda as a source and controller of commodity trade, and secondly that the reported erosion of the protection provided by land and rain priests against such occult threats is connected to changing values of land and territory and escalating tension over borders, both internal and international.

Refugees and poison

During both the first (1963-72) and second (1983-2004) periods of civil war in South Sudan, large numbers of people from what are now the southern counties of Central Equatoria State (CES) sought refuge across the nearest international border in Uganda. The same counties also hosted large numbers of Ugandan refugees in the 1970s and 1980s. These reciprocal movements and the wider cross-border networks, of which they were both a product and cause, have demonstrated the extremely limited capacity of the colonially-imposed border to actually partition the inhabitants of the borderlands. But on the other hand, refugees' experience of the categorising bureaucratic apparatus of international refugee programmes and Uganda's own citizenship laws have also

¹ This is a very early sketch of an ongoing research topic: please do not cite or circulate without permission. It draws on my own doctoral and postdoctoral research, particularly fieldwork conducted in Yei between 2004 and 2007, funded variously by the AHRC, Leverhulme Trust and British Institute in Eastern Africa. The interview and fieldwork notes provided by Leben Moro were collected during research for a US Institute of Peace-funded Rift Valley Institute project in 2009-10, which resulted in the report: *Local Justice in Southern Sudan* by Cherry Leonardi, Leben Moro, Martina Santschi and Deborah Isser (Washington DC: USIP, 2010).

heightened the meaning of nationality and ethnicity and the significance of the international border itself.

Border studies have come a long way from criticisms of the 'artificiality' of colonial boundaries to an understanding of the ways in which borderland peoples have nevertheless used and exploited international boundaries through trade and traffic, and to deeper explorations of the specific identities they have forged in the process. Discussing the Uganda-South Sudan boundary in particular, Merkx argues that these advances in border studies need to be integrated into refugee studies, in order to emphasise 'borderland', rather than 'refugee', identities.² The people of the Equatoria-Uganda borderlands have in this view a shared history of marginalisation, war and forced displacement, and thus a shared border identity.

Yet, as Merkx and others also note, the nationality of refugees in this area has nevertheless remained, or even become, important, partly because of the essential definition of refugee status. The neglect of the nationality factor has contributed to misunderstandings of relations between host and refugee communities, of the meaning of ethnicity in borderlands, and of the famed 'African hospitality' which was supposed to ensure a welcome for refugees.³ The people I interviewed and spoke to in and around Yei between 2004 and 2007 tended to express considerable ambivalence towards the inhabitants of the Ugandan side of the border. Some did emphasise their long shared history of relations of ethnicity, kinship, intermarriage, interdependence, trade and migration and the obvious artificiality of the border. But many spoke more of 'Sudanese' and 'Ugandans', of experiences of hostility from Ugandan hosts and of attacks on Sudanese refugees by rebel groups in northern Uganda.

And one of the most prevalent views was that migration and exile to Uganda had produced new threats, in the form of new practices of witchcraft and poisoning brought back by returnees to Yei and Kajojeji. In these areas, there had long been concern that certain individuals – often but not exclusively women – had an inherited propensity and capacity to poison people. Although the poison was believed to be administered in food and drink, it could also be conveyed by a mere touch or handshake, and in some cases could effect an apparently remote action, such as an attack by a wild animal or a lightning strike. Even in the colonial period, people reportedly claimed that the practice had been brought from Uganda.⁴ More recently during my research from 2004, poison was said to have increased in Yei because of contact with Uganda and Congo, and through the return of refugees since the 1970s: 'poisoning has increased because people have brought back these things from Uganda'.⁵

The association of refugees with poison was not a new one. Harrell-Bond reported numerous accusations of poisoning among Ugandan refugees in the then Yei River District in the early 1980s,

² Jozef Merkx, 'Refugee identities and relief in an African borderland: a study of northern Uganda and southern Sudan', *New Issues in Refugee Research, Working Papers* No. 19 (Geneva: UNHCR, 2000).

³ Merkx, 'Refugee identities'; J. Baskom, *Losing Place: refugee populations and rural transformations in East Africa* (New York: Berghahn, 1998), p. 25.

⁴ Cherry Leonardi, 'The poison in the ink bottle: poison cases and the moral economy of knowledge in 1930s Equatoria, Sudan', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, 1 (2007), pp. 34-56.

⁵ Interview by Leonardi with a Kakwa chief, Yei, 20.1.07.

often resulting in the assault or killing of suspects.⁶ Her account made clear her own frustration with the fear of poisoning, particularly in her lambasting of 'charlatan' herbalists whom she blamed for propagating fear for their own material gain. But she also tried to explain the fears and beliefs in the context of the refugee camps. She interpreted the 'hysteria' about poison as a symptom of the 'psychosocial state' of the refugees resulting from economic deprivation, increased incidence of disease and general experiences of trauma and threat. She also explored the specific effects of refugee camp life, highlighting the enforced settlement of people in close proximity to strangers and former soldiers, producing social relations 'marked by extreme distrust, suspicion and fear'. Finally she concluded that a sub-nutritional diet may have been the most decisive factor, underscoring her view of the poison suspicions and accusations as fundamentally a 'mental health' and 'psychosocial' problem.

Almost thirty years on, Harrell-Bond's attempt to wrestle with the issue of poison among Ugandan refugees now reads as a very condescending and subjective approach. But her general critique of the effects of removing refugees' autonomy and creating artificial settlements obviously has a more enduring relevance for refugee studies, and her account provides a useful historical context for more recent concerns about poison. Some of her analysis also resonates with an even longer history of poison in this region. In the 1930s, collective fears about poison led to mass trials and killings of suspected poisoners organised by chiefs in Kajokeji. The colonial government punished the chiefs but expressed rather less concern and even more condescension than Harrell-Bond, seeing poison largely as just another aspect of an African world of magic, witchcraft and superstition. But a British missionary in the area explained the crisis with reference to the recent forced resettlements creating a particularly dense population concentration on the Kajokeji plateau, with obvious parallels to the refugee camps of the 1980s.⁷

There might then be connections between fears about poisoning and conditions of close settlement and restricted movement such as in refugee camps; as Kopytoff argues, migration and dispersal had long been strategies to diffuse social tensions in African societies.⁸ But such analyses would continue to treat poison suspicions as an aberration in need of rationalisation and explanation, and as a social crisis or moral panic. The remainder of this paper does not seek to find such an explanation for poison and witchcraft suspicions; rather it uses the ongoing discourses about poison to discuss the meaning of the Sudan-Uganda border and the ambiguities produced by experiences of migration, interaction and trade in a region that became a borderland almost a century ago. It explores the continuing connection of poison and related occult practices to refugee camps, but argues that these connections should be understood in the context not just of conditions in the camps, but also of their location in Uganda, and of the wider and longer experiences of migration and exchange in the borderlands. And it argues that the resulting concerns about poison have both contributed to and reflected the emergence of ideas of nationhood and citizenship and the meaning of the border itself.

⁶ B. E. Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid: emergency assistance to refugees* (Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 309-329.

⁷ Leonardi, 'The Poison'.

⁸ Kopytoff, Igor, 'The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture', in Igor Kopytoff (ed.), *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 3-84.

As Wilson and Donnan argue, '[t]he negotiation of borders includes both the practical negotiations involved in cross-border transfers of people and goods, as well as the more abstract negotiations over meaning to which these activities, among others, give rise.' Citing Stokes, they suggest that borderlanders are often 'very much absorbed by the question of the ways in which movement (imaginary and otherwise) is constrained and permitted'.⁹ In Central Equatoria, poison is one aspect of the ways in which local people discuss how movement should be 'constrained and permitted', which in turn contributes to making the boundary a meaningful one, with consequences for the formation of the state and national identity.

Poison in the water: commodities and cross-border labour and trade

In 2007, Ugandan media reports highlighted a series of attacks on Ugandan traders in Juba allegedly perpetrated by military and police personnel, prompting a number of public statements from the SPLA and GoSS. Declaring that the people of Uganda and Southern Sudan were 'bound by history and blood forever', and that there were 'bones of beautiful girls and young boys from Uganda... littered in the bushes of southern Sudan' to whom the SPLA were indebted, the SPLA Chief of Staff Lt Gen Oyai Deng Ajak asserted that 'we feel we are one people and one country', divided only by 'somebody from somewhere' who drew 'artificial borders in Africa'. He went on to blame the recent crimes against Ugandan traders on 'agents from Khartoum' who were seeking to 'divide us here from our Ugandan brothers' in order to prevent Ugandans ousting Northern Sudanese traders from Southern markets. He picked up the bottle of Ugandan mineral water in front of him to emphasise the way that Ugandan trade was replacing the trade from Khartoum: 'We are not producing anything in southern Sudan and the bulk of our imports are from Uganda'.¹⁰

Such imports are not, however, without ambivalent meaning locally. The year before, a South Sudanese woman who returned from Rhino Camp in Uganda to Yei was accused of poisoning children in the refugee camps in Uganda, poison which was allegedly found in a bottle of Rwenzori water. Rwenzori was then the main brand of bottled water imported from Uganda, and its name had become shorthand for bottled water in general.

This paper argues that economic, political and military relations at the margins of the emerging new state of South Sudan have ensured that this stretch of the Uganda border, however 'artificially' created, *does* have meaning, and that movements of people and goods across it have contributed to, as well as apparently subverted, the formation of national identities. This is partly the result of government efforts to control cross-border movement. But it is also the result of local negotiation over the meaning of these movements and imports, and of the wealth they generate.

The Sudan-Uganda border to the west of the Nile has not been formally demarcated, and there is even an area of uncertainty in its delimitation. The borderlands were part of the Lado Enclave, leased by King Leopold II of Belgium until his death in 1909, when the Enclave reverted to the Sudan. In 1914 this territory was divided between the Uganda Protectorate and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium of the Sudan (both British-run administrations): the former Ugandan territory to the

⁹ Thomas M Wilson & Hastings Donnan, 'Nation, state and identity at international borders', in their (eds.), *Border Identities: nation and state at international frontiers* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 21.

¹⁰ Alfred Wasike, 'SPLA chief speaks out on Ugandans in country', *New Vision* 29.10.07.

east of the Nile was handed to Sudan in return for the southern district of the former Enclave, so that the Sudan-Uganda boundary would follow a north-south rather than east-west divide, not least to prevent people crossing the Nile to avoid one or other government.¹¹ A boundary commission partially surveyed the border east of the Nile. To the west, it was delimited relatively clearly, mostly by streams and other features, but one area of vagueness remained: south of Kajokeji, it was supposed to follow 'the southern boundary of the Kuku tribe', a line which has never been formally clarified. To overcome this and to prevent the former extensive interaction between Kuku and their Madi neighbours to the south, the colonial governments sought to enforce an uninhabited zone along the general area of the border, ostensibly to prevent the spread of sleeping sickness. This involved the forced resettlement and destruction of homes in the borderland. In 1931, the District Commissioners of Kajo Kaji and West Nile decided to get together with local chiefs and map their stretch of the boundary, and they marked it by blazing prominent trees or agreeing on landmarks like rocks, but this was never formally recognised. In 1944, a dispute over a new Madi settlement near the boundary revealed its continuing vagueness (to which we shall return).

The sleeping sickness campaign propagated the idea that Uganda was the source of dangerous disease and that people moving across the border could therefore transport harm with them. In 1935, sleeping sickness was again the government pretext for attempting to suppress cross-border movement:

In spite of a large no-man's land separating the Kuku country from Uganda, our Kakwa people have been secretly visiting their Uganda relatives via the elephant tracks through the bush and *so have brought the infection back with them*. As a punishment the chief was put in prison and the whole Kakwa tribe made to move to a new site some 40 miles inland from the Uganda border. Before leaving some of the men burnt down the building which had been their Church and school – it is said out of resentment.¹² [My italics]

In general social and trading networks thus continued to operate across these boundaries throughout the colonial period; inhabitants of the border zones maintained their 'informal' trade and even profited from the boundary. They also continued to migrate across it, especially in times of food shortage.¹³ Trade and smuggling increased further when bicycles became widely available later in the colonial period.¹⁴

Labour migration was the other main factor in cross-border activity, and one which came to be actively encouraged by the colonial authorities, provided it was registered and regulated. From the 1920s, young men from Equatoria travelled to work in the plantations in southern Uganda, partly under pressure to earn cash to pay taxes. The Sudan government started a pass system for migrant labourers in 1937; in one part of Yei district, a survey of labour in 1941 showed that 47% of adult men were employed away from their villages, mostly in Uganda.¹⁵ By the 1950s many were moving

¹¹ See Mark Leopold, 'Crossing the line: 100 years of the north-west Uganda/South Sudan border', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3, 3 (2009), pp. 464-78; Douglas H. Johnson, *When Boundaries Become Borders: the impact of boundary-making in Southern Sudan's frontier zones* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2010), pp. 101-4.

¹² Finch, Kajo Kaji, 10 July 1935, Church Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham (CMS): G3 AL.

¹³ Yei District Monthly Diary Feb. 1944, May 1945, National Records Office, Khartoum (NRO): EP 2/24/87.

¹⁴ Interview by Leonardi with Lubari Ramba, 31 Aug. 2004, Mitika, Yei.

¹⁵ Equatoria Province Monthly Diary Aug., Oct. 1941, NRO CS 57/14/53.

to Uganda for longer periods to work in the cotton industry; some of their descendants were among the 'Sudanese' of northern Uganda who would be employed by President Idi Amin.¹⁶

According to Baskom and Merx, the growth of migrant labour and the shift to a market economy in the mid-twentieth century led to increasing strain on cross-border relations even among those of the same ethnic group.¹⁷ These developments had certainly led to debates within communities in the Yei area, with chiefs and elders in the colonial period complaining at the loss of labour locally and at the tendency of migrant workers to spend all their earnings on clothes in Uganda and return with less respect for the rural communities. Concerns about the loss of labour from the area and interaction with the capitalist economy were perhaps encapsulated in reports from the late colonial period of '*kulia batu*': European, Arab or Indian cannibals who came in saloon cars across the Uganda or Congo borders to carry people away to consume. Cross-border labour migration had increased interaction with central and southern Uganda as well as the immediate borderlands, and may in the process have contributed to emerging national identities, as both the *kulia batu* stories and the reference to 'Sudanese' in northern Uganda suggests. Migrants were not allowed to purchase land in Uganda. Significantly they became drawn into a commodity economy that barely existed in their home areas at this time, returning with clothes to distribute to relatives.¹⁸

Labour migration also helped to establish or strengthen cross-border relations that could be utilised for the development of informal trade and smuggling. Such networks have been further built through the movements of refugees back and forth across this border since the 1960s. In the early 1980s, Sudanese refugees who returned to Yei and Maridi districts were able to use 'friendships' built in Uganda or Zaire to conduct illicit trade across the borders.¹⁹ But, as Meagher's study of *magendo* trade in northern Uganda at this time shows, there were high risks involved; traders not only had to contend with high and often unofficial customs and taxes, but also with roadblocks and harassment from both official and unofficial sources.²⁰ Markets that she mentions such as Ariwara and Baze in the Uganda-Sudan-Congo border triangle once again become significant after the SPLA capture of Yei in 1997; the cheap motorbikes, for example, that flooded into the region were frequently purchased from Ariwara, and until around 2005 a Congolese numberplate could be purchased at relatively low cost.²¹

Increasing efforts to ensure that bikes and other vehicles were registered in the appropriate country have increased the cost of such trade, as have the largely informal customs payments demanded at various points between the border and Yei or Juba. All traders complain about these demands, but for Ugandans their frequent harassment has characterised their experience of the Southern Sudanese government and was often interpreted in terms of nationality. The Ugandan media exacerbated such perceptions, particularly between 2006 and 2008, when a number of attacks on

¹⁶ Merx, 'Refugee identities', p. 10

¹⁷ Baskom, *Losing Place*; Merx, 'Refugee identities'.

¹⁸ E.g. Yei District Monthly Diary March 1945, NRO EP 2/24/87; Leonardi, 'The Poison'.

¹⁹ Akol, 1994, cited in Merx, 'Refugee identities', p. 4.

²⁰ Kate Meagher, 'The hidden economy: informal and parallel trade in Northwestern Uganda', *Review of African Political Economy* 17, 47 (1990), pp. 64-83.

²¹ As I know from personal experience, in 2005 it was much cheaper to buy such a motorbike in Aliwara and bring it up to Yei or Juba than to purchase one inside Sudan. See also Kristof Titeca's account of Aliwara: 'The changing cross-border trade dynamics between north-western Uganda, north-eastern Congo and southern Sudan', *Crisis States Research Centre Working Papers Series 2*, No. 63 (London: LSE DESTIN, 2009).

Ugandan traders or their general harassment by military and security forces in Southern Sudan were reported.²²

While cross-border trade might appear to subvert national boundaries, the efforts by governments and military forces to tax and regulate it have ensured that the experiences of traders contributed to the distinctions drawn between Sudan and Uganda. In addition, the risks and costs involved in the trade have fuelled the uncertainties and debates about the meaning and moral implications of the movement of people and goods.

One of these goods was bottled water, which was primarily associated with the international personnel of the refugee and aid programmes in the region. Some children even called white people 'Rwenzoris'. This was then a luxury commodity. In a more general sense, water became a scarce commodity in refugee camps and towns, where people might have to buy or receive rations in containers or experience pressure on boreholes, which no doubt contributed to suspicions and fears about poisoning. IRC reported tensions over boreholes in Juba in 2007 between long-term residents and more recent returnees from Uganda; the latter were told they should have a separate borehole because of their propensity for poisoning the water.²³

Poison has to some extent become a marker of the 'other'; frequently blamed on Ugandans and returnees from Uganda, the latter instead associated it with the rural communities around Yei and feared to eat or drink or even to shake hands with people in the villages, preferring the anonymity of public tea places to consuming anything in a private home. Similarly in the past, one Yei chief's father had told him that Masindi was the principal source of poison, and yet a 1937 report by a British official claimed that Kuku young men working in Masindi feared returning to Kajo-Kaji because it was the site of poisoning.²⁴ Nowadays the origins and most dangerous sites of poison in Uganda were discussed and debated in Yei:

We know many people have been killed. Liwolo seems to be the worst place... There is a market there called Agama where even shaking hands is dangerous.²⁵

As this reference to the market suggests, the potential purchasability of poison indicated the commodification of witchcraft itself. In Yei, people particularly associated poison with villages near the border like Ombasi, which became particularly notorious after a truck containing pesticide overturned on a bridge there, and people took the pesticide to kill ants but also allegedly to poison people. It was also common more generally for suspects to be accused of poisoning using tins of insecticide. Such substances also represented the international commodity trade.

²² Charles Bwogi, 'Over 20 Ugandans killed in Sudan', *The New Vision* 12.9.07; Charles Ariko, "'We don't harass Ugandans' – GoSS", *The New Vision* 22.4.07; Cyprian Musoke & John Odyek, 'Govt urged on report on Ugandans killed in Sudan', *The New Vision* 20.9.07; Chris Kiwawulo, 'Ugandan traders in Juba attacked', *The New Vision* 19.2.08; The Monitor, 'SPLA troops rough up envoy Kiir apologises over assault', *The Monitor* 7.10.07.

²³ IRC 2007. There were also fears that the waters of the Nile itself had been poisoned by the Khartoum government just before South Sudan's independence: Sudan Tribune, 'Juba's population panics over rumours of water poisoning', *Sudan Tribune* 23.6.11.

²⁴ Equatoria Province Monthly Diary Oct 1937, NRO Civ Sec 57/4/17.

²⁵ Interview by Leben Moro with an SPLM secretary in Kajokeji County, 17.11.09.

Most often though, the commodity of poison was said to have been purchased in Uganda or Congo. In early 2007, three elderly women near Yei were accused of putting poison in food and water, and were beaten until they reportedly produced the substance they had used which was then administered to them, causing their deaths (a measure promoted by the SPLM authorities until recently as a means of dealing with poison). According to the sub-chief, 'the ones who died said that they had bought the medicine during the exile from some Lugbaras'. He added that 'people who don't have a husband or children want to destroy other families'.²⁶ The idea of envy as a motivating factor has obvious parallels with witchcraft more widely. A young man who grew up in Uganda explained his reason for avoiding returning to his home village between Yei and Juba:

If you go to the village and you are educated or your father is rich, they will try to poison you. I try to avoid going to gatherings or eating or drinking anything there, but then they will notice that too and say I am expensive, and they will try to get me somehow. Even the young men can poison you these days. There is a place in Koboko where you can go to buy poison. Adjumani is the worst place.²⁷

Poison was linked to discussion of wealth, particularly wealth gained from cross-border trade or opportunities. Trucks and drivers had been an increasingly prominent aspect of this trade; As Leopold shows, drivers have been among the wealthiest people in Northern Uganda.²⁸ Like the poison in the Rwenzori bottle, the poison from the overturned pesticide truck in Ombasi was highly symbolic and indicative of the suspect nature of imports and the vehicles that transport them. More specific resentment was directed for example at the lorries transporting teak timber from the Yei area, a trade which was known to have benefited certain SPLA commanders since Yei was captured in 1997; an elderly woman passing one heavily loaded teak truck on the road in Yei in 2005 turned to utter a curse on it. More generally, drivers were increasingly being blamed for bringing HIV into the Yei area; just as sleeping sickness was seen by the colonial authorities to be imported across borders, so HIV was commonly seen to be brought from Uganda or Congo. Drivers epitomise movement across regions and borders; they are seen to be ungoverned by moral or social controls, and thus to potentially carry dangerous infection with them.

Poison was often discussed in conjunction with two other (sometimes overlapping) occult phenomena, with even more overt connections to experiences of the capitalist economy and the unequal power dynamics of cross-border economies. One of these was known as 'Abiba', a spirit or power which was said to take people from their beds while sleeping or even from the grave to labour in some unknown location, generating 'money' for the person in possession of the Abiba. People report waking in the morning to find mud on their legs and feeling physically exhausted from working in the fields all night. It was very much associated with Uganda (particularly Masindi according to one man) and Congo. A suspected case occurred near Yei in 2005, when a recent grave collapsed and the deceased was said to have been taken by Abiba; according to a relative, 'people are blaming the driver who drove the deceased to Uganda, saying that the driver is a workaholic and has taken him away to work for him'.²⁹ There are obvious parallels with the *kulia batu* cannibals in

²⁶ Interview by Leonardi with a sub-chief (formerly a refugee camp block leader) near Yei, 22.1.07.

²⁷ Conversation between Leonardi and a young man recently returned from Uganda to Southern Sudan in Yei, 22.1.07.

²⁸ Mark Leopold, *Inside West Nile*

²⁹ Interview by Leonardi with youth and church leader near Yei, 6.9.05.

their 'saloon cars' in the late colonial period: Abiba is even more explicitly related to the *cross-border* extraction of labour and the profits of trade and transport. 'Abiba is a form of witchcraft, which was brought by Sudanese returnees from Uganda', as Moro reported in 2009:

*Abiba is new and people learned about it in exile in Uganda. They bought this kind of poison from markets in the Lugbara areas of Maracha in the Terego land. Some poisons were also bought from Madi on the eastern bank of the Nile. The Kuku bought Abiba from Ugandans during the war time, and are using it to kill each other.*³⁰

A similar explanation for sudden or great wealth acquisition was reported among Ugandan refugees by Harrell-Bond in the 1980s, and was also being discussed in Equatoria more recently.³¹ An individual who wished to become rich would pay a specialist and be told to write down a numbered list of names of relatives. Each of these relatives in turn would die suddenly, and just before their death they would see their number appear somewhere on their skin. Their deaths would bring sudden great wealth to the individual who drew up the list. Again there are obvious connotations of the enumerating, exploitative forces of bureaucratic government and capitalist economy. And again the specific accounts of this deadly numbering tended to involve border-crossing; very often the specialist dispensers were said to be in Uganda.

Studies of African witchcraft have increasingly explored occult discourse as a way of discussing modernity and capitalism.³² In Central Equatoria, the concerns about the import of occult practices from Uganda were a more specific aspect of discourse about the cross-border economy. People in Yei and Kajojeji were almost entirely dependent on Uganda for imported commodities, as well as for educational and employment opportunities. And the cross-border trade was heavily controlled by Ugandans, producing ambivalence and some resentment on the part of the borderland inhabitants themselves, and exacerbating perceptions of national difference. Recent reports have demonstrated that although cross-border informal trade produces transnational economic networks, the dominance of Ugandans in these networks has actually served to increase hostility towards Ugandans in South Sudan. As Titeca emphasises, the Ugandan traders had occupied 'a central place' in the cross-border trade since the 1980s: 'In doing so, they managed to accumulate wealth and establish a powerful trading position in the area'.³³ It was the border itself that produced the profits for these Ugandan traders; it was not surprising that cross-border movement was also seen to produce occult means of acquiring wealth and commodified forms of witchcraft and poison.

³⁰ Interview by Leben Moro with a paramount chief in Kajojeji County, 13.11.09; Fieldwork report by Leben Moro for the RVI-USIP project *Local Justice in Southern Sudan*, in the author's possession.

³¹ Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid*, pp. 322-3.

³² E.g. Peter Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville, 1997); Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (eds.), *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa* (Chicago, 1993); Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumour and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley, 2000).

³³ Titeca, 'The changing cross-border trade', p. 14; Graham Carrington, *Cross-border trade: fuelling conflict or building peace? An exploration of cross-border trade between Sudan and Uganda and the implications for peacebuilding* (London: Conciliation Resources, 2009).

Borderland politics

The concerns about poison in Yei and Kajokeji also need to be understood in the wider political and military context and in relation to territorial and ethnic definitions of citizenship, and the increasing politicisation of the Uganda border itself. The movements of refugees are inevitably political, and from a South Sudanese perspective they were bound up with relations with the SPLA. For young men and women and children, flight to Uganda was a means of avoiding forced conscription into the SPLA as soldiers or wives. But SPLA monitoring of the camps ensured an ongoing risk, and the fear of being identified as having sought to evade conscription. Yet at the same time, from 1996 the West Nile Bank Front of Juma Oris attacks the Southern Sudanese refugees as SPLA supporters, and Dinka refugees were particularly targeted because of their perceived association with the SPLA.³⁴

Some young returnees running a youth organisation in Yei repeatedly claimed that the 'locals didn't want us' in Uganda. Yet they carried Ugandan ID cards in order to avoid harassment by the SPLA in the camps, who would accuse those carrying refugee cards of abandoning their country and fearing to fight. Now they have returned to Yei, soldiers or ex-soldiers continue to accuse them of having 'run' to Uganda to avoid fighting, and got 'nice clothes' – again revealing the association of Uganda with commodities.³⁵ Nationality and citizenship have of course gained heightened significance as South Sudan moved towards secession and its government engaged in self-conscious nation-building. Returnees from Uganda have been subject to particular scrutiny and doubt over their 'real' national identity, exacerbated by their frequent lack of knowledge of colloquial Arabic or even their mother tongues. Cross-border movement may have blurred national identities but this has also led to heightened attention to nationality in the borderlands.

Returnees proudly showed off their Ugandan-style clothes, music, churches, education and language, and yet their experiences as refugees had constantly reminded them that they were *not* Ugandan. Now they returned to find their Sudanese-ness, or South Sudanese-ness questioned. In this sense a borderland identity might be seen as a neither/nor kind of non-identity, a negative liminality. Perhaps this has contributed to the association of poison and witchcraft with the border areas, but more important was the import and exchange of new goods and the movement of people and cultures, requiring ongoing moral debate as to how to govern and regulate them. For the questioning of a returnee's loyalty to South Sudan, rather like the suspicion of poison, was in part a recognition or critique of their privileged access to outside economic, cultural and educational opportunities.

Payne claims that SPLA leaders deliberately spread rumours in the Ugandan border town of Koboko that the people of Aringa County wanted revenge for their treatment when refugees in Sudan in the 1980s and the attacks upon them by the SPLA. Rumours spread of 'people who would poison' the refugees. In Payne's view, there was a deliberate attempt by the SPLA to ensure that the refugees did not seek to settle in Uganda and would instead return to build the 'New Sudan' after its

³⁴ Merckx, 'Refugee identities'; Lina Payne, *Rebuilding Communities in a Refugee Settlement: a casebook from Uganda* (Oxfam GB, 1998), p. 29.

³⁵ Interview by Leonardi with youth organisation leaders in Yei, 16.2.06.

'liberation'. Many refugees reportedly declared that they would rather return to die on 'their own soil' than remain to be attacked in Uganda.³⁶

However, returning to one's 'own soil' has often generated its own tensions. Land disputes have escalated in the interim period in South Sudan as refugees and IDPs have 'returned' to their home areas or to the rapidly expanding towns, and as internal administrative boundaries have become hotly contested.³⁷ In Kajokeji, a number of people interviewed by Moro were concerned that their old means of protection had been undermined because the landowning clan leaders had lost their power to curse evildoers like poisoners. This was because the war had polluted their land with blood:

The *abiba* [witchcraft] defeated us. Some suspects were killed, or chased away, but the problem is still with us. The problem is that the government is doing nothing to discourage the practice and appears to be supporting the wrong people or suspects at some times... We are confused and do not know how to handle this matter. Much *rima* [blood] was shed during the war, and the land has been polluted. This requires cleansing. The process will commence with the construction of two huts... After these have been built, the *mataki ti porogo* [landlords] would prepare their own compounds in which they could *lömbu* [curse] evildoers, including those using *abiba* and other forms of poison to kill people.... Then the *mataki ti porogo* will deal with the *abiba* and other poison cases. They will curse, and the guilty will die. The government will not interfere in this traditional way of dealing with poison.³⁸

But this concern at the landlords' loss of power may have also reflected the wider tensions over land at the time, which were producing increasing disputes over the boundaries between clans, communities and local administrative units, and even between Southern Sudan and Uganda. A local administrator reflected the overlapping tensions in discussing how to deal with a case of death from suspected poison:

The death caused confusion. I called the meeting so that we could determine who was the landlord of the area. There were competing claims... I was not involved in the election done on 20th. I was meeting the County Commissioner on the border problem between us and Uganda.³⁹

The 'election' will be discussed in a moment, but this statement is revealing of the circular way in which concerns about poison intersected with wider disputes over land and territory, which in turn gave heightened significance to the international border – which itself contributed to concerns about the import of practices of poison and witchcraft. The uncertainty of the border between Kajokeji and Moyo County of Uganda has led to recurrent tensions during the interim period. In early 2007 the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) accused the Moyo District authorities of

³⁶ Payne, *Rebuilding Communities*, p. 43.

³⁷ See e.g. Ø. H. Rolandsen, *Land, Security and Peacebuilding in the Southern Sudan* (Oslo: PRIO, 2009); Mareike Schomerus & Tim Allen, *Southern Sudan at Odds with Itself: dynamics of conflict and predicaments of peace* (London: LSE DESTIN, 2010).

³⁸ Payam chief interviewed by Leben Moro in Kajokeji County, 17.11.09, cited in Leonardi *et al*, *Local Justice*, p. 58.

³⁹ Payam Administrator, speaking at a meeting with the County Magistrate, Kajokeji, 4.11.09.

encroaching on Sudan land with their construction of a road and border post. In September 2009, Ugandan farmers in Moyo District claimed they had been chased from their fields by SPLA soldiers shooting in the air (a report denied by the SPLA) and claiming that they were on Sudanese territory; Ugandans then rioted and attacked Southern Sudanese nationals and refugees in the area, forcing the closure of the main border post at Afogi. A few months later the Kajokeji County Commissioner escalated the dispute by asserting that the Kuku not only claimed 'ancestral' ownership of a disputed 5km border area, but of other areas in Moyo and Yumbe districts. He also claimed that some of the disputed areas had been settled on by Ugandan refugees after 1979, but were Kuku and hence Sudanese territory. Kuku ethnicity and territory were thus gaining rapidly heightened political significance as signifiers of (Southern) Sudanese nationality and territory, a consequence of the original 1914 definition of the border. By late 2010 road construction was still prevented by the ongoing wrangles between the authorities on either side of the border.⁴⁰ The inhabitants of these borderlands have thus been caught up in the politicisation of the border and of their own nationalities.

Land and territory were intertwined with national identity more generally, particularly for returning refugees, as Hovil shows. Her informants in Kajokeji asserted that life was much better there than it had been in Uganda, where they had no rights to land in relation to 'the nationals', i.e. Ugandans. Land was probably the single issue that most reinforced the status of refugees as non-citizens of Uganda, and it was therefore crucial to their sense of nationhood and citizenship rights on their return to Southern Sudan – to their 'empatriation', as Hovil argues.⁴¹

In Kajokeji, as increasing numbers of people returned from Uganda after 2005, several mob killings of suspected poisoners occurred, often involving beatings and burning. Some chiefs and other community leaders here advocated instead 'excommunication': the eviction of suspects from the community, which had sometimes been a practice in the refugee camps in Uganda. This again connected landownership with protection against poison, because land authorities could refuse land to or evict suspected poisoners. Hovil cites a woman recently returned to Kajokeji who praised the continuing control of land distribution by the 'landlords', 'because it eliminates people with bad backgrounds from the community'.⁴² Land allocation at the local level could thus be used to exclude as well as to include, helping to distinguish particular kinds of local citizenship rights on the basis of autochthony. Many of the poison suspects were said to be of Ugandan origin, and nationality and autochthony were thus featuring in the intertwined concerns over land rights and poison suspicions.

Various other solutions had been tried to deal with poison suspicions and accusations, as well as evictions. During both the Anyanya One and SPLA rebel wars, suspects were killed by the soldiers in large numbers. Subsequent efforts to regulate these killings led to a new policy by the SPLM/A

⁴⁰ Xinhua, 'Uganda, South Sudan in land row' *Sudan Tribune* 24.2.07; Sudan Tribune, 'Ugandan rioters attacks Sudanese after border dispute', *Sudan Tribune* 3.9.09; Sudan Tribune, 'South Sudan army says not involved in Ugandan border incident', *Sudan Tribune* 4.9.09; Sudan Tribune, 'South Sudan demands ancestral land from Uganda', *Sudan Tribune* 14.12.09; Sudan Tribune, 'Border row with Sudan stalls construction of road in Uganda', *Sudan Tribune* 16.8.10; Sudan Tribune, 'Uganda and South Sudan to discuss border row', *Sudan Tribune* 19.11.10.

⁴¹ Lucy Hovil, 'Hoping for peace, afraid of war: the dilemmas of repatriation and belonging on the borders of Uganda and South Sudan', *New Issues in Refugee Research: Research Papers* No. 196 (Geneva: UNHCR, 2010), p. 19.

⁴² Hovil, 'Hoping for peace', p. 20.

administration of Yei and Kajojeji counties to overcome the problem of evidential proof in poison cases by demanding that accusers identify and produce the poisonous substance that they claimed defendants had used. If litigants could do so, the defendants were then ordered to consume the poison to see how deadly it really was. Many people accused of poisoning thus died after being forced to consume tins of insecticide or other chemical or poisonous substances allegedly found in their homes, in what were effectively ordeal trials.

The reestablishment of a formal court system made it increasingly difficult to convince magistrates and judges of evidential proof in poison cases, however, especially if the case concerned a more remote effect such as a lightning strike rather than the administration of a poisonous substance. In 2009, a means of identifying suspects was followed which had also reportedly been imported from the Ugandan camps. After two boys were killed by lightning, community leaders including teachers, parents, chiefs and local administrators asked the boys' schoolmates and the wider community to vote by secret ballot to identify the culprit(s). A clear majority identified a particular woman and her children, and the 'election' was seen to have constituted evidential proof, a claim rejected however by the county magistrates, police and commissioner, who were nevertheless forced to take the suspect family into protective custody.⁴³

There was a certain logic to the adoption of practices from the refugee camps to tackle a problem also believed to have been imported from Uganda with returning refugees. In the colonial period, expert diviners had been invited from outside the community to conduct ordeal trials of poisoners, and more generally there was often a sense that knowledge and expertise in such matters could be used either to cause harm, or to treat and prevent such harm.⁴⁴ In Kajojeji more recently, people similarly sought out diviners and doctors to identify the source of illness, death or other harm, often from or in Uganda, as a police commissioner complained:

You know people seem to prefer witch doctors, whose actions are been responsible for some mob killings and communal tensions... Most of the witch doctors are foreigners and Muslim. They come from Uganda, where there are many criminals. In fact, some witch doctors began putting up sign posts here. I ordered their arrest on migration irregularities. They are here illegally. Unfortunately, our people like these witch doctors, and sometimes tip them off before we get to them.⁴⁵

One practicing doctor or diviner himself admitted to learning his craft in Uganda; when interrogated by a magistrate for having identified a man as an *Abiba* poisoner, 'I told him that I cured sick people using herbs, and I showed him a big manual that I was given in Uganda when I attended a workshop there'.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Concern about increasing and new forms of 'poison' or witchcraft in the Equatoria borderlands was in part an expression of the morally ambiguous results of leaving one's 'ancestral land' to take refuge or seek economic opportunity across the border in Uganda. Those who subsequently returned

⁴³ Leonardi *et al*, *Local Justice*, pp. 56-8.

⁴⁴ Leonardi, 'The poison'.

⁴⁵ Interview by Leben Moro with Police Commissioner, Kajojeji, 23.11.09.

⁴⁶ Interview by Leben Moro with a doctor and diviner, Kajojeji County, 8.11.09.

brought new skills and experiences with them, but they might also bring new occult expertise. And the means to combat such dangers were simultaneously undermined by the effects of war and the threat to and contestation of land and territorial rights. In the borderlands, ethnicity and territory were increasing signifiers of national identities and citizenship rights. At the same time, people in Equatoria were experiencing the unequal wealth and power dynamics of the cross-border trade with Uganda, reinforcing older associations with Uganda as a site of mysterious wealth and exploitative terms of trade. It was not surprising that it was also identified as the site for the acquisition of occult commodities like poison and newer forms of witchcraft. The association of returning refugees with these occult practices and substances was not then simply a product of the hardships and experiences of the refugee camps themselves, but should also be viewed in the broader and longer-term context of cross-border economic relations. Migration, trade and social interaction across the Sudan-Uganda border had always produced and reproduced cross-border and transnational networks that resisted the border as a 'partition'. And yet the paradox is that this economic and social interaction and the movements of armies and refugees have at the same time produced new sources of difference and division along the fault-line of the border. The stories told about poison – sometimes stories with deadly effect for suspects – traverse back and forth across the border, revealing both the way that people's lives have encompassed multiple border crossings, but also the ambiguities, fears and identifications that these crossings have produced.

NDAU IDENTITY IN MOZAMBIQUE-ZIMBABWE BORDERLAND

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Introduction

The Ndaus are one of many African groups that show the division provoked by the establishment of colonial borders. The effects caused by this territorial demarcation to the definition of a transnational Ndaus identity, as well as the evolutions around this identitarian feeling, specially affected by sociopolitical transformations in both countries (specially colonial wars and civil wars) are fundamental analysis elements to the update of knowledge about this ethnic group.

The academic debates about ethnicity have been largely discussed in the past decades, specially the ethnicity historicity, i.e., if ethnic groups are deep-rooted in ancestral identities or if they were invented by colonialism. Jean-Loup Amselle, for instance, sustains that ethnic identities are colonial creations, that there wasn't such thing as an ethnic group during pre-colonial ages and that ethnic identities were sculpted only by the colonizers' will of territorialize the African continent; after that, the local populations have reappropriated these identities². However, nowadays there is an emerging consensus about the importance of looking to ethnic identities as a process of constant transformations, adaptations and negotiations previous to colonialism (although only known in this period), more than looking for exact moments of crucial construction or rupture³.

Ndaus identity is deep-rooted in Monomotapa Empire, previous to the Mozambique-Zimbabwe border establishment and prior to colonialism. So the Ndaus are an example of shared common social and cultural traits over several centuries, which contributed to the emergence of a sense of Ndauness. Social structures and cultural practices related to totems, marriages, births and deaths served to bind the Ndaus together across southeast Africa. Many of the conventions in place in the twentieth century, such as the burial and succession of chiefs, are similar to those practiced

¹ This article was produced within the research project "Borders and Identities in Africa" (PTDC/AFR/098339/2008), financed by the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT).

² Amselle, M'bokolo, 1985: 23

³ Dorman et al., 2007: 7

centuries earlier. While some of these “little traditions” have certainly changed with time, they have also retained a coherent relevance for the Ndaus today. These traditions in Ndaus history serve as cultural materials that define aspects of a scripted Ndaus identity⁴.

This article presents some reflections about African borderland identities, focusing in Mozambique-Zimbabwe border and showing practices and representations from Mozambican-Ndaus social actors about those Ndaus “on the other side”, considering that these practices and representations are a fundamental part of their own identity processes. So it analyzes “partitioned” Ndaus in their sense of belonging, and the uses and meanings of that international border to them. It also relates Ndaus identity evolution with the historical and political evolution of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In this sense, the text begins with an approach to some general issues about African borders and is followed by an analysis of Ndaus ethnic identity in Mozambique-Zimbabwe borderland, its representations and possibilities as a transnational identity. The ideas here presented are a result of Mossurize district (Manica province, Mozambique) case study.

African borders

According to Malcolm Anderson, political borders are instruments of state politics and represent the control level that the State is able to practice over its territory; they are also marks of identity, political beliefs and myths about the unity of the populations that live in the same political territory and that contribute to the construction of an «imagined community» that many call a «nation»⁵. Jeffrey Herbst sustains that all borders are artificial because states aren't natural creations as well – so borders are political creations established according to the uses intended by those who defined them⁶. On the other hand, Christopher Clapham says that the relationships between states and their borders may be of two kinds: borders that are built by states or states that are built by their borders – and most African states clearly belong to the second type⁷. Indeed, today is generally agreed that African borders are merely artificial, formal and symbolical and that's the reasons why they are porous.

⁴McGonagle, 2007: 69

⁵ Anderson, 1996: 1

⁶ Herbst, 1989: 692

⁷ Clapham, 1998: 79

In pre-colonial Africa, social groups (kinship groups, villages, cult groups, chieftaincies or kingdoms) were very autonomous. However, rivalries or desires for emancipation were demonstrated through witchcraft, poisoning or disagreements about succession rules and, in these cases, traditional African societies periodically «injected» people out of their kinship groups, communities and societies. These people moved to other places, the «borders», and their relationships with the «center» from where they came could be kept or permanently broken⁸. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that there was a whole new social construction in the “border” because the group that settled there carried all social, institutional and ethnic features of the «metropolis». On the other hand, inside this new group it would emerge new conflicts and tensions, causing what Kopytoff calls “structural replication” – the emigrant group settles itself in the border and gives rise to a new structured community, from which would come out another group to another border and so on⁹.

African boundaries current outline corresponds to the sharing of African territories between some European powers institutionalized during the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference and local populations hadn't interfered in this process, which radically subverted the pre-existed way of spatial organization. If, in certain cases, the new demarcation corresponded to previous ones, such as Rwanda¹⁰, in other cases the new boundaries had suddenly cut the social and political units already existed and compelled to new identity reordering. In any of these cases, the new outlines followed European powers ways of thinking, and their own power relations, which had totally excluded local societies from demarcation processes.

When African independences took place, the 15th and 16th UN General Assembly sessions, in 1960 and 1961 respectively, approved resolutions favorable to the maintenance of colonial borders outline. In the same way, OAU stood up for maintaining colonial borders since the time it was created, in 1963. This meant that the new African independent states could built their sovereignty in the same territorial basis that their predecessors, which was also the opinion of the new African political leaders, who feared they could lose their power if they decided to start trying new kind of political organization¹¹. African borders have had few changes since the end of

⁸ Kopytoff, 1989: 18

⁹ *Idem*, 27

¹⁰ Florêncio, 2001: 5

¹¹ Herbst, 1996-1997: 121

decolonization, except only in some cases as the Bakassi peninsula, Cameroon and Nigeria or Eritrea.

In most cases, new African political elites couldn't enlarge their legitimacy to general population and that population also began to look at the elite formation process as clearly related to ethnic, regional or religious loyalties. In the other hand, most states were lacking technical, material and human means, so they couldn't totally incorporate the entire populations in the feeling of national unity and belonging¹². The need of reinforce nationalism, as well as modernization and economic development needs, also lead the elites to choose authoritarian political models, such as single party regimes or military regimes, which became extremely "exclusives" to a large part of the population, leaving rural populations away from power centers.

In 1980's, the end of Cold War and international geopolitical alignments left the African continent to itself. However, the structural adjustment politics contributed to emphasize the economical crisis and to the impoverishment, marginalization and alienation of most part of rural populations and their local elites¹³. These features, along with international pressures towards political liberalism introduction, caused African central States retraction and their withdrawal from the peripheries, and so elites in power could radicalize their positions because they feared losing their privileges and places within the State apparatus¹⁴.

So these African states political options had consequences to the populations living in borderlands, who feel culturally more close to others living in one or more neighboring states than to their country fellows, also due to their ancestral and pre-colonial connections. This means that, in these populations daily routine, crossing an international border is just an administrative matter because that movement isn't understood as a cultural territory shifting. In fact, people can cross an international boundary only to do agriculture in one's farm, to go to the school, to the market, to participate in the same ethnic group weddings or funerals... This happens in almost every African borderlands¹⁵.

¹² Florêncio, 2001: 6

¹³ *Idem*: 7

¹⁴ Clapham, *op.cit.*: 82-83

¹⁵ Tomàs, 2010: 36

There is a list of African cultural areas that were “partitioned” by international borders¹⁶. In this list, one hundred and three African international borders “cut” one hundred and thirty one cultural areas, some of which are “partitioned” by more than one border. The distribution cross-cuts the continent because each international border in Africa “cuts” at least one cultural area. But this doesn’t mean that borders are walls to those “partitioned” ethnic groups; in fact, these borders are mainly channels by which people, goods and ideas flow¹⁷. And despite being referred in 1985 Asiwaju’s list, the Ndaú didn’t claim the restoration of a common territory.

Ndaú ethnic identity

Mozambique can be considered an “invention” of Portuguese colonialism because it is a political-territorial unit that didn’t exist before the “effective occupation” process settled in Berlin Conference. African societies didn’t take part in the outline of their own country, so it can be said that the concept of «mozambicanity» has often been seen as a foreign imposition and not a will or desire of the people who previously lived there¹⁸.

Mossurize is a Mozambique district in the borderland with Zimbabwe and its habitants belong to Ndaú ethnic group. Ndaú origins and history are related with the fragmentation of Monomotapa Empire and Mbire kingdom and to the expansionary cycles of the Rozvi, a Shona-Caranga lineage group, who moved from the Zimbabwe hinterland highlands around the fifteenth century, and that successively occupied the central stripe between Búzi and Save rivers, dominating the Tonga populations that previously lived there and settling small political units (chieftaincies) relatively autonomous from each other but related by kinship¹⁹.

Ndaú was the name that invaders from the south, the Nguni, gave to the people living in the region between Save and Búzi when they invaded them during the second half of the nineteenth century. This word is related to the way by which these people greeted a chief or an important foreigner: they kneel, clap their hands and repeatedly and rhythmically scream «*ndaú ui ui, ndaú ui ui*». So the Nguni invaders called these people Ndaú to represent them as population and also their condition of subservience

¹⁶ Asiwaju, 1985: 256-258

¹⁷ Tomàs, *op.cit.*: 14-15

¹⁸ Florêncio, 2001:10

¹⁹ Florêncio, 2005: 79

and submission to Nguni lords. Nowadays, the hypothetical origin of this designation is widely accepted by Ndaus and is deeply rooted in their oral history, despite not knowing if it was Ndaus oral history that influenced the authors or if the authors' proposals were accepted and interiorized by the people²⁰. Nguni domination was first led by Sochangane (also known as Manicusse), who established its capital city in today's current Mossurize district, and ended in 1889 under the leadership of Gungunhane (Manicusse's grandson) when he retreated towards South. Two years after this event, the 1891 Treaty between Portugal and Great Britain formally gave birth to Mozambique.

Mozambique-Zimbabwe border and transnational identity

One of the issues that generally appears in almost every analysis about African borders is about the division settled by colonial borders in pre-existed social and ethnic groups. The debate about identity issues and the border settlement is almost always related to ethnic division produced ever since and kept by African independent states.

In the past decades African borderlands and ethnic identity have occupied a central place in the academic debate. Since the Berlin Conference, most part of international African borders hasn't changed. However, some "mistakes" were done during the territorial partition because they didn't account for demographic, ethnographic or topographic factors that Europeans didn't have the knowledge of²¹.

The border that separates Mozambique from Zimbabwe "is approximately 765 miles in length (...). The alignment which resulted from the Anglo-Portuguese agreements of 1891 and 1893, together with the Arbitral Award of 1897 concerning the Manica Boundary, gave rise to a prolonged sequel of demarcations and modifications ending in 1940"²². The extensive boundary was settled by taking into account four main points which corresponded to the rivers in that region: the tripoint between the Zambezi river and the Mazoe river, from the Mazoe river to the Honde river (Barue section), from the Honde river to the Save river (including the Manica Boundary) and river Save to the river Limpopo²³.

²⁰ Florêncio, 2002: 52

²¹ Herbst, 1989: 674

²² Brownlie, 1979: 1219-1221

²³ *Idem*: 1221-1222

So the 1891 Anglo-Portuguese Treaty settled the border between Mozambique and the then called South Rhodesia, but Ndaou populations that lived in the borderland weren't immediately set apart: that separation was only formalized when Portuguese administration could set a regular presence in Mossurize region, by creating an administrative office in Espungabera in 1900. However, during the colonial period, this separation was never effective: despite the creation of an administrative office the administration didn't have effective means to control the entire border, so this line never truly got in these borderland people's minds or practices²⁴.

The international borders establishment wasn't indeed enough to break the set of political relations between Ndaou chieftaincies in Mozambique and Rhodesia, which had an important magical-religious feature and a complex chain of political hierarchies and subordinations. Despite Portuguese colonial authorities' efforts to break them, these relations have been maintained and, even nowadays, for example, Mozambique Ndaou chiefs are subordinated to Ndaou Zimbabwe chiefs in what concerns the magical-religious issues²⁵.

The Portuguese colonial state couldn't control people flows in Mozambique borderland, which also included escaping from hut taxes and forced labor, illegal migrations to South Africa mines and Rhodesia plantations, and also wasn't able to refrain the spread of Rhodesia religious cults or the nationalist ideas sustained by the leaders of that churches (like Kamba Simango)²⁶.

Mozambique independence didn't change this situation and even promoted transboundary flows because the new state didn't have the necessary means to supervise the flows of people or goods. On the other hand, and only two years after the independence, 1977 Ian Smith's war against Mozambique²⁷, followed by FRELIMO and RENAMO armed struggle, contributed to increase the state weakness in controlling national territory and the populations. In fact, RENAMO had early occupied vast areas in Mossurize district, settling in 1978 its first military base in Mozambique near the

²⁴ Florêncio, 2001: 11

²⁵ Florêncio, 2005: 129

²⁶ Branquinho, 1967

²⁷ The government of South Rhodesia, former British colony, was ruled by a white minority and Ian Smith was its leader. Smith had unilaterally declared the country's independence in 1965 and a civil war between the white army and the guerillas of ZANU (*Zimbabwe African National Union*) and ZAPU (*Zimbabwe African Popular Union*) has followed. When Mozambique became independent (1975), it decided to close the border with Rhodesia and to give support to ZANU, which attacked Smith forces from Mozambican territory. As a consequence, Smith retaliates and starts its own attacks against Mozambique.

border with South Rhodesia, obliging the state to retreat to Espungabera (district head office) and in Dacata e Chiurairue administrative offices²⁸.

This civil war caused huge population flows to refugee camps or family units in the “other side”. Almost everyone living today in Mossurize district has a father or a grandfather who escaped to Rhodesia during the Mozambique independence war and remained there during the conflicts that followed or that escaped only during the civil war. Those people sank for refugee within their families, studied and got jobs in Zimbabwe and returned to Mozambique only after the peace agreement of 1992; some felt so integrated in Zimbabwe and never returned. The ineffective control over borderlands during this period created some *no man’s land* between the two countries which were used to settle networks of illegal trade to supply Mozambique local markets which faced a shortage of goods²⁹.

The end of the civil war in 1992 brought the desire of state’s stabilization and consolidation. However, this is a fragmentary and unfinished process because Mozambique still state can’t have effective control over the entire territory. So the Ndau still cross the border like they did in the past and go to Zimbabwe to visit their family, to consult healers and traditional authorities, to go to school and to take part in ceremonies. It seems these people don’t feel the impacts of the international boundary demarcation in their daily lives - not in colonial times, not even today.

The only formal Mozambique border office in Mossurize district is Espungabera, which is located about 3 miles away from the village center. It’s a “historical” border, with few flows of people or goods and people only cross it more often by the end of the year, “when Mozambique workers in South Africa use this border to return home for vacations”³⁰.

In most part of the cases, the people of Mossurize district enter in Zimbabwe “illegally” through “cross-country paths” which are all over the borderline. They do this because most of them don’t have a passport or because it’s closer to arrive to Zimbabwe through these paths than by walking until the official boundary³¹.

The word that designates “border” in the local language (ciNdau) is *mugano*. But *mugano* means “limit” or “end” and it’s used to designate any territorial limit (*nyika*)

²⁸ Florêncio, 2001: 15

²⁹ *Idem*: 16

³⁰ Interview with JB, Espungabera, 10-5-2011

³¹ Crossing the Espungabera checkpoint, the nearest Zimbabwe village is located about 13 miles away.

and not only the specific case of State limits. So it can be said that there isn't an idea of strict separation between two different political units in Ndaue vocabulary. In fact, as Elizabeth McGonagle sustains, many Ndaue elders in both countries do not cite any firm boundaries for the Ndaue region, perhaps because their sense is that they are *between* borders with an unbounded sense of Ndaue territory³².

Transboundary flows in Mossurize district have changed through time but only due to political or economical events, and not to any cultural affinity change among people on both sides. In fact, during Mozambique independence war and civil war, most part of the borderland illegal flows was of Mozambican refugees or smugglers entering in Zimbabwe. With Zimbabwe current economic crisis, which has escalated since year 2000, it's the Zimbabweans turn to seek consumer goods and fuel in Mozambique. The currency previously more used in this borderland was Zimbabwe dollar, but recently Harare abandoned it (due to severe Zimbabwe's inflation) and now allows the use of different foreign currencies to trade operations and business transactions, including the United States Dollar (USD). This has contributed to reduce Mozambican flows to Zimbabwe for shopping. Nowadays, Mossurize habitants often go shopping to Chimoio (Manica's province capital) instead of going to Zimbabwe, making a much longer journey through some troubled roads (a travel of about 240 miles for each side) but they consider this is a better option than the costs of exchanging Mozambique money (metical) to USD³³.

If there weren't these recent economic events, that obliged this Ndaue from Mozambique to change their shopping habits and created a "barrier" to transboundary trade, it could be said that this border is nothing but an "imaginary line" and its outline is more symbolic and relevant for central States than for borderland populations, who have, in this case, a huge cultural and social homogeneity. In fact, in the past, the borderline wasn't seen as "real" thing: Ndaue family and political units were located in both sides of the border and people kept maintaining their interactions during the colonial period and they do it even now, after the independence of the two countries³⁴. In other words: it's not possible to study the history of Mozambique provinces of Manica and Sofala without taking into account the history of Zimbabwe province of Manicaland. So it can be considered that this ethnic identity equally shows some

³² McGonagle, *op.cit.*: 109

³³ Interview with IL, Espungabera, 08-05-2011

³⁴ Beach, 1989: 347

outlines of a transnational identity, rooted in Monomotapa Empire and in the submission to Gaza Empire, both of them previous to the border settlement. This idea of oneness with those “in the other side” is noticeable through the existence of common symbolic places, like “Lugar de Gungunhane” (*Place of Gungunhane*): a place in Espungabera, in the road to Machaze district, where there is a huge tree and a rock below that tree, and where Gungunhane, the last Gaza Emperor, allegedly sit and rest when he was moving South with his troops. There is a exact same place in Chipinge (Zimbabwe), with the same name and where people say that Gungunhane also sit and rest³⁵. This oneness prevails also in the words of the Ndaus living in Mossurize: «there’s no such thing as two countries separated, Chipinge [Zimbabwe] and Mossurize [Mozambique] is all Ndaus³⁶; «we get there and we all speak the same language, everyone understands each other, it’s not like going to a different country»³⁷.

The sharing of a common language (ciNdaus) contributes to maintain and reinforce a transboundary Ndaus identity in this region. However, either in Mozambique as in Zimbabwe, the national languages prevail in the government communications or in school, so the Ndaus in each side of the border also use their national language(s) along with ciNdaus. The exception (in Mozambique) are those who never went to school and that live deeply in Mossurize woods, away from Espungabera center: those only speak ciNdaus and scarcely understand portuguese (or don’t understand it at all).

These language and culture features, which are traditional aspects, are very important to the maintenance and consolidation of Ndaus identity in the region and are reinforced by other cultural elements such as the common history of this partitioned group. The submission to Gaza Empire strengthened those ties and they weren’t shaken not even during liberation wars or civil wars in both countries. This deep sharing of these common elements is daily infatuated by the circulation of the Ndaus in the borderland and give them a sense of freedom that overlaps any constrain: “I feel free because I am Ndaus”³⁸.

³⁵ Interview with GS, Espungabera, 09-05-2011

³⁶ Interview with IL, Espungabera, 08-05-2011

³⁷ Interview with TSM, Espungabera, 11-05-2011

³⁸ *Idem*

Conclusions

In pre-colonial years, borders were defined according to the distance in which one political unit could extend all its power, considering that this distance fluctuated during time according to the conquest or loosing of territories. The main change that colonialism brought to this *status quo* was a new system of fixed territorial boundaries, which the post-colonial African States decided to keep.

The Mozambique-Zimbabwe borderland, which settled some social, economical and political differences at a national level such as language and geography, wasn't the outcome of ancestral and historical diversities. In fact, the border derived only from the 1891 Treaty as the result of territorial rivalries between Portugal and Great-Britain in southeast Africa by the end of the nineteenth century. Before that, such a border wouldn't have any meaning because there were old connections between the people and economies of the Zimbabwe plateau and the people and traders of the Mozambican coast³⁹.

The conquest by the Nguni in the nineteenth century acted as a foil for the Ndaus to re-create their identity and assume a sense of Ndauness with a powerful salience that reverberated into the twentieth century. However, this nineteenth century episode of common suffering at the hands of others reinforced a sense of being Ndaus as earlier relationships had not. The "other" came to rule over the Ndaus in a more direct manner in the nineteenth century and this harsh reality continued into the period of formal colonialism under the Portuguese and the British⁴⁰.

During fieldwork near the border it was clear that the international boundary separating Mozambique and Zimbabwe is an artificial border that runs through the Ndaus-speaking area dividing kin, culture and speakers of the same language. Most people on or near the border in the 1990s were oriented toward Zimbabwe, partly due to the infrastructure on that side. With better roads and more frequent transport, well-stocked shops and greater educational opportunities, Zimbabwe lured Ndaus speakers residing on the Mozambican side of the border. Children crossed the border to attend school in Zimbabwean communities and some Mozambican residents used only Zimbabwean currency. Since then the situation has changed and taken a reverse turn. The currency used in the borderland changed for USD or South Africa Rands, a visit to

³⁹ Beach, 1993: 5

⁴⁰ McGonagle, *op. cit.*: 91

the Mozambican city of Chimoio in the province of Manica, for instance, revealed well-stocked stores in Mozambique frequented by former residents of Zimbabwe, including relocated white farmers⁴¹. However, Zimbabwe schools are still considered as being better than those in Mozambique and children still prefer to attend classes there⁴².

From what has been exposed, it can be concluded that this case shows that African borders, and specifically Mozambique-Zimbabwe borderland, does not represent a true political, religious or cultural rupture line between States. On the contrary, this borderland allows, and fosters, the maintain of flows between both sides due to the weakness of their own central States in controlling the territory and due to the weak identification of the people with their State – the State is understood as a foreign entity and, for the vaNdau, as where southern ethnic groups as the Shangana prevail.

Bonds of marriage, language and culture tie Ndau speakers to one another across the border and they share common interests and a common identity. But people refer to it in conversation and acknowledge its existence, what makes of it a hard border in some respects. Yet, it can't be denied that it's also a border with soft edges as well.

For the vaNdau people of Mossurize there is an idea of belonging to a space called Mozambique, people know they are Mozambicans and they share a feeling of belonging to a Mozambican identity. However, they look to this identity as secondary, and, in a certain way, as imposed by the State. And this identity doesn't overlap nor annihilates more important identities, such as local or family identities, which were not suppressed by the outline of international borders.

⁴¹ McGonagle, *op. cit.*: 21

⁴² Interview with FA, Espungabera, 09-05-2011

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Identity Strategies, Cultural Practices and Citizenship Recovery: the Mauritanian Refugees in the Valley of the Senegal River

Mamadou Seydou KANE

Introduction

This paper seeks to examine the cultural strategies of adaptation toward integration developed by a refugee community in the Senegal River Valley after 22 years of deportation on the Senegalese side. The discourse of the refugees, being itself part of the identity and cultural strategies of adaptation, helps to illuminate other strategies pertaining to the register of socioeconomic and cultural practices.

The issue of the refugee identity strategies and culture in the context of border processes in the Senegal River Valley has been abundantly addressed, yet more by French than English speaking scholars. And these French scholars have insisted on essential aspects of culture and identity construction – (Santoir (1990; 1993; 1998) provides a comprehensive body of work on these refugee communities) – but with a limited emphasis such cultural practices as discourse. Marty (nd) does so, but with an interest rather focused on the nationalist movement of the FLAM. Even though the discourse of the latter is sometimes appropriated by Mauritanian refugees in their claim of citizenship, it does not account yet for the refugee experience and the resulting representations and discursive strategies it shapes.

On the institutional level of humanitarian organizations, Polzer deals with ‘discursive specialisations and blueprints’ that convey “the assumption that a discourse of refugee rights, as defined by international Conventions, will in all cases be beneficial to the refugees concerned and therefore is desired by them” (2008:6). Such an assertion implies that the expression of the refugees as to what they desire is not given due attention.

The representation of their situation, drawn from the refugee’s imaginary, but also from the cultural reserve of their linguistic community, is thus structured by their cultural heritage. The question is then also that of how the refugees approach their integration with various cultural strategies, and how these are disclosed by discourse and implemented through discursive strategies.

I will address first the experience of deportation in its psychological and social/ material aspects. The second part approaches the local integration and strategies of adaptation, with a focus on the part played by the refugees in their integration through representations and discursive strategies, socioeconomic practices and cultural practices.

I. The Experience of Deportation

In 1989 a clash between Mauritanian cattle raisers and Senegalese farmers leads to a diplomatic crisis due to the intervention of the Mauritanian National Guard. This situation entailed intercommunity violence on both sides of the border and, at the same time, turns out to be the last straw in a permanent socio-political tension in Mauritania since 1978 (Marty: 499). In Mauritania whose Arab-oriented policies have been more and more marked, this crisis between the two countries is coupled with an escalation in tensions between White populations (called Beydanes) and Black Mauritians. Beside the resulting killings, the massive deportation of the black populations of Mauritania on the other side of the border has been the most remarkable aspect of this crisis.

It is in this context that the inhabitants of Djolly, a Mauritanian village of the Trarza – a southern region on the banks of the Senegal River –, have been deported in 1989 on the Senegalese side of the border. Like other refugees landed on the sites of Ndioum, Dodel, etc. along the border, they are taken in by the district of Thillé Boubacar.

a. The Psychological Dimension

The psychological dimension of the refugee experience covers the 22 years of deportation, with a deep trauma at the beginning of their exile, due to the experience of violence, dispossession as well as uprootedness. Former possessions on the Mauritanian side, as well as the feeling of powerlessness in the face of state-supported abuses have not been cleared from consciences by the new concerns and expectations. Nourou, 29, evokes this aspect as the main reason why the possibility to go back to Mauritania is not welcome to him:

I was 6 or 7 at the time our families were leaving. So people of my age cannot remember all the details about how good it was to live down there, but we have been told about the way we used to live there, it was a life of abundance. Then we spent 22 years here... it has not always been easy. Yet I know that in Senegal, whenever you undergo an identity control, chances are there's something wrong with you. Otherwise, nobody disturbs you. In Mauritania, someone can find you in your house, slap you and ask you what you are doing there. Everybody hasn't the required self-control to tolerate this, and if you react, you can be imprisoned for it, or even more. Personally, this is one of the reasons why I don't like Mauritania at all.

There is an acute awareness among the refugees as regards their condition, and which is still linked with the circumstances of their forced migration; apparently not at ease with the term *refugee*, one of them declares that

they are the 'deported', "which is different from the label "refugees" that is generally put on us. We have been forced out of our homeplaces into exile as a result of a political decision; we didn't flee from war consequences, etc., as refugees do."

On their arrival most of the villagers of Djolly were scattered in the neighbouring villages where they have been accommodated temporarily by the local populations, mainly that of Dimat (a village 2km away to the west of Thillé Boubacar) because of the kinship ties. Soon after, they were allotted a plot of land to set up their camp. This moment marks, at least temporarily, a turning point in their relations with the local populations and the perception of their condition. In the course of settling in the camp, they are faced with new spatial intrusions and collisions. Mamadou O. Sy, a local worthy and one of the elders of this community, retraces this new sense of alienation as follows:

"It is the local authority of Thillé Boubacar who allotted us this area on which we've set up the camp. But unexpectedly, we've seen people who weren't refugees trying to take advantage of this opportunity by taking over building lots within this territory. We were not in a position to say anything, being newcomers. There was this feeling that we hadn't enough legitimacy to raise an objection, and it was all the more delicate as these people often turned out to be relatives..."

This episode is a sort of re-enactment of their experience in the country from which they have been expelled. Both are connected to spatial dispossession and seem to produce a persistent sense of uprootedness that is reflected in their discourse.

It is a noticeable fact the possibility of repatriation has not put an end to the experience of deportation. Repatriation, considered on the political and judicial level as the end of deportation, does not put an end to the latter in the minds of the refugees, in this specific case, given that it is not viable. "I have always been a refugee in Senegal, a displaced", says A.B.S. "And strange enough, even when I've returned in my country, my status has turned out to be problematic; it was "incomplete" because they said I'm a 'Revenant.'¹ Then I asked him: 'where did we go? We belong here!', which means that it would be much more pleasant if he had called us 'citizens'"

The evocation of patience is also a recurring motif in conversations, and testifies to the ongoing experience of deportation.

b. Social/Material Aspects

¹ Seemingly the implied meaning of « Revenant » here is "someone who has decided to come back", yet the actual meaning of "revenant" in French is "ghost", that implies also, "someone who no longer belongs to this world". This might be the reason why the word has raised so much controversy.

A considerable heritage consisting of vast expanses of land suitable for agriculture and cattle-raising has conferred on the community of Djolly a long tradition of practice of these activities, in addition to fishing and Koranic studies. So the first aspect they have resented is the lack of these means of subsistence. On arrival, they are left with no other option than making arrangements with the local populations as to land exploitation, but they are aware of the scarcity of such a resource, in comparison to the possibilities that Mauritania offers. The effort of the Senegalese government in this sense is not acknowledged by the refugees; they appreciate that Senegal has welcomed them and treated them humanly, but this treatment does not include putting such resources at their disposal:

On this side, when we came back, we pursued these activities, namely agriculture and cattle-raising. But if you have no land and no cattle, that turns out to be problematic. Then OFADEC arranged some contracts with the landowners and provided funding for the laying out of the land, so that we could share the latter's lots and exploit half the land. After the crops, which end the contract, we would take our water pump and move away for another contract with another landowner whose land has not been prepared for cultivation, generally because of the lack of means. None of us had land here on this side, so it was the system which permitted us to survive.

The idea that they are somewhat exploited by the local populations is widespread among the refugees, and their views diverge as regards the possibility that the local populations have to provide them with land for farming. They repeat with a certain bitterness a saying regarding their role in the development of land that the local hosts had not the means to exploit before the type of contract mentioned above: "people say in the surrounding villages that if you cannot prepare your land, give it to a refugee," says Habib with a certain sadness.

The refugee women of Djolly had a kitchen garden back in Mauritania which they used for consumption, a part of the products being sold to provide them with some financial resources. Yet they admit that the trade culture they discovered in Senegal after their deportation has been quite traumatic. There were some products that they never imagined could be sold and which turned out to be expensive in Senegal. They experienced the clash of two extreme cultures: theirs, a culture of reasonable commercial spirit that has not yet wiped out deep rooted habits of gift and mutual support, and that of the Senegalese communities, extremely mercantile.

Most of the activities women used to carry out in Mauritania have been severely limited by the new environment, especially in the first moments after deportation. They used to have a wider range of activities than men in Mauritania, and most of these weren't profitable in the end when they gave the experience a try in Senegal. Apart from farming, they would gather in mutual profit associations too, initiating various activities. They have been faced with the same problem as men to find land for farming. In terms of support, there was a good start on arrival, but it didn't last long. The distribution of food supplies would help them in the daily management of

family resources, but has been cut off long ago. “We had also a centre built for us so that we could undertake such activities as dry-cleaning, dress-making, etc.” says Aïssata Sy. “We’ve been involved in these activities for a long moment, and others too, initiated by various organizations.”

The relationship with the women of the host communities also has not made things easier. Refugee women have been rarely invited to join feminine profit associations, but the experience would always take a wrong turn given that the expected outcome vanished at the moment of sharing profits. “We’ve decided that it was perhaps better to stay out of these associations,” says Aïssata Sy, “We often had the feeling that we were betrayed, that’s why we’ve decided to be more cautious about this sort of associations with the local women.”

The relations are far from being conflictual yet; on the contrary the ties with the host populations have even been reinforced, and the refugees seem to compensate for the negative aspects of the experience of deportation with the evocation and claims of their Mauritanian belonging and citizenship.

2. Local Integration and Strategies of Adaptation

Ways of life and forms of meaning are constituent of culture. Border meaning is essentially a matter of perception. Brunet-Jailly illustrates the fact with Anderson’s description of “how meaning varied according to place, noting, for instance that ‘frontier’ in the American and French traditions does not appeal to the same imagery” (2005: 635). Whereas people live and work at borders “because of the very existence of borders”, they have also a shaping power on the latter; the borders, beyond their rigid physical presence, are what people make of them through their practices, and these result from a particular perception of these markers. “This, then, is the core theory of border studies: the implicit recognition that agency and structure are mutually influential and interrelated in the shaping of emerging and integrated borderlands” (Idem: 644).

This mutual influence between agency and structure occurs through complex processes in which ethnic, social, political and economic identities of various actors (refugees, host communities, agents of state control apparatuses at the border) cooperate, interact and clash according to a logic that opposes global policies of states and local strategies of communities or conciliates them sometimes. Fluxes of people and goods across the borders are at the heart of these exchanges. The refugees’ perception of the border, which appears through their discourse, varies depending on the reference to their Mauritanian identity as citizens or their relationships and ties with the borderland communities. Marty observes the same phenomenon with the rhetoric of the FLAM (508).

Local integration, as it appears with the Djolly refugees, is a negotiated shift from the conditions of the temporary to those of the indefinite or its possibility. This indefiniteness (Polzer, 2008: 3) encompasses a variety of limits (temporal, spatial...) that were previously set in the host territory and are eventually blurred through “a process of negotiating access to local legitimacy and entitlement on the basis of a variety of value systems determined by local power holders in dialogue with refugees” (Idem). Polzer provides such a definition as including elements of Jacobsen’s *de facto integration* and Crisp’s notion of integration as the eventuality of permanent stay in the host country in a way that satisfies them.

a. The part played by refugees in their integration

a.1. Representations and Discourse

One interesting question regarding the Mauritanian refugees in Senegal is relative to their idea of Mauritania, in that their representations of it reflects the complexity of the relationship with the home country, a complexity that is made worse by the bonds that have been created with the host country. “You cannot possibly give your head to someone, and then take back the tongue. That’s what is going on in Mauritania presently”, says M. Sy. “Mauritania, in my mind, cannot be separated from what has been in construction process since 1966, meaning racism” adds A. B. S. The association with racism and unfair practices of the Mauritanian governments is a leitmotiv and is deeply linked with the question of land. Justice, for the refugees, means reclaiming the land which has been feeding them.

“Justice is a fair settlement of arguments between citizens and their equal treatment (...) There is no justice. When they imprisoned us for claiming our land, the public prosecutor said that I shouldn't be taken to him if land claim was the issue. Now the question is: where should I be taken for a settlement? And as a condition to my release, he demanded that I wouldn't return there, unless I get permission to do so from the governor. If there is justice, then we don't know what it is”.

The point is that farming is a central, nearly sacred element in the cultural range of the Djolly refugee community. Besides being the main source of subsistence, it is a value they have inherited and that has shaped their way of life in Mauritania for decades. To a great extent, land determines their options as regards repatriation, and is

evoked in their discourse by strong images. “The nights you spend in the south are the nights you can’t spend in the north², because in the north your land is the bed”, says a woman.

Evoking the difficulty to make a choice between a home country where you can return and get any favour, providing that claims to land property are not mentioned, and a host country where land access is also quite impossible, Mamadou, when asked what was to be done, gives a quite uncommon answer: “Kaya mbeeya”³.

The discourse pointing to dilemma, *kaya mbeeya*, expressing bitter irony and cynicism, shatters that of such public actors as the States and the IGOs. *Kaya mbeeya* sums up a disorientation that is reflected in a discourse and is also translated in various practices as a result of identity re-composition strategies. It’s an attitude which shows the discourse of the States and the UNCHR as simplistic and hardly serious with regard to the identity issue, but also it questions and even annihilates the actions of relocation that these undertake, given that the latter is not merely physical.

Besides, such a discourse reflects a specific notion of the border space as a continuum and connotes a certain relationship to the border in that the latter determines the floating situation that the discourse describes, with its bridging effect.

This relationship illustrates the dialectical relationship between the notions of *Space* and *Place* within the anthropological perspectives and interest in “accounting for cultural disjuncture, displacement and distress (Donnan and Wilson, 1999: 9). Space is defined as “the general idea people have of where things should be”, that is, “the conceptualization of the imagined physical relationships which give meaning to society”. As to Place, it is “the distinct place where people live; it encompasses both the idea and actuality of where things are” (Idem).

a.2. Socioeconomic Practices

The mercantile culture of the local host communities has left an imprint on the refugees. Most of the latter acknowledge that they were perhaps too naïve, less realistic than the populations of the host communities, and that this difference must be due to the proximity of the Senegalese villages with local markets, which was not their case in Mauritania. For most of them, the utopian relation to resources of the old days pertains now to the category of buried habits, even though it is still magnified as a great human quality.

Faced with the new reality of what one is tempted to call the possibility of impossible repatriation, the refugees have adopted a strategy of ambiguity with regard to the options. In Djolly, which looks more like a refugee village

² “In the Fulani language (also called pulaar in Senegal and Mauritania), the terms “Mauritania” and “Senegal” don’t exist, they are respectively referred to as “the North” (Rewo) and “the South” (Worgo) of Fuuta Tooro, the land of the Haalpulaaren.” (Fresia, 2008: 5, My translation)

³ “Kaya mbeeya” means literally in pulaar “either you float or you hover”. It connotes the lack of certainty, but also the lack of options with regard to a particular situation.

than a refugee camp, both those who have decided to return to Mauritania and those who have decided to stay can be found at home. They have sent one or two members of the family in Mauritania to occupy the new sites they have been allotted, (paradoxically near their former places which are occupied by beydanes) so that they can take delivery of any supplies from the UNCHR or any other form of support, and watch over the place at the same time.

“There is no other possibility”, M. Sy says; “we haven’t enough choice because it is not practicable as a destination. You go there for a moment, if you find conceivable conditions that allow you to stay there a while, and if you don’t find them you go back to where they permit you to sleep and take some rest, given that you’ve spent three or four sleepless nights.”

The new mobility, the “dem-dikk”⁴, as one of them has called it, is justified by the fact that “a drowning man would clutch at a sword blade without hesitation”. After 22 years in Senegal with the problem of refugees’ land access still unsettled, the very evocation of the possibility to have this problem solved in their home countries creates a rush.

Besides there is the need to secure the possessions acquired in Senegal, and that are worth 10 other years of hardships and effort that cannot be sacrificed to the hope of going home. So, to them, the question has taken on a socioeconomic dimension, in addition to other aspects.

a.3. Cultural Practices

Among the identity and cultural strategies of adaptation, there is the adoption of a nomadic way of life which characterizes the new figure of the displaced. The latter sees and defines himself as a citizen of the other side who is yet compelled to come back now and then in the land of exile in the quest of identity and cultural roots:

“In Mauritania our culture has been confiscated”, says A. “Whenever people gather to express or celebrate or enjoy cultural practices we inherited from our forefathers, they are faced with the reluctance and resistance of authorities who consider any gathering as a threat to stability and set out to discourage it or even forbid it. We are not given freedom when it comes to living our culture in community.”

As it seems, the refugee as a cultural figure is denied existence in Mauritania, and it is this fragmented identity that the nomadic strategy of re-composition of the self addresses. Describing, about the French policy, what he calls ‘le paradoxe flagrant’ (explicit paradox), Etienne Balibar explains this type of situation as follows:

⁴ This is an allusion to the name of a Senegalese public transport company, which means “round trip”.

the struggle against more or less real communitarianisms that are perceived as a threat turns into the construction of an exclusive identity which is given an 'abstract' and 'political' definition (...), but is used very concretely to draw lines of ethnical demarcation (given that there is the people of the republic, with their history, their symbols and traditions...and there are the others)" (Balibar, 2001 as quoted in Neveu, 2008: 4)5.

This somewhat clarifies why the refugees interpret the effort of the Mauritanian government to discourage their cultural gatherings as a rejection of their citizenship. Thus in a context of deprivation, they resort to the cultural identity to compensate for a citizenship they are not allowed to live fully. Such a situation creates a link between those who have returned and their fellow refugees who have chosen to stay in Senegal, and even with the Senegalese host communities, in a reflex of bridging activism.

The existence of a linguistic community, a culture spanning the boundary, creates the opportunity for those among the Djolly community who have returned to expand their spatial scope by crossing back to Senegal whenever they are denied the occurrence of their cultural practices. So the demands of local culture and its expression entail a temporary denial of the boundary in the imaginary of the repatriated. In their minds, the boundary is a line they cross when they temporarily discard transcendence to reinstate their political status of Mauritanian citizens for a specific purpose (socioeconomic reasons).

A noteworthy aspect of the cultural practices of the Djolly community after their deportation is the immediate adjustment of their appearance to their new relation with the Beydane culture: among the visual elements of their Mauritanian culture, some garments were adopted from the Beydanes. These have been discarded from the refugees' habits as soon as they arrived in Senegal. One of these outfits, called *Darra* is particularly interesting in that it is unfamiliar to the Senegalese culture :

These belong to Mauritanian culture and have not 'crossed' to this side. They are unknown to even someone of Mauritanian descent who has been living in Senegal and is not acquainted with the other side (...) Whenever you put on one of these elements, even a child will identify you as a Mauritanian with the utmost certainty. What has changed is that we are no longer putting the darras which are typically an element of the beydane culture. It would give us the appearance of beydanes. And since we have strongly resented our bitter experience with them, we've just given up this way of dressing. It was adopted in a context of a peaceful cohabitation and quest of harmony, which implies an effort to show the other that we are the same, we have things in common. We have eliminated this point, I mean dressing up like them, out of anger and disappointment.

⁵ My translation

These choices are symbolical of transition, with elements of a failed integration process that are discarded in an effort to start another integration enterprise.

Outcomes of Integration

Several aspects and elements of what precedes testify to an integration of the Djolly refugees to the host communities of the district of Thillé Boubacar. One of them is the discovery of self and other that is revealed by the refugees' new self-perceptions through the differences with their Senegalese fellow-citizens of the borderlands. Daïbou, a young man, confirms:

Young people are integrated here to the point that some of them would like to stay. In the beginning differences would break out, there were misunderstandings, but it was because we didn't know each other very well even if we are relatives. We had different ways of life, different characters and styles. There is a frontier between the temperament of the Senegalese and that of the Mauritanian, in the same way as there is one between the two countries. There is a certain fineness, a certain patience that characterizes the Senegalese, and that you won't find in the Mauritanian. You can easily identify a Mauritanian, I cannot explain why. We feel at home now in Senegal, but we'll go back as soon as we have the guarantee to recover our possessions, in spite of the 20 years. The land we had there was our own, not one exploited by contract.

Integration, as we can see above, is accompanied by a preservation of the Mauritanian identity: integrating doesn't mean to become naturalized.

Another positive outcome of integration has been the rise of a citizen consciousness among some of the refugees, like A., urging them to take action regarding the claims to recover their rights and the sensitization of fellow refugees:

I was "young", unaware of my rights, and they could make their bed on it. Now I won't let anybody sleep in this bed. They know I'm totally devoted to my reinstatement in my rights for now, it's no longer a matter of eating, drinking and sleeping, of comfort; now there's more to it.

Yet there are residual aspects that still affect this integration, such as a persisting vulnerability that is partly due to the lack of refugee cards (which they ought to receive 22 years ago), which refugees interpret – not wrongly

– as an unwillingness of the Senegalese government to grant them a clear refugee status. The land-access difficulties also are blamed on the State.

Besides, there is the lack of reciprocity on behalf of the local population that is still resented by the refugees, on the issue of land-sharing, and because of the obvious tendency to exploit refugee labour force: “For twenty years we have been the wrestlers, preparing their fields for them”, says Kadiata Diack, hardly hiding her bitterness, “but we cannot blame them for it, we must blame this situation on our country. It’s true that we have strong kinship ties, and that if they wanted to help us, there is enough land for all of us in Senegal. . .”

This reinforces the transient subjectivity of the refugee: “You are a stranger wherever you don’t possess land, and you’ll always be a stranger there. That’s why we are travelers, we’ve been on a journey for 20 years!”

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to examine how local integration is approached by refugees through strategies stemming from a particular experience, and how their imaginary was solicited in such a process.

Their vision of the border complexities, of which they are a central element, reveals realities that do not seem to have been taken into account in the management of the refugee problem. Neither do their relation to land and homeland, which appears as motivated by socioeconomic concerns, but is revealed by refugee representations and discourse as transcending this dimension.

If “agency and structure are mutually influential and interrelated in the shaping of emerging and integrated borderlands” as goes the core theory of border studies (Brunet-Jailly, 2005: 644), the contribution of this paper is its modest attempts at examining an aspect of agency that is important in understanding the motivations, beliefs and subsequent practices of refugees. It is the study of the refugee imaginary through discursive and

cultural strategies. The powers of deconstruction as well as of reconstruction of this imaginary that are mobilized by the refugees to act upon a particular geographical context of continuity and discontinuity, of bridging and isolation, deserve a particular methodological attention.

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An international border or just a territorial limit? Joola dynamics between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau

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FALTEN NOTES AL PEU METODOLÒGIQUES. I CITAR BIBLOGRAFIA.

Introduction

This paper aims to present an ongoing research about the dynamics of Joola population in the border between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal (more specifically from the Atlantic Ocean to the Niambalang river). We would like to tell you about how Joola Ajamaat (near the main town of Susanna, Guinea-Bissau) and Joola Huluf (near the main town of Oussouye, Senegal) define the border and, especially, how they use this border in their daily lives¹.

As most borderland regions in the Upper Guinea Coast, this international border separates two areas that have been economically and politically marginalised within their respective national contexts (Senegal and Guinea-Bissau) in colonial and postcolonial times. Moreover, from 1982 –that is, for almost 30 years– this border area has suffered the conflict between the separatist MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) and the Senegalese army (and, in the last few years, the Bissau-Guinean army as well). Despite this situation, the links between the population on both sides are still alive, as we will show later on.

After a short historical presentation, we would like to focus on three main subjects. First, to show concrete examples of everyday life gathered during our fieldwork. Secondly, to see how the conflict have affected the relationship between the Joola from both sides of

¹ This paper has been made possible thanks to a postdoctoral scholarship granted by FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia). My deep gratefulness goes to this institution as well as the Center of African Studies at ISCTE, Lisbon. Most of the data used in this text has been gathered especially in Oussouye and other neighbouring Joola villages (Senegal) and in Essukujak, Kerouhey and Varela (Guinea-Bissau) during my fieldwork of almost 3 years between January 2000 and June 2011. This text is in line with the project "Identities and borders" coordinated by Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues (PTDC/AFR/098339/2008).

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the international border. Finally, we aim to analyse how the border is defined by the population².

1.The international border: a brief approach

1.1. The birth of a border

The Portuguese were the first European to arrive in the Casamance area during the 16th and 17th centuries. They founded the town of Ziguinchor in 1645, but they never controlled all the Casamance region³. The French began to be interested in the Casamance from the 1820s⁴. In 1886, one year after the 1885 Berlin Conference, the French and the Portuguese defined the international border, and negotiated the incorporation of the town of Ziguinchor to the French Empire⁵. Nevertheless, some parts of the treaty were not clear, and both colonial governments signed two more accords concerning this border in 1932 and in 1951⁶. As most part of the borders in Africa, the local population was never consulted⁷.

1.2.The border and the Joola population during the colonial period.

From the beginning, the local populations understood that they could use the international border to their own benefit. As far back as 1903, when the French, coming from Karabane Island, decided on the military penetration in Oussouye (the main city of the Joola Huluf Kingdom), some of its inhabitants fled to the South, to the former Portuguese Guinea, with their cattle.

In fact, from the end of the 19th century to the Second World War we can find a lot of examples of how the Joola crossed from one side to the other, depending on the

² For the Joola culture and society consult Thomas (1959), N. Diatta (1998), C.S. Diatta (1998), Journet-Diallo (2007, 2010), Tomàs (2005a and b, 2006, 2008a and b, 2009), Mark and Tomàs (2010), Davidson (2007), among others.

³ For the history of Ajamaat, in Portuguese Guinea, see Lemnos Coelho (1990), Taborda (1950a and b)Carreira (1964), Journet Diallo (2007, 2010), Juillard (2000), Lopes de Lima, Pelissier (1997).

⁴ For more information you may see Bocandé (1856), Simon (1859), Bour (1883), Brosselard-Faidherbe (1892-1894), Maclaud (1907).

⁵ See Esteves (1988), Tomàs (2006). For the Gambian-Casamance border, please read Kébé (1997), Nugent (2007).

⁶ The sea delimitation is another question. See ONU (2006).

⁷ For more information on this period of Casamance history look at Roche (1970, 1985), Mark (1976), Trincaz (1981), Baum (1986, 1999).

NOT FOR CITATION OR CIRCULATION WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION, PLEASE colonial policies⁸. One of the most common reasons for crossing the border was when the colonial armies went to the villages to collect tax (especially rice).

Another reason was the recruitment of “volunteers” for going to Europe to fight against the German army: in 1941, the French decided to recruit soldiers for the II World War in Casamance. Several young men fled to Gambia or to Portuguese Guinea.

During the revolt organized by Alinsitowe (also transcribed as Aliin Sitoué) against the French colonial power during 1942 and 1943, the border became a solution for escaping from the French: several Joola went to the villages of their relatives in the Portuguese Guinea, South of the international border⁹. The same year, 1943, after the defeat of Alinsitowe and her companions, another prophetess, Gnacoufoussou, organized different prayers against the French. Finally she fled to the Portuguese Guinea as a refugee.

1. 3. The border after the independence of Senegal

Senegal became independent from France in 1960. From 1961 to 1974 the Joola Ajamaat people began to cross from South to North: the Ajamaat people fled from the Portuguese army and refuged in Senegalese villages. The liberation war in Guinea began in 1961. In fact, already in 1961, the king of Kerouhey, Cecakosel (which may also be transcribed as Sikakusel), abandoned his natal village and crossed the border to go to Oussouye, where he was taken in by his counterpart in Oussouye, the king Sibakuyan, and his family.

In 1964, soldiers from the Portuguese army crossed the border searching for members of the Guinean guerrilla.

During the struggle for the liberation of Guinea, one of the most important waves of refugees took place in 1973, when thousands of people from Portuguese Guinea, went to Ziguinchor, Brin, Oussouye and other Senegalese villages escaping from the Portuguese.

1.4. The border and the conflict between MFDC and the Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau armies.

⁸ See the French colonial explanations in Archives Nationales du Sénégal (ANS): I3G507 (1895-1904): Journaux de poste de la Basse Casamance (4) Oussouye; I3G502: (1903) Opération de police contre les Floups d'Oussouye (4) Résidence d'Oussouye; 2G3/50 (1903) Rapports politiques mensuels: avril-décembre; 2G4/43 (1904) Rapports politiques mensuels: janvier-septembre; I3G375 (1904) Attaque dirigée contre le résident d'Oussouye en tournée à Kerouhaye; 2G9/44 (1909) Rapports mensuels d'ensemble: janvier-décembre; 11D1.226 (1944-1964) Contrôle des étrangers. Affaires de frontières.

⁹ See also Baum (1986, 2001), Tolliver-Diallo (2005).

As you may already know, in 1982 a conflict between a separatist movement (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) and the Senegalese government began¹⁰. The military actions on a large scale began in 1990, when the military conflict between the rebels of MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) and the Senegalese army broke out. The separatist combatants used the border to protect themselves from the Senegalese army attacks, even using anti-personal mines. This conflict provoked a deep crisis in the border area, causing thousand of refugees to flee to other cities, abandoning their native villages and, as a consequence, abandoning all their social, economical and ritual practices. The Senegalese army went to the villages closest to the border and installed permanent troops there. One of the most significant cases is that of Effok, in which the army settled in the school.

It could seem that the armies of both countries respected the international border. The border that, officially, we can assume they protect. According to several informants, the Guinea-Bissau troops crossed the international border and penetrated to Senegalese territory when they were persecuting a faction of the MFDC in 2006. In November 2009, the Senegalese army was accused of crossing the border to the South, and a serious diplomatic conflict started between both governments.

2. The border today: examples from the everyday life¹¹

Despite the conflict, the relationship between the Joola Ajamaat and Huluf communities continues. As we have explained, it is also true that due to the conflict daily life has been affected and people do not cross the border as often as they did before 1990. Anyhow, the practices that entail people from both sides are alive. So, we would like to present some cases that are still common in this area today.

2.1. Kinship

The Joola people are a patrilineal and virilocal society. This means that women move to their husband's village to start a family, to work in their husband's rice-fields, to

¹⁰ A lot of books and articles have been published on this subject. You may see Marut (2010), Foucher (2007), Evans (2004), Robin (2006), among others.

¹¹ The most part of the data used in this section have been gathered during my fieldwork (see note 1).

educate their children, etc. Different women from both sides of the border have married men from the other side. Once the family is established, women must participate in different events (social and ritual, especially) in both villages (their native one, and their husband's). So, for example, when a child is born, his/her mother must go to her native village to organize a ceremony called *kasabo* in her father's house shrine (called *kuhulung*) to introduce her son or daughter to the community. The same happens when someone from the woman's family dies: the presence of that woman in the funerary ritual (*ñukul*) is definitely expected by all. This means that -when she's from the other side, that happens especially in villages such as Youtou, Effok, Emaye, Essaout...- she must cross the border.

2.2.-Economy

Before the beginning of the conflict between the MFDC and Senegal, people easily crossed the border for economic purposes. As all informants confirmed, the economic relationship between villages from North and South were really strong. Today, the situation is completely different. Nevertheless, the Joola still cross the border for some economic reasons. For example, during the preparation of religious ceremonies (such as men's initiation, organization of wedding rituals, etc.), a lot of palm wine, or a large number of pigs or goats is needed. So, if there aren't enough products in the village, people must go to neighbouring villages to obtain them (including the villages on the other side of the border).

Another remarkable example is that of the rice-field farming. The border established in 1886 separated family rice-lands in two, one ended up in Senegal and the other in the former Portuguese Guinea. But these rice-fields remained property of the ancient families. So every year women and men went to the other side of the border to farm their rice-fields. As we have already mentioned, during the most serious clashes between the military and the rebels most part of the villages were abandoned, as well as these economic practices. Recently, especially after the signature of the peace accords of 2004, some of the families have gone back to their villages and started working on their rice-fields on the other side of the border¹².

Crossing the border was not only a matter of agriculture and cattle. Before the beginning of the conflict, people from Oussouye went to Suzanna to buy some manufactured products in the market that were cheaper in Guinea-Bissau. People from

¹² See, on refugees returned to the border area, Labonia (2006).

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Guinea-Bissau also went to Oussouye to buy some products that could not be found in Suzanna.

2.3.-Education

In this case, the people cross the border from the South to the North because Casamance is a reputed region when it comes to schools and education. In some Casamance regions, such as the Joola Huluf area, primary education schooling rate are 100%, and 70% in the case of secondary education. Most part of this scholar institutions were founded by missionaries just after the Senegal's Independence (1960). Others are state schools the Senegalese state. In the Oussouye Department we found schools in the main towns and villages: Kabrousse, Diembereng, Oukout, Oussouye, M'Lomp... On the other side of the border, there are only schools in Suzanna.

We have gathered several examples of Joola Bissau-Guinean families that have sent their children to Senegalese schools. In the schools of Kabrousse, Diembereng or Oussouye it is easy to find some students from Guinea-Bissau. Some of them leave with their relatives during the week and they go back to their natal villages during the weekend, if their villages are not far from the border, such Essukujak or Tenhate (Guinea-Bissau), not far from Kabrousse (Senegal)... Others live in Senegalese towns during the academic year and they go back to their native villages at Christmas and during summer holidays.

2.4.-Health and Traditional Health

Another interesting contact between populations from both sides of the border, is related to health. Some Joola from the South usually go to the Oussouye hospital to be treated. On the other hand, according to our informants, traditional medicine is better in some villages in the South. So, some Joola Huluf people go to the Joola Guinea-Bissau villages to receive treatment from traditional specialists.

2.5.-Ritual and religion

As we have shown in other articles, Joola traditional religion is such a net. Several villages are included in the same rituals for a shared shrine. In some cases, especially for women shrines, the women's priest must organize some of the initiation steps in other villages before its definitive entrenchment as a *anahan báciin* (shrine priest). For the

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women of Oussouye (in Senegal) some of these ceremonies take place in villages in Guinea-Bissau.

2.6.-The Joola kings and the border

The kingdoms of Oussouye and Essaout (today in Senegal) and Kerouhey and Essukujak (in Guinea-Bissau) are closely linked. According to all our informants, historically, the Kingdom of Oussouye comes from the town of Kerouhey. According to the same sources, Kerouhey is the oldest Joola kingdom. During the major ceremonies organized by the king of Oussouye (who was proclaimed in 2000) the presence of the king of Kerouhey is definitely expected. Some years ago, the king of Kerouhey died and today the people in this town are awaiting the proclamation of a new king. Meanwhile, the protocolary functions of the Kerouhey king during the Oussouye royal ceremonies are carried out by the king of Essukujak. (The Kerouhey kingdom belongs to a bigger area called Hassouka, made up of by several villages –all in Guinea-Bissau– including Essukujak). This means that in the last 10 years the king of Essukujak has attended several ceremonies in Oussouye such as Humabel (an annual royal ceremony, celebrated almost every year from 2003) and Ewaang (the men's initiation to the royal shrine, celebrated in June, 2011).

On the other hand, the king of Oussouye hasn't ever visited the villages of Kerouhey or Essukujak. According to his council, this is due to security reasons.

2.7.-Spare time.

Two of the greatest festive events for the Joola people are *ekonkon* (dance) and *kataj* (wrestling). These events take place especially during the rainy season -but not only- and are practised by young people (boys and girls). Young people from different villages go to other villages for a day, or even for some days, to share these events with one another. These festivities are, in fact, a way to make it possible for young people from different villages to meet. During the *ekonkon* and *kataj*, people from the same generations but from different villages strengthen bonds. There are some villages, those closest to the border, that usually wrest and dance with the villages of the other side. For example, people from Effok and Youtou (in Senegal) usually go to Bugim and Ejatem (in Guinea-Bissau), and vice-versa.

3. The international border defined by local populations

The Joola populations have a word, in Joola language, to define all the territorial limits: *álinga*. This word is used for all the territorial separations: between houses, between village lands, between rice-fields, etc.

For some Joola population, especially (but not only) the elderly, the international border is just a territorial limit, just “*álinga*”. As we have already mentioned, they usually go to the villages situated on the other side of the border for kinship, economic, political, ritual, educational and wealth reasons.

For young people, educated in Senegalese schools, the perception of the border is becoming different. They use the same word, *álinga*, but the values attributed to it are different from those used by the elderly and by the traditional authorities. For security reasons (MFDC-Senegalese army) most of them have not visited some of the neighbouring villages on the other side of the border. On the other hand, for many years they have been to Senegalese schools. And there they are integrating concepts such as: “nation”, “territory”, “sovereignty”, and, logically, “international border”.

Conclusion

The border between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Niambalang river, has been a porous border –to a different degree– for the last 125 years (1886-2011), that is, from the date of its creation. Joola population understood this permeability from the beginning and they used the border to their own benefit for more than a century (1886-1990). During that time the Joola population crossed this border for different reasons: for kinship obligations, for economic interests, for political strategies, for religious and rituals reasons, for educational needs, even for spare time activities.

These dynamics have changed from 1982 and especially from 1990, when the military conflict between the rebels of MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) and the Senegalese army broke out. The separatists combatants used the border to protect themselves from the Senegalese army attacks, even using anti-personal mines. This conflict provoked a deep crisis in the border area, causing thousand of refugees to flee to other cities. Abandoned villages and a mined border as well caused a crisis at all levels and provoked a progressive decrease of relationships between both

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sides of the international border. Here is the paradox: at the beginning of the conflict the MFDC fought for a great Casamance, defined as “from the South of the Gambia river to the North of Cacheu River” (in Guinea-Bissau), trying to redefine international borders. But, after almost three decades of conflict, the effect was the opposite: never, until now, have the borders been so rigid.

On the other hand, the dominant ideas of the State (such as “sovereignty”, “Nation”, “citizenship” and “international border”, to mention but a few) are progressively being integrated by the younger generations through different mechanisms (such as the school, for example).

In spite of this insecurity and in spite of the State's interest in creating a Senegalese/Guinea-Bissau national identity, some Joola have continued and continue to cross the border because for them this line –used by the Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau states as well as by the MFDC–, is just a territorial limit, just “álinga”.

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Territory and border crossing for livelihoods among (voluntary and forced) migrants from DRC to Swaziland: the re-imagining of a borderless spatial system

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Introduction

In people's livelihoods, migration across international borders represents an important strategy for asset accumulation (Moser and Dani 2008). As such, cross-border migration is part and parcel of survival strategies for thousands of individuals on the Africa continent. This type of migration is characterised by a dominance of temporary and undocumented migrants. On the continent, men and women have always migrated to neighbouring countries or further afield in search of opportunities. Adepoju (2000) argues that undocumented movements across frontiers, fostered by shared culture, language and colonial experience, noticeable in many parts of Africa, as well as frontier labour migration, blur the distinction between internal and international migration, as well as that between migration in regular and irregular situations on the continent.

Taking the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a case study for the generation of cross-border migration, this paper contextualises the problematic above to examine ways in which, through the spatial trajectories of migrants from Democratic Republic of Congo, different meanings are assigned to bordered territories. It interrogates the extent to which (voluntary and forced) migrants create a borderless spatial system that circumvents the geographically defined state. I make use of an interpretive approach derived from a combination of the structuration theory (Giddens 1984) with the migration system theory to cross-border migration to trace migrants' experiences with border crossing as a livelihood and asset accumulation strategy. My core argument is that the interplay of weak institutional policy apparatus along the inter-state borders makes it easy for migrants to create their own rules for free movement to fit their social aspirations and in this process a meaning to cross-border mobility is socially assigned and values are developed over time across

geographical boundaries. To empirically substantiate this argument, life stories of migrants living in Swaziland were obtained from in-depth interviews. To link internal migration with international border crossing, each migrant is followed from the place of origin (in the Democratic Republic of Congo) to places of destination (in the sequence reflected in the successive moves to Swaziland). The narratives collected from migrants inform on the changes affecting their socio-spatial strategies (motives, social networks of reference, labour use) as they cross one border after another to end up in Swaziland. Each place of transit from the borderland to more distant destinations displays a set of intersecting social relations within a borderless spatial system into which the migrants are structurally embedded. This aspect is developed in the section below presenting the theoretical framework.

Cross-border in historical, political and social contexts

The Democratic Republic of Congo (here and after DRC) shares land and waters borders with a large number of countries of central and great lakes region of Africa. Borders institutionalised since colonial times have never however ended the common political, social and economic history, characterised by the transnationalisation of movements of people. Most of the populations in the region share common cultures, and have maintained relationships across borders, both before and after independence. This inter-relationship of communities in the region partly forms the human basis for the existence of cross-border mobility. This is to say that the forms and character of spatial relationship have always been influenced and shaped by the social and political environment prevailing in each period. From the onset of independence, the informal trade in what was named Zaire (today the country has been renamed DRC) has always been influenced by migrants crossing the border to neighbouring countries (Brown 1996). Under the regime of Mobutu, the collapse of the formal economy led to this phenomenon reaching dimensions unknown elsewhere. Men and women flocked to neighbouring countries, in search of income and survival, to trade or look for casual work. The same trend is being observed in today's DRC. The mobility of these traders is not specific to a destination country, rather it operates in a regional system influenced by a changing set of factors which include the political and macroeconomic frameworks in the DRC, the regional and political and economic environment, and the international arrangements around economic integration (SADC, GLRC and COMESA and globalisation (exploitation of mineral resources).

Since the 1990s, the region of Great Lakes in which the DRC is located has witnessed some rapid transformations of which cross-border population mobility occupies a major place in the processes of spatial reconfiguration. This migration is not however a recent phenomenon. It is part of the history and culture of the peoples of that country. In the pre-colonial time, most parts of countries known today as Congo-Brazzaville, DRC, and Angola (referring especially to its enclave of Cabinda) formed a territorial entity which was under the authority of the Kingdom of Kongo (Kongo-Diatotila or Banza Congo). The needs for survival and escape from domination pushed peoples to travel short and long distances, and settle in new areas. Nation states borders in politically defined terms were inexistent, although chieftaincies were defined according to customary assigned symbols. From oral sources (gathered by this author), it is narrated that historically the kingdom of Loango which presided to the creation of the city of Pointe-Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, was formerly established by one of the sons of the King of the Kongo peoples by the name of Nimi Lukeni. This latter entered into rebellion against his father and fled all the way from the Equator region (in Zaire) to the Atlantic region of Congo. He migrated with a large number of his father's subjects, recruiting others along the way. The linguistic similarities between Vili spoken in Pointe-Noire and *Tsiliji* spoken in Cabinda and *Tsiyombe* spoken in the Bas Zaire province are the reflections of this historical transmigration of peoples.

From independence time to the end of the Mobutu's regime, there had been extensive contacts through migration and trade between Zaire and its neighbours. The spontaneity in the mobility patterns have never been limited even when countries had their independence and the national borders were being delineated. Since the end of the Mobutu's regime, the migration of peoples has gained further momentum because of the diversity in new forms of mobility –refugees, economic migrants, religious migrants, and student migration-which add complexity to the many other aspects of the dynamics of the region. The RDC has numerous points of entry and exit along the very long borders with Zambia, Uganda, Sudan, Angola and other countries in the Southern region. Monitoring efficiently these points is a very difficult task because of their location in undeveloped forest areas. The pervasive insecurity perpetuated by military groupings has rendered all attempts to control them deemed to failure. The conditions eluded above, combined with the understaffed and underfunded borders control, have been compounded by the sensitive political issues raised by the

continued flows of forced migrants at the borders and internally displaced persons in near-border towns. The issues of irregular migrants and refugees remains therefore positively sensitive both domestically and internationally, because of the repeated atrocities involving militia and rebellion groups, politicians, military and stateless minorities (the so-called *Banamuniengue*, ex-rebel *Uthu* and *Mahi-Mahis* being the three major ones).

Within the context of regionalisation, the opening of the border is not the critical question. It is rather about the extent to which the border should be open or restrictive to the inflow of cross border migrants. Put differently, how open the border should be and? To whom should it be open? There are no as such institutions to liberalise migration in the region, while efforts have been deployed to liberalise trade and investments. It is widely admitted that bilateral initiatives to reduce the flow of irregular cross border migrants have had insignificant impact. Long and porous borders have rendered bilateral agreements ineffective. If migrants cannot enter through legal channels, they will breach the law as illegal migrants or disguised forms as long as they look for viable sustainable livelihoods or security. Cross border migration too is the reflection of these interactions.

Theoretical framework

For need of clarity, it is important to give a scope to what cross-border mobility covers and what theoretically it implies. Conceptually, Cross-border mobility is defined to include all types of mobility, whether they operate from or far the borders of the DRC, provided all these forms of spatial mobility involves the passage from one country to the next-border one. Most analysts recognise that the dynamics of migration can be adequately understood by embedding it in a system of interactions such as the one proposed by Giddens (1984) in his theory of restructuration. Along these lines, such a system is composed of institutions, organisations or social agents driven by values and principles. Thus, in the system, migration (human behaviour) and social structures (components of the system where it takes place) are intertwined at varying interacting levels. This provides ground for this study to build upon the structuralist (or structuration) theory in order to understand the sub-processes associated with cross-border migration. Structuralists argue that inasmuch as people are restrained by the structure, they also allow the emergence of a certain time-

space-structure. In other words, people make use of the existing structure-rules, resources, institutions-or through rules they create for themselves, they contribute to the creation of structures that suit their behaviours. Thus interactions above mentioned above operate in a two-way direction, migration \leftrightarrow social structures, with feedback effects. It is therefore assumed that although migrational behaviour may be restrained in space and time by social structures, it can also be creatively shaped by these ones. People decide where to move within the spatial system according to the codes of signification they attach to places. It is therefore theoretically justified to analyse cross-border migration as embedded in social structures. I however argue that such embedment is better captured through an analytical framework which allows the migratory system to emerge from the perspectives of migrants themselves, rather than pre-defining the system with ad-hoc classificatory categories (e.g. SADDC, COMESA, CEGEL, etc) used in regional integration or cooperation fora. Hence the use, as described in the methodology to follow, of migration histories to reconstruct the trajectories of individuals with different experiences to narrate. To keep with the structuration theory previously evoked, the narratives must not only reveal what actions and processes are displayed by migrants, but (most importantly) the rationales for actions which are being used by the persons on the move, and the types of rules and resources (structures) that are constructed as a result of such actions. Here it is important to note the links that migration has with such institutions as market, family, household, regional integration policy, civic organisation, interest group, to name but a few. This shows the links between the system theory and the structuration theory as both share some similar views. My argument here is that the structuration theory is relevant to migration system theory because cross-border migration is part of a large, interacting, and interrelated bundle of changes, which the nations of Great Lakes and southern regions have so far experienced. These changes include globalisation, regional integration, institutional restructuring, state reconfiguration, market failures, commercialisation of personal relationships, and son on. This migration also finds in the prevailing forms in the prevailing forms of persistent crises. The interaction of parallel influence the micro-structure within the migration system, clarifies the role of informal networks developed by the migrants themselves to cope with the changing spatial conditions.

Previous studies in the Great Lake region have indicated that the movement of people across the borders is associated with various motives. The motives are thus

represented by persons with specific characteristics and constraints to be mostly specific to migrants. These persons are often young with lack of adequate education, training, and capital. Consequently, they tend to rely on social networks and other personal resources. Their migration proceeds by step and is often of short distance, moving temporarily to locations where the induced costs are low. Cross-border migration has always been associated with livelihoods drained from the informal sector (Brown, 1996) because people have to rely on temporary work in areas where they relocate. The motives that drive this mobility display a great deal of heterogeneity. While some persons have unclear objectives, for others the reasons for moving are subjectively well designed. Unlike migrants travelling by air to other countries, their mobility is quite flexible in terms of compliance with international regulations. Because of that, these cross-border migrants are often denied equal access to formal resources and markets in the country where they temporarily reside. The repeated cross-border mobility is predominantly male-dominated, as it is adventurous physically, very demanding and risky to personal safety. This form of mobility has increased over the past years because it operates under an inappropriate policy and regulatory environment, the result of institutional imperfections biased against the free-movement of people within the region. Various restrictive barriers have constrained integration of mobility across the nations into the mainstream regional integration of the national economies.

With the increase, on the one hand, in markets failure, tension and, on the other hand, initiatives for economic integration, governments in the Great Lakes region have lost some controls within their own borders. The reality of today is that moving is much easier because the states have become to a large extent “borderless”. Brettel (2000) argues that cross-border migrants from one country to another are part of transnationalism. This author defines this phenomenon as “a social process whereby migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political and cultural borders”. Social distances between sending and receiving countries are now shortened, not only because of the various modes of travelling, but also because of the facilitating role of migration networks. Migrants transcend the constraints imposed by official borders by means of informal channels of communicating and moving from place to place. According to Ananta and Arifin (2004) they can maintain their contacts with others in the home countries. In the same vein, they use contacts they have to facilitate their move to other places. Places of stay for migrants become “one”

integrated within a spatial system. They are not uprooted, but they move back to forth and freely, between different or similar cultures, social, economics, and political systems. In places where they have relocated, migrants not only send economic remittances, but also social, cultural, and perhaps political remittances (Ananta and Arifin 2004).

In moving across the border from country to country across the Great Lake region, these migrants do not rely heavily on the so called “shadowy” network of labour brokers, contractors and transporters as frequently reported in the case of South Asian countries (Asis 2004). They make use of their personal relations and resources to cover costs and find way to the destination. In both the country of origin and that of destination, the networking enables migrants to move sequentially across borders, some of these are distant, with short stay before moving to another receiving country. Migration using the network of previous migrants is a route used by many migrants and it has been much more dominant in the case of those reaching South Africa and then moving to Swaziland. Once they arrive in the country of destination, social network becomes very important because of the limited use of international assistance. As was observed by Asis (2000) in the case of Asian migrants, families and friends, stands out as the most cohesive element in the migration process.

Methods of information gathering and analytical framework

Using the migratory histories collected from nine Congolese self-settled refugees in Swaziland, an attempt was made to organise or rearrange, in a narrative manner, a set of differing individual experiences in relation to migrant status, location and housing, work and livelihoods. The aim was to keep with the necessity of working with a refined recollection of the fragments of individual stories through a consideration of real-life practices, daily practices with reference to the location where the person transited. The migration histories were collected during the fieldworks I conducted in urban Swaziland in 2006 within the framework of a research on Congolese migrants and assets for livelihoods. This research also collected data from 135 respondents using a semi-structured questionnaire.

The migratory history of each informant was gathered over a period of time from the departure in DRC to the relocation in Swaziland. In the gathering of information, I emphasised process, ambiguity and change in one’s person life, assuming the absence of order and rationality. Thus I made use of bibliographical approach, focusing on

personal crises and psychohistory. To preserve the validity of this qualitative material, I kept present the authenticity of information, the avoidance of distortion and deception, and the representativity of facts. Through the biographical approach, migrants were encouraged to engage in a deliberate act of reflection and relate their (intended) actions to the changing social environment they were confronted in their life-course. Each interviewee was asked to identify the stages and significant turning points in their life in an attempt to elicit aspects of migrant identities, values and goals. Particular attention was paid to researching the perceived routines of social life during each stage of the respondent's biography. In brief, the in-depth interviews sought to discover the origins and meanings of migration decisions in the context of (would-be) forced migrant's whole life experience. In the end, the objective pursued was to capture the temporal link between what migrants knew about their social conditions and the displacement involved. By so doing, the analysis of trajectories was intended to provide insights into way in which the generation of migration intentions over time related to the self-defined changing social contexts of the migrants' everyday life. To bring individual's practical consciousness to a discursive level (Giddens 1984), the in-depth interviews sought to scrutinise the practical consciousness which underlies their mobility by asking them to report on the social and economic activities they were involved in at various stages in their trajectories.

These nine migratory stories have been systematically restructured and reorganised to project a coherent narrative framework reflecting a set of individual's experiences (relative to conditions of departure, border-crossing, accommodation, work and family at different places). Understanding migrants' trajectories necessitate a tuning of primary material that bring together events they went through in a coherent analytical perspective, as well as considering activities they were involved in with respect to the places of previous stay. The intention is not to sketch any typology; at the most, from the migratory histories, a series of mere factual insights could be derived and hypotheses proposed. This exercise is done in the last section of this paper. Such hypotheses could be approved or rejected through a rigorous reading of the grid of events. From the findings I reported elsewhere (Tati 2006); it was observed that most self-settled refugees from DRC tended to engage in petty-trading activities in the informal sector. This observation leads to the assumption that forced migrants have a certain inclination for these activities due to the professional experience they had at different places prior to arriving in Swaziland.

The analytical approach to narrating in this paper gives preference to what is termed in French *pan de vie* meaning a life piece of the individual from the departure in DRC to the settling in Swaziland. Rather than bringing together the nine narratives into thematic sections punctuated with verbatim quotes from respondents, as is the case in most narrative accounts using qualitative material, the use of individual's piece of life preserves the integral sequencing of events the interviewed person went through during that period of his or her life. Although she sited her study in the aftermath of migration, Vaa (1990) also made use of migration histories to narrate the experiences of female migrants in the city of Bamako. This is to suggest that the migration histories approach can also be useful if it takes the migrants back from the place of departure to the place of arrival with some incursive insights into their lives at the places of transit. In so doing, my intention is also to connect these events with the places of transit for which different borders were crossed, henceforth locating the concerned individual within a spatial configuration described by the trajectory. The point is not only the determination of migration, but also way in which individuals assess the options open to them within a spectrum of multimodal alternative destinations. The section to follow closely examines the migration histories of nine persons from the DRC. Living in Swaziland, they may have various links among them through friendship, work, ethnicity, or residential proximity. The interest in the narratives is focused on the circumstances of their initial move from the place of birth, what motivated them to cross the border and moved to transit places, their economic and family situations at different places (including Swaziland) and their ties to their area of origin. For ethical reasons, their real identities have been kept anonymous. The names used are abbreviations.

As a final word, it is important to say that the implementation of the methodology used to gather information required a great deal of reflexivity from the point of view of ethical research as discussed in the literature (Sultana 2007). Having had prolonged exposure to the community of these migrants and their ways of life in Swaziland, I found it relatively easy to negotiate access to informants. My origin from a neighbouring country which has been culturally associated with DRC greatly facilitated this negotiation though they were w few problems along the way.

Results: narratives on migratory trajectories

Before narrating the individual migratory experience, it is important to first draw some cut-crossing features from the nine migratory histories. The qualitative analysis of migratory trajectories suggests some common traits emerging from migrants; a forced departure from a locality, a transit in a place within the DRC territory and the relocation in Swaziland. All these events seemed to have taken place without the individual acquiring an advanced educational or professional status. Taken individually, each of these displaced persons could be regarded as victim or the instrument of a process shaping a depreciation of the labour force. When displaced in that way, individuals are, however, localisable in a temporal-spatial matrix that is relatively new when one refers to the urban context of Swaziland. From a methodological standpoint, the in-depth interviews collected can be used to reconnect the “objective” information and provide insights into certain elements that reflect the ideology of the subject. This ideology is not just a mere extract of discourse; it is also present in some specific practices such as access to assets or acquisition of a certain type of education or status. Three types of discourse seem to have some significance, namely the exposé on the reasons for departure, the importance of links with the place of origin and the place of sojourn as well as projects for betterment (especially those in relation with the professional achievements). To keep with clarity, the trajectories are first examined separately, and thereafter insights from the different migratory histories are brought together into a tentative grounded theory of the re-imagination of a borderless spatial system.

Trajectory 1

Identification: M.K.K

Place of birth: Kananga

First departure: 2001

Place of residence: Manzini (Fairview)

Age: 26

Sex: male

M.K.K left the Democratic Republic of Congo three months after the sudden and violent death of president Kabila. Since 2003 his place of residence has been Manzini. He did not provide a detailed track line about his family background. When asked about his ethnic group, he even refused to reveal about it on the ground that he was

suspected to be associated with the Baiamulegue ethnic group. He only said that he is from a family of nine children and he is the second son to his father. He spent his early childhood in a locality called Tshikapa, part of the Kananga district. His father could not afford to provide education to all of them. He always wanted to leave his parents and join his uncle leaving in Lusaka (Zambia), where he thought life was much better than in his home place. The military unrest that followed the power take over by Kabila motivated his parents to let him travel to Kipushi, close to the border with Zambia. He got there by road, and the trip was financially supported by his father. Thereafter, he crossed the border and found his way to Chipata as, at the time he was leaving his parental home, he was told that his uncle has moved to this secondary city of Zambia to set up a furniture making business as a professional carpenter.

Upon arrival in Chipata, he stayed with two Congolese fellows from DRC who, through their local network of relations, helped him to trace his uncle. In the end, he managed to get in touch with his uncle. M.K.K decided to become a carpenter as advised by his uncle. After 14 months of training, he was not quite satisfied by the way his uncle was making a living from his business. His apprenticeship was only on part time basis, as he gradually came to realise that being a carpenter was not the right profession for him. Besides, aged 23, he felt that it was high time for him to become autonomous. He left his uncle's workshop and entered a new apprenticeship deal with a Zambian running a hairdressing salon, convinced was he that this activity was more lucrative than being a carpenter. To enter in the new apprenticeship deal, the arrangement he made was that after six months of training he had to pay his boss an amount of money (he did not say exactly how much) agreed upon with him. On the top of that throughout the entire period of apprenticeship he had to concede 80% to him for the cash received as payment from every customer he serviced. M.K.K was therefore getting only 20% from his on-site training job. Being in a new country, he had no other choice but to accept these terms of training contract. He reckoned that under this agreement he was incapable of getting the necessary amount to "free" himself, and felt like being "trapped" for life in this apprenticeship deal. All this time, his status of residence was not cleared out; he was neither a formal refugee nor an asylum seeker. All he knew is that he left his family home in DRC in a time of military unrest and lack of job prospects because of the conflict.

After leaving his Zambian boss, he was accommodated by a Congolese, who was like him a self-settled refugee, to which he was partially contributing to his monthly rent. From time to time, he was paying visit to his uncle to spend a few days in family. Like most Congolese migrants, after several attempts, he managed in the end to obtain a letter from the UNCHR stating that his application for refugee status was received and was being processed. Not further communication, however, was given to him by the UN agency during the following year.

The acknowledgement of his application was however an indication that he could use the letter received from the UNCHR as an official recognition of his status. At age 25, he decided to leave Zambia as he could no longer pay the fees for his apprenticeship. M.K.K. joined two friends of his, a Zambian and a Congolese, who were travelling to Maputo (Mozambique). At the boarder, he and the Congolese companion presented themselves as being asylum seekers. They were after transferred and admitted in an UN-assisted camp for refugees, while their applications were being processed for clearance. As is the case in most African countries, the movement of asylum seekers between the camp and Maputo was not restricted, and this free movement allowed him to make the necessary arrangements for crossing the border to Swaziland. Why did he choose Swaziland? To this question, M.K.K responded that the information he had about Swaziland motivated him to envisage better living conditions in that country than they were in Mozambique. Besides, he also heard from friends in Maputo that it was much easier to move to South Africa from Swaziland than from any other country within the SADC region. In 2003, he successfully crossed the border (after a first failed attempt to do so), and once in Swaziland he submitted an application for asylum seeker.

The status of DRC as a member of SADC region, he said, facilitated to some extent his application to be considered in regard to this status. He was thereafter referred to the refugee camp in Kappa (close to the town of Siteki) where he stayed for 5 months waiting for the status of refugee to be granted. Life in the camp was quite comfortable but lacked in opportunities. M.K.K decided to settle in Manzini, the largest city of Swaziland, and at that time he settled, he was still waiting for the outcome of his application for refugee status that was being processed by the department of home affairs in Mbabane. The relocation in Manzini brought to him some support from other Congolese self-settled refugees living there, and this was materialised by the set up of his own business as a barber in that city. This was a way

practising what he trained for in Chipata (Zambia). This business was first started in a suburb of Manzini called “66” where he was sharing accommodation with four other Congolese citizens. Finding it difficult to attract clients, he found a bigger space to rent in a commercial building located in the vicinity of the Manzini bus rank. The building was owned by a female Swazi, and it was being used by many other informal petty traders and personal service providers.

Upon moving in the new premises, his business increased in magnitude with the recruitment of four assistants hired as apprentices. Within a period shorter than one year of stay in Swaziland, his business considerably grew, resulting in the hiring of four apprentices. This positive change was a strong motivation for him to embark on a diversification of his income generating activities by buying goods from Mozambique and selling them in Manzini. He got married to a Congolese woman, herself a refugee (with a proper status). The relative success in business prompted him to rent a two-bed room flat in the vicinity of the Manzini Central Business District, close to his business. This locational choice was largely motivated by a search for personal security, as he experienced with a life-threatening assault at the time he was staying in the outskirts of the city. His marital life also changed as he thereafter became a head of family of four, including his wife.

The business however was constantly affected by a high turnover among his apprentices. The trainees tended to set up their own business as early as they think that they have got a bit of skills in hair cutting for them allow them operate to on their own. Some of the boys he has trained were from DRC, but others originated from Kenya and Mozambique. Three of these apprentices were nationals from Swaziland. His brother from DRC who joined him in 2004 became one of his trainees. Since leaving his family home in DRC, M.K.K has never gone back there for visit. It is too far travelling by road and the border crossing has become more life risky than before. The relations with relatives at home are kept alive through letters sent home through an informal courier service using road travellers linking southern Africa and DRC, via Zambia, or by telephone (mobile phone due to the network made available by MTN). The informal courier service is also a means used to send voice-recorded tapes in order to communicate with relatives at home.

Trajectory 2**Identification: N.E****Place of birth: Goma****First departure: 1998****Age: 31****Sex: male****Place of residence: Manzini**

N.E. has been living in Swaziland for just 4 months. He was interviewed in the premises of the Department of home affairs where he came to query about his refugee status application. In his words, he is a forced migrant. The displacement of N.E. started under the same dramatic conditions caused by the military unrest. The period that followed the take over by president Kabila (the father) was, for most of the people living in Kayemba in the Kwango region, a very difficult time to go through. The physical context was characterised by breakdown in the communication infrastructure, isolation of the city and barriers in trading with most of the places around the country. It was a time where most of the residents, especially the young ones, were looking for ways of leaving the city, and N.E. was one of them. He took advantage of the lack of control at the border caused by the military unrest to relocate in Angola in a locality called Soyo, though the situation was even worse there than his place of origin. From there, he moved to Lobito, a port city, where he was accommodated by a Congolese apostolic priest who was living in the area for six years. Thereafter, he decided to have some skills in gardening as it was the only offer of training he found available there from a florist's shop. The training itself was relatively short, and after this N.E. worked as an assistant florist in the shop where he was trained as a way of repaying his apprenticeship. For one year and a half he could not change this job because he did not have enough money to pay his debt back. From 2001 to 2002, his professional trajectory was what one would not qualify as a predictable one. Within a period of two years, he worked for four different florists transacting in the selling of exotic flowers across the border to Namibia and South Africa (he claimed that he voluntarily left each of these companies). The last florist he worked with sent him to serve as a representative of his timber business in the Lubango area which was under the permanent risk of being raided by the UNITA at that time (before the death of Savimbi). After 5 months of employment, he lost his job because he did not want to be transferred to another site. Using transport by road, he managed to resettle in Luanda after a life-threatening journey in company of some

other internally displaced refugees. There using his meagre savings from previous jobs, he set up his own business as a florist.

Living illegally without a legal status of refugee (he has never applied for this status though he always perceived himself as being entitled to one at that time); he was constantly harassed by the city authorities. He said that there was a prevailing xenophobic attitude toward Congolese among the locals. It is partly because of this that he relocated in Namibia, close to the border to Angola, using the contacts he had at the time of his training. But soon after arrival in Namibia, he was forcefully expelled back to Angola as he did not have proper documentation. Back to Angola, he worked again as a gardener in the same small town of Lubango, located close to the border with Namibia. N.E. did not stay long there and went back to Luanda. In the capital city, he rented a room which he shared with his female partner. His partner, a divorcee, was a national from Angola owning a grocery. From this liaison, he had a daughter while his female partner had also a daughter from a previous marriage. The only detail he provided about his itinerary to Swaziland was that he travelled by road to Swaziland transiting by Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. From the interview, it emerged that N.E. has never visited his relatives at home. He said that he inherited two plots of land from his deceased father (this one passed away one year after his departure from Kayemba). One of his uncles, the youngest, is farming the plots. N.E. has no intention of going back to his village of birth, with which he has so far maintained weak links far.

Trajectory 3

Identification K.K.

Place of residence: Mbabane

First departure: 1999

Age: 42

Sex: male

In 1999 K.K. left his parental home of Kindu in the surrounding area of Kalima to move to Bukavu at the age of 32 years old. From the description he gave about his social background, his parents were very poor. The father had however three land holdings. At the age of 22, he was forced to find an income generating activity. The motivation to find a job came from his father and his uncle, both heavily indebted, as they had to repay a debt. He first worked as a shop assistant earning a very meagre

salary, for several working hours each day. From his parental home, he moved to Busuka because he wanted to escape from his tiresome and demeaning job. He reckoned that, even after moving in Busuka, his living conditions were not as different as they were at his parental place. First he was hired as a casual worker by a coffee-buyer middle man. Thereafter he did several other casual jobs that did not require on his part to possess any particular skills. For three years, he had no stable source of income, and his housing conditions were critically precarious (staying in a cardboard made shelter). At 37, K.K decided to move to South Africa as he heard that many DRC citizens were finding fortune there after claiming to be refugees. He found it however extremely difficult to meet the passage fee required for the trip to South Africa. He decided to become a pot maker and joined an artisan who was making a living by selling cooking pots made with aluminium. After a while, he could not stand the rude attitude of his boss. Unsuccessful in making ends meet and living under harsh conditions, he constantly thought of going back home.

The passing away of his father was the hardest time for him, as he could not afford to meet the travel costs and assist his mother for the funerals. He even worked as canoe runner (ferry man) in a locality called Bemi, a job that made him become familiar with the continuous influxes of refugees heading for Uganda. Perhaps this familiarity with people on the move motivated him in the end to cross the border and relocated in Marghuta Peak. He then moved to Kampala. From there, his ambition of moving to South Africa forced him to travel southward all the way to Swaziland in March 2000. He did not provide any details on how he travelled to this country, and restricted himself to just a few words “it was difficult, but I coped”. (From an unconfirmed source, it was alleged that he travelled under a false identity as a Mozambican.).He reckoned that his life in Swaziland has become more stable and that he has achieved some kind of autonomy. K.K. however pointed out that despite his age, he had to start again a new apprenticeship cycle to work as an operator of a laundry facility service (lavatory). A more stable family life started as well in Swaziland for him. Five months after arrival, he was joined by a female partner he met in Uganda, and with whom he had a child there. While in Swaziland, he was informed that his cousins are exploiting the small plantation of palm trees left by his deceased father without sharing the profits derived from that with her old mother.

From the narrative above, one has to admit that the migratory itinerary of K.K. is particularly complex and his life course, for most of it, has been characterised by

periods of life events that are not clearly relatable or collectable, so to say. There is a heavy presence of family influence in his cross-border migratory trajectory. Despite all these difficult events, K.K. has managed to stabilise his situation in Swaziland. The salary paid to him by the laundry's owner allows him to accommodate his family in an acceptable modest house equipped with electricity and to afford the costs incurred in the schooling of his daughter. He said that having now settled down, his intention is to go and visit his mother. He has not seen her since leaving his home town. His plan is to go there by road to Lubumbashi, via Zambia, but he pointed out that the persistent military unrest and lawless in the region does not offer enough security for making it this way.

Trajectory 4

Identity: A.S.

Place of residence: Manzini

Departure from DRC: 1996

Age: 38

Sex: male

A.S has a very long migratory life (13 years) as he reckoned it with a tone of bravery and adventurer. His mother was the second spouse to his father in a family of 11 children. Two of the sons from his father's first wife also migrated and one was living in Germany and the other was living in South Africa at the time of the interview. The social background in which he grew up was relatively modest. At 22 years old, A.S. was sent to Lumumbashi by his father to stay at his aunt's place for college attendance. From that age, A.S. resided successively in Lumumbashi, Likasi, before moving to Swaziland. With the exception of Lumumbashi, the other steps were rather of short time. While in Likasi, he visited his family's home twice. In Lumumbashi, he provided some assistance to his aunt in the management of her business, a kind of informal restaurant located in a very popular market place of the city centre. At 26, while he was living in Likasi for about two years, he went back home and stayed there without working. At the heat of the fighting that was taking place between the military fractions, A.S. decided to stay there for a while. (He said he wanted to join one of the military fraction supported by Professor Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, but lately changed his mind as his girl friend was raped by two fighters from that fraction.)

The migration of A.S. to Likasi was quite specific in that he arrived there at a relatively young adult age and found accommodation at his father's half brother place (from the same mother). This person advised him to train as tailor. His training lasted eight months, and following its completion he tried to set up his own business but failed in this undertaking. He said that the failure was caused by the lack of customers. The stay in Lumumbashi almost followed the same pattern. He had to start from scratch as he started a new informal training under the supervision of a Congolese (one of his cousins). He quitted this training after four months without completing it, but tried, however, to set up his business. He once again failed in that project. During that same period, he settled down with a woman from the area with whom he had two kids. Finding it difficult to make ends meet, A.S. decided to move to Swaziland, advised to do so by his female partner. He was accommodated by his partner's brother, before finding his own place to rent. His professional life took a different path, as he went through relatively long periods of informally salaried job tenure interrupted by unemployment periods. His second child was born at a time when he was unemployed. He said that the reason for him marrying a foreigner was because he could not go back to his home place due to the situation of war in DRC.

Overall, what seems to emerge from A.S's professional trajectory is a certain achievement in Swaziland. He has never applied for refugee status, acting mostly as a self-maker. His living conditions have improved in Manzini (a two-bed flat, comfortable furniture, hi-fi system for entertainment...). However, he did not perceive his relocation in Swaziland as a way of ending his career as a house builder (mason). This is reflected in his drive for entrepreneurship. In parallel with his salaried employment, he has three apprentices assisting him in the running of his private business as brick layers. This activity has brought him so far seven opportunities to work with building contractors. A.S. also mentioned a third source of income related to the links he has maintained with his place of origin. He frequently managed to send home, through his niece who was studying in Johannesburg (South Africa), some money he saved from his previous contracts. The money sent home has served to build a small house that is being rented out by two of his three sisters. The rent is also partly used to cover the medical expenses incurred for the treatment of his mother diabetic condition.

A.S.'s migratory life, quite fragmented, has evolved in three steps. One can look at them as three distinct migrations. In each of these, there was neither a project nor a

personal long term strategy. His first migration was motivated by his father death, and from that first move, A.S. has mostly remained connected to his place of origin over his migratory trajectory. He however admits that upon arrival in Manzini, the links with his home place have tended to weaken. One can also observe that he seems to have demonstrated a certain control over his professional life. This is reflected in the tenure of two income generating activities. Since relocating in Swaziland, A.S. has developed what one would see as personal strategy in terms of consolidating his entrepreneurial drive. Probing the information he gave, it was however difficult to establish the extent to which his current marital life is part of such a strategy. Also he did not indicate whether he had any plan of applying for the status of refugee in Swaziland. All indications tend to point to a willingness to find his way in the host society as an economic migrant.

Trajectory 5

Identity: T.A.

Place of residence: Manzini

Age: 37

Date of departure: 2001

Sex: male

When one looks through his assets or his position as a reference person within the community of origin, T.A. is to a large extent the archetype of a successful migrant. When he departed from Yangambi close to Kisangani, his family home was one would qualify of satisfactory living conditions. His father was a primary school teacher and, at the same time, a landowner casually involved in land selling. His siblings attended primary and secondary schools, as he too did it. T.A left his parents at 23 to study at the University of Kisangani. His studies were not successful as he failed to get the licence (equivalent to BSc). He then decided to train as a nurse and was admitted in what was then the only state-sponsored institute of public health in Kisangani. After his graduation he settled in the city of Kisangani where he was first accommodated by one of his teachers at the institute. He worked for two years as a laboratory assistant in a private clinic. Unhappy with the low wage paid to him by the clinic's owner, he moved to Kinshasa in 1991 to look for a better job. After a search that lasted two months, he ended up with one offer as laboratory technician for medical analysis. The laboratory was owned by an expatriate from Belgium. The laboratory was destroyed during the looting that took place during the down fall of the

Mobutu's regime. As a consequence of this destruction, he left Kinshasa to look for a job in South Africa, but could not find one as he could not get a work permit. He reckoned that the two years he spent in Johannesburg without proper documentation were the most difficult of his life. He lived most of the time on the hiding. His life took a different turn after he met a medical doctor from Ghana who was visiting the owner of the house where he was illegally living. The medical doctor was working in Swaziland. T.A. was advised by this one to try his luck there as the public sector of that country was in dire need of laboratory technicians in bio-medical analysis. It took him five weeks to finalise the arrangements for his relocation in Swaziland. He first resided in Manzini where he stayed for four months at the Ghanaian's place. With the assistance provided to him by his host, he was in the end successful in finding a job as laboratory analyst in the public dispensary of Manzini under a contract employment with the ministry of health. Soon after taking up employment, he rented a house in a peri-urban ward called Ngwena Park, which was at that time a recently developed residential area for middle-income class. Since his relocation in Swaziland, he has changed neither his place nor his job. Career wise, he has however moved up. From simple laboratory analyst, he was the time of the interview heading the department in charge of HIV/AIDS testing located near to a place called *Jubilee Park* in Manzini in the business city district.

On a more family formation side, he has at the time of interview 8 children from two legally married spouses. The first spouse, with whom he has six children, came from DRC via South Africa to join him around 2000. The position of laboratory analyst has helped him to acquire a luxurious car, and to assist his two spouses in setting up their own business. Educated and experienced professional, A.S. is a person of reference within the community of migrants and refugees from DRC. He served as an elected representative of the community. He held that leadership position for almost three years. Under his mandate, he set up an office in the business city district of Manzini to deal with issues pertaining to the welfare of DRC citizens in Swaziland. The office also dealt with issues regarding the fostering of linkages and collaboration with other migrants from DRC living in neighbouring countries to Swaziland, especially those residing in South Africa and Mozambique. The Congolese diaspora in the United States of America was also part of his networks. The office was a quite popular place as it also served as a meeting point for the nationals from DRC residing in Swaziland, to discuss community welfare issues and mobilise various resources.

A.S. displays quite a few other signs of a wealthy person for which migration has paid off. He is in the process of buying a free-standing house in a residential area called “66”, an affluent suburb of Manzini. He also owned a taxi run by a Ghanaian driver he is employing. The financial problems he experienced therefore forced him to sell the car and repaid a debt. During the field work, I picked up from other informants some allegations that the money he was paying for the property was taken out from the funds set up as a saving scheme by the Congolese themselves. Accused of embezzlement, A.S had to resign his position of representative. His private business is now limited to two maize mills run by one of his daughters in the vicinity of the Manzini market. Nonetheless, A.S. is a clear example of a successful migrant that has managed to consolidate a comfortable life in the host society.

Trajectory 6

Identification: R.M.

Place of residence: Mbabane

Age: 33

Year of departure: 2000

Sex: male

The situation of R.M. bears some significance in that it illustrates the situation of an individual that finds himself between the necessity to migrate across the border in order to escape payment of debts and the proletarian practices at the village level. The reasons for his departure were not related to the on-going war. Indeed, at the death of his father, R.M. inherited three plots of land from him, but this inheritance did not bring him any good fortune. To cover the costs of his father’s funerals, R.M. had to borrow money within the community. In order to repay the loan, he mortgaged the two plots of land, but the money was not enough. At 26 years old, this man had to run away from his creditors, leaving behind his wife and two kids. He could not repay the loan he contracted to cover the burial costs of his father. He first moved to Buta where a cousin of his accommodated him for a while. The same cousin helped him to find a casual job as a manual worker in a construction company. The salary he earned from that job was so small that he could not make ends meet in the Buta city. With that wage, he could neither repay his debts nor sustain his family. In 2001, he left Buta to relocate in Sudan, with which the DRC shares a border in its north eastern. From there, he reached Kampala, after transiting at various places within the Great Lakes Region. His route to Swaziland was not revealed during the interview. He said that his

final destination is South Africa, and his plan was to migrate there illegally through the border with the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Trajectory 7

Identification: M.L.

Place of residence: Mbabane

Date of departure: 1991

Sex: female

Age: 29

M.L. lives in Mbabane since 2001. Her life story illustrates the extent to which women in some parts of Sub-Saharan African, even when they are married, are relatively autonomous in the decision to migrate. This biography provides as well a strong illustration of how complex a residential system could be in the reconstruction of the migrant's social life.

M.L. left her birth place, a small place called Kibombo in the Kasai oriental, at the age of 13 years old to relocate in the town of Kindu with her mother. She indicated that it was her mother's second migration to that town for a marriage-related motive. She then moved to Goma after her mother divorced from her first husband. M.L. stayed in Goma for 8 years, and during all that time she did not pay a single visit to her birth place, though her father and sister were still living there. Thus it does not come as a surprise that she could not recall at all the living conditions she had had in the Kasai before moving to Goma. During the first five years of residence in Goma, M.L. trained as a tailor and assisted her mother who was selling locally-grown vegetables at the market place. At 21, she got married to a man who was involved in cross-border trading between Rwanda and DRC. She settled with her husband in Kigali and latter had two kids with him. Five years after the marriage, the husband migrated to Zimbabwe, and there after to Swaziland. She did not give clear indications on the reasons of these successive moves. What transpired from the interview was that the moves had to do with the association of her husband with some Asian traders involved in pulp wood trading.

M.L. joined her husband in 2001 by her own means, as she could not go back to Kasai due to the military unrest around the border area between Rwanda and DRC. Soon after her arrival in Swaziland, she discovered that her husband was living with another woman from Zimbabwe as his partner. The husband had no source of

personal income, and was materially supported by the woman. Because of this illegitimate liaison, M.L. could not stay with her husband and ended up by renting a room to accommodate her and the two kids she had with her, while waiting for her application for refugee status to be processed. She has not had a stable activity since resettling in Swaziland and is actively looking for a start up capital for a business activity. Despite his extra-marital life, her husband would like to go back home or relocate elsewhere in the country with her, once she has been granted the status of refugee by the Swaziland home affairs department. She however does not consider the status of refugee as a strong motive for settling in Swaziland. She intends to relocate with her two children in South Africa, which she sees as a good place to be as far as income-generating opportunities are concerned.

Trajectory 8

Identification: A.M.

Place of residence: Mbabane

Age: 36

Date of departure: 2000

Sex: Male

A.M. is the third born son in a polygamous marriage. He is the only person with a migration experience in the family. The reasons of his first migration, however, cannot clearly be defined. He first left his home place at the age of 19, while he was finishing his first year of secondary school (equivalent to grade 11). He enrolled at a school in Bukavu as a vocational student to train in basic electronics. He failed to pass the three-year course and decided to drop out. Using however some skills learned from the training, he then joined a friend who was running an informal workshop providing service in electronics repair (TV, radio, ...). He indicated that the time spent at the workshop was fruitfully used to improve his practical skills in providing such service, and later make a living out of it. He did not however pursue that plan, as in the end he decided to work as a security guard for a super market in one of the city wards. The city was predominantly inhabited by Uthu refugees from Rwanda who fled there in the aftermath of the well-documented genocide of Tutsis. He decided to change job, as he settled down for two years with a female partner with whom he has one child. He set up a workshop for electronics repair in Bukavu but this an unsuccessful business because of the persistent climate of unrest perpetuated by militia .

In 2001, he crossed the border and moved to Kabwe in Zambia (after a two-week transit in Lumumbashi) by road via Kipasthi (a locality bordering Zambia) to join his wife's brother, after he was informed by this one about a possibility of setting up a business there. He reckoned that making a living in Kabwe was harder than was the case in Bukavu. One year after, he decided to migrate to South Africa by first stopping in Zimbabwe. The problems he encountered at the border with the immigration officers dissuaded him to use this itinerary. He dropped Zimbabwe for Maputo (Mozambique). This step in his migratory trajectory was indeed characterised by a quite unstable residential localisation within the capital city of Mozambique.

He lived in many parts of the city -from the inner Maputo to the peripheral suburbs- in search for a more secure accommodation. A distinctive trait of his Maputo itinerary is the way in which he set in motion a few adjusting strategies that were both diversified and complimentary from asset-accumulation standpoint. A.M. is what one would call a "self-made and forward looking person". From 2002 to 2004, he held three positions as a salaried worker. Evidence gathered from him about the change in his job tenure suggests that for each of them the decision to quit or end the contract came exclusively from him. He indicated that for the second position, the decision to quit was mainly motivated by his Portuguese employer refusing to increase his salary. He also added that his employment status was improved from one job to another. Looking into his professional trajectory, one would agree with his statement as this changed from manual worker to semi-skilled worker), reflecting in an increase in earnings (from 2002 to 2003 his salary doubled). All of these suggest a constant drive for better livelihoods.

Throughout the different stages of his migratory trajectory A.M. obviously demonstrated a strong drive towards material achievement. In Maputo, the capital city of Mozambique, the first house he rented was of an acceptable standard. He proudly stated that the last house he rented cost him one third of his monthly salary. He possessed a refrigerator and his house had air-conditioning system. He owned a stereo system and a gas cooking stove. He however stated with a note of dissatisfaction that his earnings were by far much better in Maputo than in Swaziland. In Mozambique, he managed to save enough money that could have been used to buy a plot of land in Bukavu and build a comfortable house onto it, had he wished so.

This high drive for social achievement did not however prevent him to invest in the schooling of his children. Since relocating in Swaziland, two of his children are

attending a medium English school in Mbabane, and at the same time, he is providing assistance to his second borne son attending secondary school in Goma. He also said that his first-borne daughter at his birth place also relied on him for subsistence. He did not give any detail on way in which remittances he sent home reach his children. Information gathered from other sources suggests that he may also be using an outlet of *WesternUnion*, a money transfer service in the border Town of Tsipaka on the Mozambique side, to send remittances home.

Looking into the diversified strategies he is involved, a particularly complex life space tends to reflect. Mbabane is indisputably the principal pole (job, family, housing,...); Bukavu, where one of his sons is attending school, is the secondary pole, and the third is his home place where his daughter is staying. He also has some cultural projects for his home place. Throughout his migratory trajectory, he has kept positive memories of his childhood at his home place. He intends to visit it in a near future to seek membership to the traditional leadership of the village. In line with this project, he said that he is saving enough to cover the costs associated with the traditional ceremony to be organised around his membership. A secondary motivation for the visit is his intention to claim back a plot of land, inherited from his father, which has been mortgaged by his uncle to cover the costs of his son's marriage.

Trajectory 9

Identification: T.M.

Place of Residence: Mbabane

Date of departure: 1999

Age:32

Sex: male

Through the trajectory of T.M., one can see an illustration of “destabilisation”, deliberate marginalisation and the repositioning of a forced migrant on fortuitous grounds. The same trajectory however reflects the individual's ability to take advantage of any opportunity that arises. T.M. is the fourth- borne of a family of 12 children. As is the case of RM above, he too indicated that he was borne in a remote rural area of the Bukavu region. His father did not possess land for all of them, and at his death, T.M. was left landless due to his young age. His two elder brothers are settled in Kinshasa and Matadi, respectively. At the age of 14 years old, his uncle took him to attend a catholic school in a nearby small town. He passed the official exam Minerval, equivalent to General Certificate at 17 years old (which was a relatively

good achievement for someone of his age), but failed to pass the General Certificate of education (GCE A levels) after two attempts. He returned to his parental home, where he casually worked as a primary school teacher and, at the same time, he provided some home-based private lessons in elementary mathematics to children from wealthy families. With the savings made from teaching, T.M. set up a stationary shop in the small town where he was living at his uncle's place. Lacking the required experience in business, or possibly because of the dormant economic activity of the town (no major administrative functions were available there), he had to close down the business after two years of activity.

At the age of 26 he migrated (voluntary) to the city of Goma with the hope that his previous teaching experience would help him find a suitable job. His migratory trajectory from his small town of Dikese (quite far from Goma) to the city of Goma is quite difficult to track properly. He indicated that he first stopped at Kalima and then moved to Punia. From there, he went back to Kalima and there after moved to Goma with short steps along the way. It was a singularly erratic migration during which the sojourn at any of the places rarely exceeds 6 months for him to be regarded as a resident. In Goma, the failure to get a job as a teacher forced him to search for a better alternative to his ambition. The spreading war in the region also made things difficult as such an environment was not conducive to finding employment. He joined a religious group (by faith, said he), which was touring the region as part of a missionary crusade organised by an apostolic church. It was at that moment he met a pastor from Uganda who was living in Swaziland. T.M. had some ambitions to migrate to South Africa for better living conditions, and the meeting with the pastor was quite critical to him as he saw Swaziland as a way of getting close to this destination. After the crusade, he travelled with the pastor to Swaziland by road with the rest of the church members. Along the way, the pastor assisted him in securing shelter and subsistence. He also facilitated his integration within the church community. It was during the trip to Swaziland that he got acquainted with a female fellow in the same church, who soon after became his partner.

Upon arrival in Swaziland, the pastor advised him to use his knowledge of French to teach that language in a local primary school. For five months, he tried his luck in the small town of Siteki (in the Lubombo region) to teach in a nearby school while waiting for his application to be processed. Throughout this period, he did not find any job, and was finding it hard to carry on with day to day life in Swaziland,

although the stay in the camp was for him a good way of not paying rent. His female partner during the trip provided him a modest financial support by selling fruits and vegetables at the local market place. This unsuccessful job search motivated T.M. to relocate in Manzini, where he finally found employment in a Chinese shop. He perceived his job of shop keeper as being disqualifying in comparison with the teaching position, even if the salary was much better than what he used to earn in Goma as a teacher. The job as a shop keeper was also precarious. He quitted the job of shop keeper following an allegation of involvement in a theft of garments in the warehouse, which he claimed was unfounded and denied. Based on his statement, the allegation originated from one of the shop cashiers with the purpose of outing him from the job. After leaving the job, he moved back to the refugee camp with his wife as he had nowhere to stay. He did not stay there for long as he had to provide for his partner who was pregnant at that time. T.M. relocated in Mbabane to stay at a friend's house. The friend was known to him at the time he was working in Manzini. Making a living during the first five months in the city was quite difficult as the first job he casually worked for was poorly paid. When asked about his motivations for relocating in Mbabane, he implicitly referred to the alleged theft affair in Manzini. His intention was as well to get some training in computing and in view of that he applied for government assistance. He thought that by being a computer literate could facilitate access to a more stable job and care for his family. He expressed however some intention to go back to Manzini. In Mbabane job opportunities are scarce, but this keeps him close to the government department of home affairs which is in charge of processing his application. He regards the casual jobs as part of a transitory situation. At the time of interview, he was from a two-day visit in Manzini in search for a better job. A Congolese living there informed him about a vacant teaching position at a private management training school. With regard to his migration project, he has no intention of going back to his country from which he has not heard for three years from family members.

Drawing some theoretical insights from the differing trajectories

Through the examination of time-space nine trajectories, the cross-border migrants from DRC appeared to be active social agents capable of employing their knowledge

of structures to move around, achieve goals in step-wise manner and, through agency, reproduce their livelihoods in places of relocation. The biographical approach used in this paper builds on a structurationist position in order to explore the concept of practical consciousness as developed by Goss and Lindquist (1995) in an attempt to identify the embedeness of cross-border mobility in the individual search for livelihoods along the lines suggested by Giddens (1984). Giddens (1984) argues that practices and discursive consciousness inform conveniently about the conditions of the migrants' actions; what they know and say or verbally express about the social conditions of their actions. The interpretation of these values gets significance in the construction of rationalised self identity that underpins certain aspects of voluntary or involuntary displacement. The biographical analysis informs that for each of those (forced) migrants, the place has a meaning that is not statistic. Regardless of the length of stay spent in a location, each place stands as a set of intersecting social relations for the migrant into which s(he) is socially embedded. The migrant appears as an intentional agent capable of influencing or being influenced by the social environment in which s(he) is located. This influence translates into repeated mobility across different borders. Interestingly, from an empirical perspective it must be noted that despite the focus of this investigation on self-or family-initiated mobility, the narrative accounts indicate that the interviewees did not invariably choose the refugee status or the security concern as a dividing line in their self-definition of their life stages. This would suggest that interviewees were not overly concerned by this 'refugee angle'.

It must be acknowledged that the level of biographical details collected was particularly limited by the problems of memory to recall the events. This is mostly present in the exercise of eliciting migrants' formerly held values and interpretations which have been overwritten by their current perceptions of the meaning of their experiences as reported retrospectively at the time of a single interview. To unveil the meaning of migrants' experiences, the biographical interviews were supplemented by information collected from direct observation using a survey questionnaire. The life stories examined suggest that the meaning of an individual's migration or relocation decision is situated in the perception that boundaries are not institutional barriers across time and space, rather than just in the moment when the decision is made. It is not just a matter of reconstructing livelihoods from one border to another. When asked about their reasons for moving, migrant's responses provide some

unambiguous, though limited, statements of their motivations. The responses revealed how relocation or migration decision was embedded in values developed over a certain (if not entire) period of life course, rather than being linked only to some circumstances in the period immediately prior to departure. Some individuals wished to migrate regardless of the prevailing situation of military conflict, suggesting that the intention to move long predated the act.

It comes out that the trajectories are not linear but rather illustrate a step-wise or back and forth sequence in the temporal generation of movements across different borders. A set of values around which collected narratives concur or intersect is the significance of professional achievement or betterment that come with the crossing of border. Through this, mobility is used a means of advancing materially or moving closer to that stage within a spatial system that is not geographically confined to the officially-bordered territory. The space of mobility expands as new aspirations arise. The differing trajectory patterns reveal that the border creates the conditions of social contacts and attainability of those aspirations.

Equally reflecting in the trajectories is, on the one hand, the developing meaning of migration to the individuals involved and, on the other hand, the multiple social influences shaping their perception of places. The personal objective of being independent of parents is juxtaposed with the perception of a happier life elsewhere. In the end this juxtaposition makes migration an option worth considering. The trajectories and the biographical accounts also reveal a complex web of cultural values which one can interpret as favouring migration. The sources of social influence are also present in the shaping of migration. Family environment, affiliation to some religious community, marital ties and countrymen fellows contributed, at a varying degree, to the construction of the desirability of relocating elsewhere. These social influences are nested in the individual's general socio-economical milieu.

From the narratives, it also emerges that the trajectories are not linear. They serve to illustrate the long time sequence involved in the generation of each moves across the borders, be it involuntary. Certainly, an inherent problem to these narratives is that of practical consciousness. Understanding the motives behind the different trajectories becomes a complex task when one is seeking to establish what these persons knew about the implicit social conditions of their actions and values, but which they cannot express discursively, that underpinned their spatial mobility. As reported in this paper, the activities the individuals engaged in and the time period allocated to them to some

extent reflect the importance of these activities in the particular social milieu in which they were situated. A set of values around which most collected narratives concur or intersect is the significance of professional achievements or betterment in one's life. To some of the migrants, such achievements appear to be a central goal in life, as illustrated by AM's trajectory (number 8). Through the reported narratives, mobility is closely linked to the desire to advance materially or in wellbeing terms. The biographical accounts demonstrate the link between individual's move and the motive to achieve.

By way of concluding this paper, it must be cautioned here that a comprehensive analysis of the practical consciousness of these (forced) migrants would require more detailed documentation of incidences of temporal social interactions, and analysis of actions and conversations in which they were involved. However, such an analysis would demand more resources than was available to this project. Within the limitations of this study, it is not intended to claim that the different trajectories have revealed in detail all aspects of the practical consciousness of the interviewees. Rather by approaching the issue from various angles for every life stage as defined by the interviewees, it has been able to begin to trace the taken for granted values which shaped the meaning of their mobility decisions, and way in which their values and goals developed over time or across geographical boundaries.

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Beyond the 'Genius of Suffering'

The paradox of an alienated border regime: Refugee Integration and social transformation in cross-border Dagana (Senegal-Mauritania)

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Abstract

This paper seeks to understand border regimes from the perspective of refugees as part of a border people which agency can reveal the close relationship between border regimes and refugee regimes. It analyses the transformative potentials and realizations of refugee practices in local integration and their effects on the nature and role of borders as well as on refugee regimes. Focussing on the experience of a refugee community based in the cross-border zone of Dagana between Senegal and Mauritania, it contends that refugees are agentless even in the context of closed boundary regime. On the contrary, refugee agency has proven effective and even theoretically useful in understanding the character and dynamic of border regimes. As authentic and legitimate actors of local integration refugees participate in the transformation of host communities and the border regions they live in. Incidentally, they impact on the boundary regime however rigid or closed it has proven to be in. The empirical study of the transformative impact of refugees' strategies within their host communities and in the borderland local system of action reveal the various ways in which successive local integration transforms both the refugee and border regimes to extent that formal assistance and the underlying border regime are relatively challenged.

Keywords: Border regime – Refugee – Refugee Integration – Social transformation – Dagana.

Introduction

Partition has never been an absolute reality in Africa; like in many other places in the world, people permanently challenge imposed state borders through various social, cultural, economic and political activities (Asiwaju 1985). Notwithstanding this breakthrough into the enquiry of postcoloniality, some groups of people are still deemed unable to significantly challenge state borders. Because they are minorities residing outside or inside state borders, though most of the time systematically settling along or across them, refugees for example have been portrayed as deprived of agency in bordering processes. Implicitly problematic is the assumption that while border regimes define refugee regime, it is inversely unlikely that refugees have much to do with border regimes.

In this paper, I want to 'go against this trend' by building on the growing literature within refugee and border studies that provides material for the agency and impact of refugees in border regions and regimes. The issue I address is the implications on the nature and role of borders of the integration of Mauritanian refugees in Northern Senegal. The question is how such integration has been possible despite a structurally closed border regime, and how it impacted on the latter. Unexpectedly, despite this rigid border regime and their rather successful local integration, Mauritanian refugees in Senegal paradoxically show an attachment to their national identity and their 'country of origin', to use a more neutral term than 'home' or 'place'.

I first provide an analytical framework within which to situate my empirical enquiry, to address the theoretical issue of the relationship between border regime and asylum regime. Second, I characterize the border

regime between Senegal and Mauritania in the *longue durée* and the subsequent refugee regime it has yielded. Third, I will evoke the settlement and integration of the refugees in Northern Senegal and specify the way and the extent to which their agency has been impacting on the border regime and shaping the policies of neighbouring states and / or local constituencies.

Border regime and Refugee regime: Looking for Reciprocal Linkages

The reflection I engage here goes above border regimes and their effect on refugees. I am much more concerned with how refugees appropriate border and refugee policies and inversely claim and exert agency that impacts border regimes.

Ultimately, I look at the implications of these on the meaning and role of border regimes. To engage with these theoretical issues I have formulated an empirical question: why has a deportation project, which has been a result and a vector of nationalism and racism towards some ethnic groups, resulted in a greater desire for national recognition from these groups, and despite their being integrated in the host community on the other side of the border? Tackling this question and the underlying theoretical challenges entails anchoring it in an analytical framework that lays out meeting points between refugee agency and Border Studies, or, if more convenient, venture an excursion in the *border studies of refugees*.

Analytical framework: cross-border Dagana in historical perspective

Perhaps, to capture what *border regime* might extensively encapsulate this may help us distinguish between and link¹ *boundary regime* and *borderland regime*. This seems to be more socially expressive and comprehensive in capturing our idea of refugees as actors in their integration, reacting to border and borderland opportunity structures before, during and after asylum, and striking back to country of origin through identity and practical activities. In that sense, asylum regimes that can influence border regimes are those that emerge from or are built on social transformation of border areas in which refugees' agency and integration is an integral element.

Analysing Border and Asylum Regimes

The performative assumption of this study is the occurrence of a refugees and hosts' appropriated asylum regime in the context of a closed border regime to the extent that social transformation in host place and communities is fostered and national identification nurtured among exiles. In a nutshell, the refugee regime must have grown to some extent independently from the state and relief driven system and presupposes, in this case, a mismatch between the border regime and borderland dynamics. In other words, the key variable for assessing a border regime being its openness (Rietveld 2001), the borderland regime in cross-border Dagana is linked to the degree to which this variable behaves in relatively extended timeline.

¹ As Dereje and Hoehne have noted, "borders and borderlands mutually define one another – the existence of the border constitutes the borderland" (Dereje and Hoehne 2008:2).

Speaking in terms of “cross-border-ness” in Dagana means approaching border and borderland regimes in a postmodern perspective in which the functions of the border are defined beyond their institutional nature and role, by their being social constructs involving the formation of discourse and social representations and practices or activity. The notions of ‘activity space’ (Breitung 2009:104), ‘borderlands milieu’ (Martinez 1994:8-14), ‘border landscape’ (Rumley and Minghi 1991) and ‘border region’ all refer to the conception of borders and borderlands as objects moulded by human and physical environments and, incidentally, as places of social activity. To relate this to our view of refugees’ agency as being potentially transformative at both levels of identity and practice, I will go beyond the institutional character of borders to define border and borderland regimes. That is why I will resort to Kolossov’s recent and comprehensive review of postmodern approaches (Kolossov 2005) that do shift from state usage of borders to people’s relation and resourcing them (Dereje and Hoehne 2008).

In his article Kolossov provides a threefold frame of analysis that is perhaps theoretically relevant to my aim of how better to use already existing typologies of border and borderland regime². What he calls the Policy-Practice-Perception (PPP) approach works as a

synthesis of the latest theoretical achievements with traditional approaches [...] in particular the *functional* approach. From this perspective, the boundary is not simply a legal institution designed to ensure integrity of state territory, but a product of social practice (in terms of H. Lefebvre), the result of a long historical and geographical development, an important symbolical marker of ethnic and political identity (Kolossov 2005:625).

This approach takes into account boundaries as well as the social representations and meanings they are given (*perceptions*) and the activity of people in border regions or across the border (*practice*), of course besides institutional and political instrumentations endorsed by state agencies or driven or sponsored by them (*policies*). Again, in terms of relevance to our analytical framework, this approach integrates the historical and spatial dimensions of border and borderland regimes as well as refugee and host agency. If borders as ‘processes’ – and not only ‘institutions’ (Anderson 1996) – serve policy aims and interests, define nationals in relation to others, and cristallise “narratives of nationalism and identity” (Donnan and Wilson 1999:5), they are also the products of interactions between states and peoples in border regions, including refugees. As such they emerge out from the “economic and social history of borderland localities” and reflect the “experiences” and activities of the border people, including again refugees (Donnan and Wilson 1999:51). If applied to the linkage between border/borderland regime and refugee regime, the operational manifestation of this approach would be as follows.

First, *policy* comprises border and refugee policy of state, relief agencies’ interventions, and depending on these, the governance actions of state and non-state actors in local constituencies of borderlands (local governments, local traditional authorities). *Policy* displays then at different levels and, depending on these

² Yet, I must pay tribute to the author and make it clear that, besides the numerous important advantages of this approach, he has listed a comprehensive list of remaining challenges that border researchers have to face.

and the various actors, they aim at different objectives. These levels and objectives overall relate to “state, international, institutional and legal infrastructures ensuring transboundary flows and determining the relationships between the barrier and the contact functions of the border” (Kolossoff 2005:626), in other words, the *openness* of the boundary (boundary regime) and the *type of interaction* among borderlanders (borderland regime)³.

Second, *practice* refers to border activities or, “transboundary flows, informal networks [in business, politics, culture, etc.], local authorities, NGO’s, populations, etc.” (Kolossoff 2005: 626). This range of activities happening on the ‘activity space’ (Breitung 2009) straddling the boundary are influenced by the boundary regime and the type of interaction among border people and states across the border and from within centres. However, border activity is determined by the boundary regime, which, in its turn, may be influenced by the former (Kolossoff 2005: 626).

Third, *perception* consists of the character, the evolution and the channels of influence of social representations on the boundary/borderland. It also includes the imaginations and meanings about relations between neighbouring states and regions or communities, about the cross-border type of interaction (borderland regime) and the ‘high’ and ‘low’ geopolitics⁴ of the states and border regions. Therefore, it is about how state policy at local, national and international levels is perceived and given meaning by elites as well as people or communities. The role of the boundaries being differently interpreted by various social groups and cross-border actors, social representations about boundaries constitute an element of ethnic and national identity (Kolossoff 2005:625).

Perception, policy and *practice* can be clustered in the simplified framework by Dereje and Hoehne (2008) in how they all constitute and shape boundary and borderland resourcing. We already referred to “resourcing borders” through *identitary* activities (termed as “identity resources” by Dereje and Hoehne (2008)) in which I classify “status and rights resources”⁵ and *material* or *practical* activities (economic, political resources). Furthermore, these three categories are more fundamentally useful in suggesting that the border regime is indeed the dialectical relationship between boundary regime (*policy*) and borderland regime (*practice* and *perception*), a relationship subject to change and involving both state agencies and border people as well as relief agencies. In other words, in its historicity and spatial manifestation, the border regime always contains patterns of refugee action and host communities through local integration. In

³ According to Breitung (2009) citing Ritveld (2001) “a key variable for assessing a border regime is its *openness* (Ritveld 2001, my italics), which takes economic and psychological deterrents as well as legal or physical barriers into account. The principle being that more open a border regime is, the less it deters cross-border interaction (Breitung 2009:104).

⁴ *Low geopolitics* refers to the set of “concepts, symbols and images forming the world vision” while *high geopolitics* “general and strategic issues: world order, structure of international system, etc. (Kolossoff 2005: 624-625, my italics). This world vision is shaped by the national history and culture which is in turn a product of policy, i.e. the use of the border, education, etc.

⁵ Contrary to what is suggested from the authors’ classification, I believe that status and rights resources are endowed by national belonging therefore which is but a specific form of identity. Citizenship is a social status defined by law, a law of rights which is also produced according to and for the sake of what is deemed national. Citizenship comprises rights as well as a role that depends on these rights and secures them through compliance with the law and identity of the nation-state.

terms of this action and its impact, it is bound to such relationship correspondence (and not equilibrium) between boundary regime and borderland regime.

The question is then to what extent refugee integration as a result and indicator of social transformation in border regions can affect this relationship? In which way affecting this relationship favours borderland regime upon boundary regime (i.e. against the state and border and refugee and aid agencies policies and perceptions) or the way other (i.e. border people and refugee practices and perceptions)? In which way does the asylum regime as an instance and, perhaps, product of social transformation – both including refugee and host agency – balance or not with the relationship between boundary regime and borderland regime? It is these questions that are underlying our empirical research question, which is to make sense of refugees' integration and incidental (paradoxical?) feeling of "going national". This is what the next section is all about while it starts with squeezing the day-to-day border and asylum regimes in cross-border Dagana from this analytical framework.

Instable Cross-border Dagana: Between Alienation and Coexistence

The analytical framework above yields the following empirical relationship between border, borderland and asylum regimes. As suggested by the analytical framework, this relationship of border and asylum regimes is rooted in the economic and social history of policies, perceptions and practices which are all to be appreciated from the different local, national and international scales. It is accordingly that I present the empirical border regime in its *longue durée* and spatial range, as a social historical backdrop to the occurrence and character of the refugee problem.

Moments of Border Regime: Archaeology of the Refugee Problem

It can be argued that the refugee problem facing Senegal and Mauritania since 1989 is closely related to the type of border regime that exists between the two countries and their 'peripheral' communities. I attempt an archaeology of the refugee problem through the political and social history of the border regime. In studying the refugee problem from a geographical perspective, Santoir (1998) clearly notes that "its structural causes are the history, the identity crisis plaguing Mauritania since independence, and the consequences of physical and economic environmental changes" (Santoir 1998:95)⁶. Marion Fresia (2006, 2009) and Marianne Marty (2003:499-500, 506) also agree that national history and identity have cross-fertilized with eco-political traps and cooked up the refugee problem that is indeed synonymous to a national divide. Punctuated with some historical and political turns towards rapprochement between the two states, the border regime has overall remained unstable through time with a highly instrumental use of the boundary regime, subsequently generating a borderland regime that is socially ossified and economically competitive and extraverted.

⁶ For this section, I extensively borrow from these authors' comprehensive research from geographical, political sociology and critical anthropological perspectives of the refugee and, to a lesser extent, border situations in the Senegal River Valley.

The *Pre-colonial moment* is one of ambivalence with a very loose and functionally malleable openness. Such ambivalence is reflected in the maintenance of instability through political alliances and some adjustments to environmental and political changes. Ancestors of the Moors of present day Mauritania, the Sanhaja Berbers allied with the Tekrur Empire (Wolof and Sereer) on arrival on the right bank in the 10th century in order to expand their trade economy. But they brought along Islam, which has had an important stabilising effect on political and economic intercourses. This relative stability is disrupted by two events: first, the progressive drying up of the Sahara and a long period of droughts that have moved the Moors southward in the right bank occupied by negro-Africans; second, in the 16th century the river becomes an entrance route for the expanding European (Portuguese and French) trade economy. This opens up a long period of instability and wars for the control of the river as a commercial route and its banks as an economic centre. Moors increase pressure but will not secure grasp of the Valley until in late 18th century thanks to alliances with France and Moroccans.

The *colonial moment* (17th and 20th centuries) introduces the border as a new phenomenon of social relations and political order making. The river then functions as the physical boundary. In late 19th century, military colonisation is engaged to tighten economic occupation. The left bank is declared part of the new French Protectorate, without a real border being enacted in the place of a simple waterline having a fiscal function of taxation from the land tenure and trade routes. In reality, France shared power in its strategy to establish a minimally stabilised regime of extraction. Moors were allowed taxes on the land cultivated by Blacks coming from the left bank. When this bank became integrated in the Protectorate, Black assistants (Wolof and Fulbe) were fighting for the French against warring Moors tribes (Haratin). The latter arranged new alliances with France to accommodate with the long hegemony of the colonial power over local political economy. Though they progressively recovered the right bank, Moors will not take a full control of it before the beginning of the 19th century – thanks to agreements between *zawiyas* and the French administration – and ended up expulsing Black Africans in the left bank. Hence the belief today that South Mauritania is for the Beydan and therefore for Mauritania. Especially as the same memorial narrative depicts Negro-Africans as only imposed at the time by France in local administration, not to mention the enslaving image of this assistantship to 'faithless' white masters. In late colonization, when France conquered both banks of the river, land problems irrupted as Blacks did not want to pay taxes any more to Moors. This precedent constitutes the reference of memory narratives of Blacks' ancestry as first sedentary settlers in South Mauritania (Marty 2003:506) – as opposed to the Moors nomadic rationale of territory – as the land of ancient Kingdoms of the *Almamy* and *Saltigi* of Tekrur and Futa.

Constituting the context of emergence of the refugee problem the *postcolonial moment* is that of the nationalist border regime. The background issue and driver of the refugee problem are internal politics of ethnic power relationships within the state apparatus and processes of accumulation and production. This is manifested through national and foreign policies strongly mobilising and affecting the border regime to the extent that the whole postcolonial era is made of at least 20 or so tremendous developments such that capturing the border regime is a real hassle. However, a couple of time intervals (1960-65 and 1966-2011)

can be located within it, while both are mutually reinforcing through the same thread of the ethnicization of state building.

Between 1960 and 1965 the new regime of Mohamed Ould Daddah has been slowly redirecting Mauritania towards the Arab World. The tactfulness of the newly independent state owes much to the southern origins of the President and the ethnically spiced colonial legacy that entrusts Moors with political power⁷ while leaving the administration and the army to Black Africans. The boundary in the River Valley is left open and cross-border fluxes essentially oriented towards agro-pastoral and commercial exploitation by Moors and Black Africans as well as Senegalese. Understanding the components of colonial legal is important in making sense of the border regime as a backdrop of the emergence of the refugee problem and the asylum regime that has been governing it. Basically, this colonial legacy was just reset for the orchestration of a plan aiming at removing Black Africans from the state apparatus and, in the process, entitles them with all property rights and accumulation resources (Santoir 1993; Marty 2003:499; Fresia 2006).

As of 1966, a general national policy framework introduces new high geopolitics that reshapes or even turns national politics of unity and identity upside down. Though slavery has been abolished twice in 1960 and 1964⁸, consisting of diplomatic reconnections with the Arab world, arabisation officially takes off with a series of legislatures, and internal and external⁹ policy programs. Education, land, economy are the main domains wherein policy reforms and regulations targeted or impacted significantly the border regime used by the way as an instrument of decolonisation.

In 1966, a military coup against moderate founding father is followed by a presidential decree imposing Arabic as an official language and medium of education and stirs the resentment of Black Africans¹⁰ who are nearly exclusively francophone. The latter are drawn to rekindle their bonds with Sub-Saharan countries as a way of thwarting the new racial politics. It is this re-bordering on the cultural scene that will shape the future political struggles over national identity which the refugee problem and asylum regime of today epitomise and are logical outcomes (Santoir 1998:97).

The whole story of postcolonial border regime sums up in a binary process of state adjustment to multispectral changes and perceptions and responses of the people to this political footwork. Important in these changes are the economic and environmental predicaments such as the 1972 droughts that had driven many Mauritania's dry lands and nomad populations people towards the River Valley, while the same process was happening on the left bank in Senegal. Subsequent rural drain towards urban centres of the

⁷ This handover was even instated before independence through political alliances and trade agreements and arrangements between warlike Moors tribes and colonial administrators (see Santoir 1990:600).

⁸ Slavery was first penalised by French colonial empire in 1904. This new act translated a vision of the first president of Mauritania as a cultural and territorial borderland (he referred to it in French as the "trait d'union" (the hyphen) between the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa (see Marty 2003:499; Ammour 2010:2).

⁹ A first move within this new high geopolitics is Mauritania's decision of 1975 to get involved in the Western Sahara War for possible shares after alliance with Morocco becomes triumphant.

¹⁰ Perhaps it is time to distinguish within this ethnic whole the Wolof (farmers), the Soninke (farmers and traders) and the Fulani, and within the Fulani sub-group the Fulbe (pastoralist) and the Toucouleur (agro-pastoralist).

border (Rosso, Dagana, Dodel, Boghé, etc.) increased pressure on the wet lands of the River Valley and its fishery reserves. This situation gets worse when in 1983 and 1984 new droughts drive a new wave of Moors to a sedentary and de-pastoralised way of life in the already resource depleting southern border towns. Long term effects of such environmental migrations fuel rapid urbanisation that undercuts unemployment and sharpens economic crisis in the River Valley.

Parallel to national policy reforms, core foreign policy directions have had the effect of sharpening the lines of interstate remoteness. In 1977, Mauritania withdraws from the CFA monetary zone as a way of handling worsening economic crisis. The same reason may have explained its withdrawal from the ECOWAS¹¹ in 1998. Of particular question is whether this decision has been driven by national dynamics of Arabisation or an economic and geopolitical vision, especially as the government pledges Western powers to mention Mauritania as a North African country¹².

Just as the changes they are meant to address and like the foreign policy extra measures, government reactions to such structural and cyclical patterns in terms of indoor political reforms did not alter the scene. Instead, they stretched the perceptions of national and geopolitical divides and added to the incremental dynamics of border closure and borderland ossification. First of these reforms, the land act of 1983 raises the issue of the boundary though it is deemed to address food insecurity in Mauritania. While the river had been declared an international property between neighbouring countries in 1972, this reform basically targets Black Africans' traditional collectivist and usufruct system of land tenure. Relevant to borderlanders and how they resource the border-land as an opportunity is the fact that this act hits both farmers and land owners, Mauritians on the left and Senegalese on the right one¹³.

Incremental are the 1984 structural adjustment programs that enforce liberalisation and privatisation of agriculture by the new president Taya established following a coup against the regime of Ould Haidallah deemed too much sympathetic to Blacks and their Moors marabouts in the Trarza. Mainly aimed at legitimising and stabilising his regime backed by Bassist and Nasserite groups of the political and intellectual Moors elites, Taya's reform empowers Beydan private investors given that they are the only ones able to fill the conditions of exploitation of the River Valley land. As a result, the racial undertone of this reform translated into several violations¹⁴ as of 1985, due to the progression of Arab-Berber private sector in land tenure. The same year Mauritania disputes the boundary line and anticipates the contentious issue of cross-border nationals. Both affairs are entitled to inter-state commissions for swift handling (Seck

¹¹ Economic Community of West African States.

¹² Most importantly, this has yielded new economic and monetary differentials across the river as well as reinforced perceptions and beliefs of an intention to remove Mauritania from Black Africa and expel Negro-Africans from their country. These are translated into perceived barriers through the new cleavages of North and South inside and outside Mauritania. Apart from external developments, domestic instability underscores the intensity of political disagreements and strife over national identity and policy choices.

¹³ The estimates of this group of cross-border land owners and farmers was 30 000 individuals in 1972, with the majority comprising mainly the Toucouleur farming on the right bank (Santoir 1998:101).

¹⁴ Santoir (1998: 101) mentions precarious documents of title, illegal occupation, predation of forestry reserves, and law enforcement by local controlled prefects according to the criteria of effective exploitation.

2005:222). However, the latter case of “cross-border peasants” (Seck 1991) falls under the consideration of a bilateral follow-up Committee which task is to inventory cultivated land in view of a transfer of patrimonies (Santoir 1998:101.). Instead, this developed into an inter-national border dispute¹⁵ that in reality serves as an occasion to dig out the 1985 case despite clear legal frameworks and jurisprudence arbitration.

Six years after the *Front de Libération des Africains de Mauritanie* (FLAM) had been founded in 1983 as the political organ of Black Africans’ nationalist struggle, on 9 April 1989, Mauritanian soldiers fired on farmers of the Senegalese village of Diawara for cattle which had been retained by the former to protect their farm. Two are shot dead and 13 made prisoners. This event links with previous popular appropriations of inter-state boundary-driven antagonisms such as the 1988 riots against Moors shopkeepers in Podor and Matam (Seck 2005:221-22). Instrumentalised by warlike governments and ethnic and economic lobbies in both countries (pro-Arabs in Mauritania and land owners in Senegal) this inter-village incident was the last straw (Santoir 1998:102). In responding to this isolated event, Senegalese locals of border towns inaugurated the generalised “events” that will move more than 120,000 refugees on both sides. While intercommunity slaughter and physical butchering¹⁶ were raging in urban towns of the two neighbouring countries, but higher in scale in Mauritania, diplomatic relations were totally severed not until 1991 and have not stabilised ever since¹⁷.

Armed forces in Mauritania continued exactions until 1992 which they had been used to since the regime of Taya where the eviction of Blacks from state apparatus was methodically instated (Fresia 2008, Marty 2003:499). But, this time around people, mainly the Fulbe and the Toucouleur, are first herded in police stations, despoiled of their documents and goods: cattle, savings, equipments, shops, etc. (Fresia 2008; Santoir 1998:103, 1990:577-78).

Cross-border Dagana: Twin-towns Broken Apart by Deportation

I want to derive from the boundary regime above the borderland regime in local cross-border Dagana. Expectedly, that will help understand the drivers and character of refugee integration and the extent of the impact of such agency on border regime. In effect, of importance for the refugee problem and asylum regime is how a “historically unstable” boundary regime has impacted the borderland interactions.

¹⁵ Mauritanian government refused to acknowledge that the incident took place on Senegal’s national territory. The laborious talks led the two neighbours to the United Nation before Mauritania decided to withdraw from the isle of Doundé Khoré where is located the village of Diawara, and Senegal reinforced its presence with army deployment (Seck 2005:222).

¹⁶ Santoir (1998) mentions torture and exactions involving army in Mauritania and police in Senegal: 3000 Blacks were arrested between 1990-91 and more than 500 killed in 1993 in Mauritania (Santoir 1998:107).

¹⁷ The following couple of decades have been earmarked by several border tensions that concern as various domains as maritime waters and boundaries, fishery resources and fishing itineraries, internal use of the river and other high geopolitical and security issues such as rearmament. Expectedly, Mauritania, and Gambia as well, reacted fiercely to President Wade’s public announcement made in 2000 in which he was complaining about the “powder pot on which Senegal was sat” and that he would straightaway equip the army. Since then many other disagreements dampened bilateral relations: Senegal’s project of a new channel from the river to the peanut basin (2002), border tensions around transportation, maritime border resources (2003, 2005, 2009, 2010, and 2011). Currently a new border dispute on transportation is linked to Senegal’s lack refusal to vote for Mauritanian non permanent membership in United Nations Security Council.

Rather than cooperation and integration, the borderland regime is swaying between 'alienation' and 'coexistence' (Martinez 1994; Donnan and Wilson 1999:51). Patterns of alienation and coexistence prevail at the same time with the ones dominating the others depending on situations. It is this fact that I referred to as the *historical instability* of the border regime. Because of frequent tensions and animosity between respective states and/or border populations, routine cross-border exchange is prevented, not permanently but most of the time, and never are borderlanders and other border outsiders able to foresee the disruption of border flows, not even anticipate bilateral crises.

Following the events of 1989, Senegal and Mauritania have both militarised their boundaries with Mauritania deploying soldiers along security forces until 1996 and Senegal using more its border police and customs. Senegal and Mauritania may be the only collaborating states in the region which foreign policy is presidentialised and settled more by an inter-state committee than at intergovernmental level. In addition, though it does exist, day-to-day interaction across the borderline is minimal. Today the border post of Rosso is the only corridor open between the two countries while the crossing points that proliferated along the river since times immemorial have been suppressed to their maximum. The few ones that remain today are gunshot or strictly policed with time-taking procedures and requirements. Clearly, all the sphere of policy occurs to borderlanders (including refugees) as a wider elaborate set up dedicated to de-nationalise Black Africans.

Already, in cross-border Dagana – both in urban town of Dagana and in rural village of Gaya – consequences in borderland regime basically cristallise on the perceived “national divide” based on cultural and even racial bordering the policy realm has been nurturing between Beydan, Haratin, and Negro-Africans (Fulani, Wolof, and Soninke) within Mauritania and between Black Africans of both neighbouring countries (Fresia 2006; Santoir 1998). Though disheartening to borderlanders – Dagana had been the main trading and administrative post of the colonial administration and was made a town at independence¹⁸ - the borderland regime is described as follows by the Prefect of Dagana:

The crossing of the river is determined by a convention that has been signed at the level of governments of the neighbouring states. We sensitise our peoples to prompt them to use the normal tract in order to circulate freely without prejudice to the sovereignty of states. The normal route is to request from the prefecture a circulation permit and pay 150 CFA. Despite such measures, we find it hard to avoid disputes as clandestine crossing is favoured by the locals, though the gendarmerie and the border police as well as the customs are there to ward off violations and smuggling. Local councils around here also indulge in sensitisation to foster statutory circulation.

This reflects a situation of coexistence where neighbouring states reduce their tensions to a manageable level, “tolerate violations of their sovereignty along borders, as long as these violations are not made public and do not become part of political conflicts” (Nugent 2008:495, Donnan and Wilson 1999:51), public here

¹⁸ The former village has been erected a commune on 1February 1960 and Makha Sarr from the socialist party at the time was elected first deputy and mayor of the town.

meaning inter-state and political conflicts referring to bilateral skirmishes. Patterns of coexistence are reduced to illicit interactions mostly, as the Prefect suggests:

The problem with such clandestine crossing is that it is a guise to smuggling. But we don't spare our sanctions as we must preserve our national economy. We are doing our best to deal with this plight though we know it is not possible to eradicate it! We give firm orders about that to crash trouble-makers and contain harms on national economy. If it happens that nationals from either country violate statutory regulations, jointly or not, we make sure that law is effective.

Interactions never happen indeed outside illegality and no cooperation exists as it used to be, apart from few contacts before the arrival of Ould Taya in 1984. Serving on the spot since 1996, the Secretary of the Municipality of Dagana sums up this coexistence pattern:

Since my arrival I have never attended a meeting gathering the two constituencies of Dagana-Mauritania and Dagana-Senegal. I am not aware of any organism or authority of our commune entitled with such collaborative tasks with the other bank. On the contrary, even if the worst, there is no contact, though seemingly peace has come back between the two countries... hey! I must say that is just apparent! I must acknowledge that there is still a feeling of distrust and defiance on both sides. In reality, the impression is that since 1989 the page has not been turned over for good. Indeed we have very limited encounters and it's all about crossing the river. Besides that, nothing else!

A sound difference exists on border regimes of urban and rural Dagana. While illegality is common to both border areas, in the rural border village of Gaé, 5 km away to the north, and Gani there is a clandestine crossing post tolerated by local authorities of Mauritania and looked after by the Senegalese local council. Reasons of this rural exception are mainly economic and have to do with patron-clients relationships linking the latter with government officials and business men in the heartland:

The Mauritanian Government prefers to keep a blind eye on this situation that is the result of local arrangements that regard notabilities and formal authorities. The clandestine landing stage is close to the national road while cross-border trade, agriculture and fishing depend a lot on its existence. People farm, fish and trade along and across the river. Fishing is more rewarding on Mauritanian waters and fishing agreements at government level are favourable to borderlanders since as they concern only maritime fishing. Such clandestinely arranged order does not encourage cross-border cooperation between administrative authorities, exactly because it would be questioned. The bulk of cross-border trade is illicit around here. Inhabitants of Gaé who work in Gani send back money to their families in the form of provisions and goods that are cheaper there. The closure of this landing stage would be seriously damaging for the fragile order around here as we are still facing the challenges of deportation and Mauritanian soldiers have just left in 2007. Some returnees have their kids still going to school in Gaé and we in Gani cross over to Gaé for sanitation. Ours here is 12 km far away and expensive¹⁹.

¹⁹ I. Seck, village chief of Gani, interviewed by author in Mauritania on 18 July 2010. But there is another strong variable that structures this local order making which is religion. Gaye is a religious town founded in 1826 by Madickou Koura Guèye Fall after a forced migration from Gani formerly called Kajaar and inhabited by the Wolof and kin of Mandickou. Following several unsuccessful attempts to fight back the Moors tribes in their village of Kajaar they decided to cross the river and settle on the left bank and found the village of Gaye. The notability Madiakher Seck (forefather of interviewee I. Seck) was second village chief after Mandickou with whom he had fought Moors in the army of *almamy* Abdou Khadre. After this displacement, Kajaar was renamed Gani by Moors. The Wolof returned after Mauritania was under total colonial rule in the late 19th century. Today Blacks in Gani are allied with leaders of the southern Mauritanian religious brotherhoods. Today Gaye welcomes one of most important

As a result of this border regime, the current crisis between Mauritania and Senegal on trade and transportation²⁰ is seen as a falling under the exclusive authority of governments. Local authorities on both sides – they are never seen around in Dagana-Mauritania – simply handle daily emergencies and struggle against smuggling. It is in this context that the deported of the 1989 events moved from one side to the other along with other “refugees” newly resettled from other parts of Mauritania and Senegal.

Accordingly, how such alienated coexistence is perceived by borderlanders and how such perceptions resurface and circulate across the border is of much relevance to refugees’ settlement, agency, integration, and eventual impact on border regime.

The Genius of Success: From Deportation to Recognition

After a brief introduction to the settlement of refugees in Dagana-Senegal and Dagana-Mauritania (for the returnees of 2010), I will link this border regime to the asylum regime of that has developed from the policy framework of the relief industry, all the more as both regimes are drivers of refugee integration and social transformation in the borderland.

Exiles at “Home”

Santoir (1990) pinpointed the strong cultural and linguistic similarities across the border (Santoir 1990:587). Invoking these cultural patterns, Marion Fresia (2006) wrote about Fulani refugees in Ndioum and Matam that they “did not arrive in an unknown place” (Fresia 2006:2). Just as their forefathers, as I also explained above, farmers as well as cattle breeders used to come and go across the river, from one bank to the other where they had their various livelihoods making activities. However, prefiguring the complexity of the refugee problem in Dagana, exiles that poured in as of 1989 were not all “refugees” in the conventional sense of the term.

Refugee Figures and Settlements

The situation in Dagana does not really differ much from those in other places of the River Valley. Just as the sites of Matam, Ndioum and Thillé Boubacar that previously and extensively received the attention of other authors (Fresia 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009; Marty 2003; Santoir 1990, 1998, Seck 1991), Dagana had its share of exiles estimated at 3000 in urban Dagana and 1000 in rural Gaé (Trémolières and Gnisci 2004:30).

religious events in Senegal for the Tidjane brotherhood which founder Cheikh El Hadj Malick Sy was born in this border village in 1855 the day French colonial army led by Faidherbe entered Gaye.

²⁰ Mauritania has decided – the official reason is illegal migration and security policy – that Senegalese transporters do not cross any more the border in Rosso. Called the “load break dispute”, this measure decreases earnings for traders and transporters and threatens too perishable products and is time-stealing for passengers who find transportation in Mauritania more expensive and very corrupt. Senegalese transporters have fiercely demanded from their government to apply the reciprocity measure, which is likely to happen given the strength of the national union. Unless Mauritania defers it’s policy move. The case is still pending as we are writing.

Among them was a first group of deported (nationals of Mauritania having but remote ties with local Senegalese hosts), a second group of repatriated (nationals of Senegal who resided and were having jobs in Mauritania) and a third group of intruders or expelled (Senegalese “cross-border peasants” (Seck 1991; Trémolières and Gnisci 2004; Seck 2005) who had farming land on the right bank) (Santoir 1998:107). This influx does not only concern exiles from the other side in Dagana-Mauritania but also “refugees” from other parts of Mauritania relocated in this border town from the Senegalese cities of Thiès and Dakar²¹.

The site of the urban town of Dagana we have worked on was a cluster of a couple of camps which sociological differences are not only evocative of the politicised dimension of the refugee problem and how it resembles an ethnic trimming of the state apparatus in Mauritania. Such variability in the profiles and settlements also indicates how difficult the refugee problem would become appropriated by host communities and political structures. The first camp to be set up was named the “camp des autres” (Others’ camp) gathering illiterates and a bulk from the Wolof and some Fulbe nomadic pastoralist. The second camp of Dagana 2 was called the “camp des intellectuels” (intellectuals’ camp) because it gathered deported civil servants and literate and educated Senegalese from the public or business sector in Mauritania. Ethnically, this “elites’ camp” was composed of a bulk from the Toucouleur. A few among the deported in this camp were former farmers along with most of the Senegalese intruders and repatriated. Another distinction is between those who have been totally despoiled (intellectuals and Fulbe stock breeders), those who have been warned of unrest and could save some baggage, and those who left before the events with property and baggage (Santoir 1990: 587). There was none from the last group in the Dagana urban camps.

As regards rural Gaé, refugee M. Sarr and former agent of the Senegal UNHCR office and of the NGO OFADEC²²-Senegal meaningfully captures the situation as follows:

We had a lot of predicaments to face on arrival and they pertained to the way things happened there in 1989. I would say that there is God’s will behind the events. Yet many people did not have time to realise that. They just rose up and started butchering and humiliating the luckier and expropriating them, without showing any respect to the human being they were. Mauritania considered all the deported as Senegal’s nationals that is why it immediately broke ties with them here. She had expelled its own citizens! Like my father, I was born there on the bank in the village of Gani and grew up there and knew nowhere else prior to deportation. Can you imagine when one day someone wakes up and asks you to belong and live somewhere you knew nothing about? (M. Sarr, refugee in Gaé, interviewed on 17 July 2010).

Refugee Regime: Politicised Formal Assistance vs. Local Community Appropriation

As a result of the border regime described in the previous section and the nature of deportation, the refugee regime in Cross-border Dagana has been politicised by the web of actors involved from the local to the national and global levels. Arguably, this is perhaps the most prominent pattern of the refugee situation

²¹ Overall the influx of the whole administrative region of Dagana was settled in 47 sites amongst the 276 (Santoir 1998) or 280 (Fresia 2006, 2009) sites along the border (see Landstrom 2002: 20; Santoir 1998: 107).

²² Office Africain pour le Développement et la Coopération.

therein as in all other sites from Saint-Louis to Bakel. Of particular notice is the illustrative fact that it started from deportation in the sense that the “campaign of terror” bred by the national identity contention induced the confiscation and/or destruction of certificates of birth of the expelled nationals (Lindstrom 2002:20). As they say, refugees did not flee either a war or a drought or famine (Santoir 1998:117): “we are nationals of a country which has never made efforts to accommodate us if it had never considered us as belonging there”²³.

At the national level, both governments not only did keep the relief system on the lead, but they also handled tightly the refugee associations and political organisations in Mauritania and Senegal. Because they are the most politically “dangerous” population of camps, the refugees of the “elites’ camp” in Dagana 2 were infiltrated and tightly watched from Mauritania and Senegal as well (Fresia 2006). Mauritania tried to divide refugees and weaken the national resonance of their ethnic nationalist organisation in the sites of Senegal by making the census of refugees drag along and disorganised between 1992 and 1995. Most refugees believe that the selective repatriation of the early 90s was simply meant to divide Blacks and refugee organisations, while those of today organised repatriation have been blocked over the issue of reparations meaning despoiling new riches and political clients that count for the weakened military and intellectual ruling ethnic²⁴. Senegal was seeking a diplomatic and strategic lever on Mauritania by instrumentalising refugee organisations through sponsors or depriving depending on bilateral relations and the global context. M. Harouna, a former civil servant who teaches now in the elites’ camp of Dagana 2, notes about state strategies within refugee regime:

Senegal has created OFADEC-Senegal to replicate OFADEC-Mauritania and both structures are dedicated to capturing external aid and to influence the UNHCR. Senegal sees refugees as a lever to put pressure upon and weaken its *rival-neighbour Mauritania* on the issue of the river waters. In its turn, Mauritania could see the question of repatriation as but a threat to the national project of arabisation. As a matter of fact Mauritania will never take us back! Every country could as well spy the UNHCR and sabotage its mission to its own neighbourhood politics. (M. Harouna, interviewed by author on 19 July 2010 in Dagana-Senegal (*Our italics*)).

From the perspective of the UNHCR and NGO’s, the disengagement of the former and retrieval or handover of the latter to local associations and governments (Trémolières and Gnisci 2004:30) is due to the drying of funds²⁵, but mainly to political pressure from western donors (aid as a lever to manage Nouakchott’s foreign policy (i.e. the Israel-Palestine issue, and democratisation options (Santoir 1998:114)). Neither Senegal nor Mauritania wanted to recognise refugees and bother the other (Fresia 2006, 2009; Santoir 1998:113). Refugees were rationed provisions²⁶ that decreased from 12 kg in 1989 to 9kg in 1993 and 7.5 kg before

²³ M. Bâ, charge nurse of the clinic of Dagana 2. Interviewed by author in his house, 18 July 2010.

²⁴ This is what explains the current numerous border crises with Senegal, commercial decisions are directed by business shares for these elite and local patrons (new riches) and clients (Haratin franchised and some Soninke and marabouts).

²⁵ In Dagana and other places along the left bank the World Food Program has been seen as to have defected the refugees even though it had been funding the fetching for the UNHCR and local NGO’s (See also Trémolières and Gnisci 2004:25).

²⁶ Provisions consist of 15 kg of red sorghum, sugar, salt and a litre of cooking oil.

complete stop in 1995. Some NGO's like the Red Cross felt they were "of hindrance to the UNCHR and contending governments" as says V. Diop²⁷ from the local Red Cross cell of Dagana.

Several justifications (a new phase of resettlement replaces emergency measures for some donors like the WFP) were given to the disengagement of the UNHCR and Western donors to conceal a strategy aimed at forcing refugees to repatriation in 1992. Ultimately, this would help hide or suppress the humanitarian 'black mark' and solve a conflict that was proving to be an increasingly serious threat to political democratisation in the post-Cold War context and foreign direct investments that had been achieved in the framework of new externally-driven privatizations²⁸. There was a hardly hidden shared intention of major external actors to keep the refugee problem invisible and win the donors' favour.

As concerns the local scale, the undeniable promptness of local peoples and authorities to help was not only an expression of kinship or philanthropic solidarity. Handover by humanitarian NGO's (OFADEC-Senegal, Red Cross) of relief interventions and subsequent channelling of donor funding, in such sectors as education and sanitation and support for income generating activities, were valid reasons of 'volunteering' by local governments. As we will see it later, the Dagana local government has done some arithmetic over the refugee "moral and social burden" as the Municipal Secretary Y. Samb told us. To local peoples, refugees meant an influx of disaster kin and of opportunity as well. They can share provisions and relieve from the burden of hard work in rural livelihood making.

These asymmetries in political priorities consequently left many issues either unattended or unresolved. Despite the 1991 Bissau agreement secretly patronised by France, the border dispute of 1989 that led to the massacres has been forgotten, whereas reparation failed as among the 2000 deemed to have left Dagana many have come back, while another few are plying between the two countries. The 30 ones that left Gaé for Gani did not cross-over before 2009 and are sometimes crossing back the river. The limited number of returns lies on the fact that the main contentious issues for repatriation are still pending as we will come back to that later. The humanitarian stalemate leaves us with the obvious question of how integration has been going since 1989 and how refugees and local hosts have been responding to the border and refugee regimes that have clearly affected both local borderland processes and refugees. More importantly to what extent do refugees' integration and agency have significantly or not impacted and triggered any changes in such regimes.

Refugee Integration: Practicing the Border, Transforming the Borderland

²⁷ Interviewed in Dagana-Senegal on 18 July 2010.

²⁸ This explains why the EU, probably dragged along by France, was often sanctioning Mauritania and putting pressure on Senegal.

To some extent, what Tara Polzer has called “invisible integration” may have applied at one time to refugees in the River Valley generally as we have seen in the conducts of various actors²⁹. Moreover, integration in cross-border Dagana develops as a social process in which concur three interrelated elements: the austerity of the refugee regime as described above, the refugees’ own perceptions of formal assistance policy and experience of deportation, and finally the host communities’ appropriative hospitality as I noted earlier. Before I proceed however, I need to craft out from the empirical borderland setting local integration as it could be precisely understood here.

Approaching Local Integration

Perhaps it is useful to recall the social and spatial conveniences of the concept of local integration to a border approach of refugee agency and integration. Referring back to our analytical framework, ‘locality’ indicates the borderland space as the core scale of policy and practice of different actors, of course without negating the externalities of this dynamic. The integration scale is therefore at the same time cross-border, national and transnational.

Besides the geo-spatial aspect of local integration as perceived here, a social-historical dimension involves much more than in situ and day-to-day inclusive experiences of refugees (Jacobsen 2001; Valtonen 2004). Policy outcomes or values of such day-to-day asylum processes may indeed derive much from wider policies of order making than mere relief as suggested by Jacobsen’s definition (2001). As it manifests on the borderlands and through the variety of refuge figures and spaces (crossing returnees), local integration also does not preclude either indefinite settlement in host community (Crisp 2004) or repatriation in country of origin (Polzer 2008a). Permanent asylum and repatriation can be coterminous with each other in borderland settings where they may be linking in a vicious circle³⁰. In this case, local integration seems more empirical than normative, contrary to what Crisp (2004) and Jacobsen (2001) suggest. Rather, it is a “social and political process of negotiating” modalities of social capital and cohesion such as inclusion, connections, possibilities, opportunities, and resources (Ager and Strang 2004:596-99; Polzer 2008a:3). These elements, in the case of borderlands and border peoples, suggest that refugee and host community favour in their social encounters flexibility and opportunism as well as socio-historical assets such as shared memory and culture.

Reassembling all these dimensions in a way as to cohere with our analytical framework and with the Policy-Practice-Perception model may entail thinking of local integration as does Polzer (2008a:8-14) and of resourcing borders as do Dereje and Hoehne (2008). First, local integration is more than assumed conformity or not with policy frameworks; it is a political process of *incorporating* exiles into a social and political cross-border community. Second, it may refer to *local actors* and their *interests* who may be both

²⁹ From an academic perspective, francophone studies from various disciplinary approaches have attempted to make “visible” refugee experience if not integration as such (see Santoir 1990, 1993, 1998; Gnisci et Trémolières 2004; Fresia 2004, 2006, 2009).

³⁰ In particular, when as in cross-border settings, both country of origin and host country offer different opportunities, like “some peace and stability” in the first country and different opportunities such as secured property and safety (Crisp 2004).

external formal masters of order making and internal various actors of the border landscape; it is therefore about *power relations* between stakeholders. Third, local integration involves *resources* refugees locate, mobilise and expect from the immediate host borderland community and space, or from remote transnational outsources. Fourth, local integration is about the *tactics and strategies* implied by resourcing processes and power relationships above. Fifth, local integration as apolitical dynamic cannot preclude *refugee rights* or what I referred to as *identity resources* in general following Dereje and Hoehne (2008) which are status and attached rights.

Among the sectors of local integration, “identity processes” or identity strategies of resourcing borders and asylum regimes raises the issue of citizenship. At this level, integration may be endangered if reduced to assimilation or acculturation (McPherson 2011; Strang and Ager 2011:592). However, more than a legal status perhaps, citizenship as a form of identity or belonging, is a role of engagement in civic and civil life without necessarily resting on status and rights (Smyth *et al.* 2011:412).

Of particular import is the comparative analysis that can be made of Polzer’s wider framework. It has been useful in distinguishing between urban and rural peculiarities of local integration in cross-border Dagana. Arguably, it is in this comparability amongst border refugee settings and processes that the transformative nature of local integration can be better grasped.

Refugees’ Political Awareness: From Assistance to Emancipation

I already hinted at, local integration is incepted at the interstices between the austerity of the asylum regime and refugees’ and hosts perceptions of such regime. Actually, I have already described the austerity of the asylum regime as a multi-scale and multi-actor process leading to the suppression of the political visibility of the refugee problem. Consequently, I will emphasize how perceptions of such austerity further make sense of and shape the personal initiatives and the process of refugee involvement in integration.

This limitation and the previously experienced origin and character of deportation have been structuring of the refugees’ perception and subsequent awareness of relief and of the challenges and responses to it.

The UNHCR can only help refugees survive from immediate emergency crisis. They did help us for a certain time, but since as it has stopped its emergency assistance since 1995 refugees make their living now by their own possibilities and means. (M. Harouna, refugee in Dagana, interviewed on 18 July 2010).

Reminiscent of the origin and violent character of deportation, the issue of national identity is also championed in the construction of perceptions of relief policy and the motivations for integration. The principle of assistance as such is resented and discarded shortly after (re)settlement of intellectual elites in Dagana, all the more than there was no welfare state as in northern Europe (Valenta and Bunar 2010).

We cannot forget that despite the hospitality kindly offered over here, space is limited in Gaé. We cannot all settle and live here for good and develop our various activities. However, we do not pretend that we will be provided everything we have been offered here in Senegal. This country is not to be compared with

Mauritania in terms of safety and mental and material well being. And here we can at least speak Wolof with no fear. (M. Sarr, refugee in Gaé, interviewed on 17 July 2010).

We want to be heard, we need that people feel we are back home. We are aware that we need to indulge in local politics if we want to be considered as a community which has its specific challenges and its own interests to safeguard! (F. Sarr, returned lady in Gani, interviewed 21 July 2010)

These accounts are cross-cutting on the assessment of the refugee problem and subsequent formal assistance in terms of how they triggered refugees' self awareness and political consciousness that drive them to get organised and involved in local politics. While for remaining refugees in Dagana and Gaé limited resources and possibilities count in spurring ideas of self-help, returnees on the right bank in the village of Gani show a more ambivalent experience. Though yearning for self-mobilisation and re-integration in home country at the same time, M. Sarr displays a sort of returned identity of self-defence and preservation. Her attitude may be explained by lack of consideration in home country on the one hand, and on the other, by opportunities still existing in host country and which were decisive in shaping her seemingly independent stance. This prompts us to consider the extent to which conditions in host community influenced refugees' imaginations and attitudes towards local integration.

Community Local Integration Championed: Hospitality and Appropriation

Valtonen (2004) insisted that attention should be also directed towards the institutional environment of receiving society in relation to the capacities of the settling refugees. In cross-border Dagana, integration of refugees draws not only from societal resources but also from local government and traditional powers. In rural villages of Gaé and opposite Gani sharing a common religious capital that ties both communities, refugees benefited more from cultural resources than in the urban Dagana of Senegal and Mauritania. Polzer (2008a) indicated how an analysis of resources enables to look at patterns of "co-ethnic integration" as involving "existing resources such as language, cultural norms, reciprocity, kinship ties, common spiritual-religious origins (ancestors), etc., which act along with more material considerations" (2008a:11). While co-ethnics are thought here less in terms of racial or tribal identities than as borderland cultural and socio-spatial belonging and solidarities, between Wolof rural villages of Gaé and Gani, and between Fulani and Wolof in urban towns of Dagana-Mauritania and Dagana-Senegal. In line with these developments, hospitality is a pervading pattern that triggers integration as shown in the accounts below.

On our arrival in Senegal, it was as if we were coming *from hell to enter heaven*. To be honest, thank God, the President of the rural council and his people have welcomed, relieved and accommodated us. They told us we were coming home, and that we were the same people. You see? As a deported or a stateless, one loses confidence, calm and much more. He, *the President who came along with community elders gave us back such states of mind* that enabled us to keep our face up and *uphold* our fate. We crossed the river from Medina Salam to Gaé. (A. Diop, refugee in Gaé, interviewed on 17 July 2010).

I don't know what the situation was in the other sites in Senegal, but in Dagana we have been given *everything we could expect from local authorities and the people* around here. We have been given a developed site to build on, which was our main challenge and utmost need. We now live in the site we had been given. It is totally safe. If a refugee and a local are driven to the gendarmerie by a dispute, *the gendarme doesn't care who is from where*. We *feel as equals with locals* in Dagana! We have built strong ties with our local host populations and we feel really integrated and attended. (H. Moussa, refugee in Dagana, interviewed on 18 July 2010).

Of course, signs of recovered self-esteem and confidence for refugees appear in hosts' hospitality as a source of emotional support (Strang and Ager 2010:598). But more interestingly, there are mental and experiential dimensions of early-stage integration implying cognitive processes of cultural discovery and learning. Besides host-exile constructions of home and self, refugees develop a critical experience of local governmental responsiveness and rule of law and justice, as exemplified in the "heaven to hell" reference of home-state and the gendarme's figure, is constituted as an imaginary of a "good" moral model that has to travel home.

If it is true that the effectiveness of integration is influenced by experiences from the moment of arrival" (Strang and Ager 2010:595), hospitality is not the only incentive to such welcoming experiences. In some respect, it shrouds a more utilitarian relationship of hosts with the influx of exiles. As Bakewell (2007) and Polzer (200a, 2008b) already commented about Zambian and South African border hosts towards refugees, the influx of refugees often means new opportunities. While refugees may constitute an input of manpower, attending them may add to the prestige of community elders and local councillors and administrative authorities. In addition, to elders who are important land owners and dealers as well as local business operators, returnees are potential farmers to hire. In the case of Gani where 30 returnees have come back from Senegal, hospitality goes with some utilitarian expectations on behalf of hosts

It is fair that we share the resources we have in here and which they contributed in the production for those who left Gani. It is equally normal that they share what they brought along, if ever they brought something. *Their provisions and food are something to be shared with kin and neighbours. That is how we have been living ever since.* However, cows and other equipments are reparations to the wrongs they suffered individually. These are their *personal fated property*. As a community we have set up this *arrangement* with them as soon as we have been informed of their imminent return. (I. Sarr, village chief of Gani, interviewed on 18 July 2010).

No doubt that sharing or exchanging resources may be morally legitimated in the social history of the Gani and Gaé peoples. However, it may be a kind of regulatory arrangement to break the inconveniences of their return, as the idea of living returnees with their "personal fated property" testifies to that. Indicative of new power relationships in social interactions, the emergence of new regulations, arrangements and identity or cognitive experiences often epitomize social transformations.

Cross-Border Dagana Transforms: From Refugee camps to Refugee-district and Refugee-village

As it has been extensively studied in the body of social science literature, social transformation refers to wider changes at individual and societal levels. In terms of socio-spatial scale, social interactions in the local scene may harbour both individual and social transformation as two levels to cohere with the theoretical trajectory of the enquiry thus far framed. At the individual level, I will understand social transformation as an interpersonal negotiation aimed at validating the social positions of individuals; there is the question of

recognition lying behind. Of course, integral to this are the reciprocities involved in such relationships and the implicated arbitration of wider social structures and processes that ensure conformance to cultural expectations in terms of membership or belonging. At the group level, social transformation refers to the dialectical process of consensus seeking for order making and the necessary adjustments implied by newness or incoming externalities, such as for example an influx of exiles or returnees and the wider encompassing social and institutional policy and practical process. Such wider social change involves conscious attempts at representing the other and negotiating the self. It also implies symbolic / identity and practical / material stakes and objectives leading to strategic attitudes, policy decisions and interactions towards and between individuals and groups.

From an institutional perspective social transformation indicates here the factors of change in terms of regulations, norms and value systems, at both individual and collective levels in host communities and localities. To link with refugee and border regimes that concern us here, question is how *area* (economic, social, cultural, political) or *issue* changes (identity, deportation, resources, stateness, home, integration, rights, etc.) affect the way people see and relate to asylum experience, to refugees, and to borders and their resources. Question is obviously the reverse impact of the outputs of change on local actors, structures, regulations and order making. Ultimately, social transformation is simply and contextually understood through a chain of transformations in various *areas* or domains and underlying *issues*.

Social and Cultural Transformation

In host localities of rural and urban cross-border Dagana social transformation was obviously predicted by the demographic change deriving from the refugee influx. More important are the effects of such increased demographics on resources such as land, water, basic services and local facilities. In this vein, hosts have shown a sharp understanding of these inducements which they basically experience through a philanthropic solidarity and some utilitarian opportunism at the same time. Both modes of experience are inscribed in a social history of cultural sameness and a political economy of deprivation. As concerns refugees, borderland identities do implicate cultural changes, whether identity or material.

As to identity changes, instead of a loss of culture or cultural resentment, we observed some “cultural reworkings” (Donnan and Wilson 1999) through which refugees and hosts are reconstructing home. Memories of one and the same community are invested in the local politics of hospitality and sympathy between co-ethnics (Wolof to Wolof, Fulani to Fulani) across borders but also between nationals of Senegal and Mauritania on the basis of borderland belongings that are historically inscribed. At the same time, different new cultural boundaries between hosts and returnees in Gani for example are valued within the same ethnic group of Wolof to manage the new material changes induced by repatriation.

As regards remaining exiles’ in Dagana, refugee identity does not preclude national identification in the name of successful integration. Cultural or political or both at once, national identity plays as a ‘cultural archive’ carefully rekindled and preserved through remembering. Just as Senegalese repatriates and

expelled intruders, some refugees want to lively remember the violence of exactions, mutilations, and dispossessions. Others among Mauritanian refugees want to forget in an individual project of settling for ever in Dagana-Senegal or plying between the two banks or countries. Of particular notice is the determination with which refugees want to reconstitute the national and cultural community of Mauritians rejected by a racist national state, irrespective of ethnic differences (see also Marty 2003; Ngaidé 2006:39-40). More than merely coping with the discrepancies of self-imagination and how they are mentally produced by the relief industry as an “othering” other (Valenta and Bunar 2010), refugees want to build a culturally and socially based political consciousness and engagement for recognition of their exiled community without necessary return. This project is concretely imagined through a change in their perceptions of the camp and of asylum on the one hand, and through cultural practices on the other. Such practices include marriage amongst refugees or with Senegalese repatriates and locals, social and cultural organisation, and cultural and artistic performances, mainly in rural Gaé:

On arrival we were aware that relief aid is principled to help for a short emergency period; this awareness led us to start with organising our patriots within and between sites throughout all over Senegal. (H. Moussa, Dagana).

We have been *lucky to form and live in camps that are located at the outskirts of Senegalese towns or along the border*. This enabled us to live interconnected between and within camps for example. *People have remained Mauritanian all the more!* Look! Imagine a little bit if we were not in these camps! It is not the same as living in a big town like Dakar where our community would have been scattered. In addition people also speak Hassania which gathers Wolf and Fulani Mauritians in the Camp. My wife is a Wolof and I'm a Fulbe. We married here and we communicate through Hassania like our kids today and in the future. (M. Harouna, Dagana)

As we say in Wolof, *“picca nga ca kaw waaya khel maanga ca suuf”* (However high the bird is perched, he looks down). (M. Sarr, Gaé).

Like the inhabitants of Gaé, refugees are herders, farmers, and fishermen. Like their hosts they continued such activities. They have become so much integrated among us that they created their own associations and belong to some local ones. They have for instance their own football team in the rural championship. They have contributed much to the cultural life of this community through a cultural band. Their performances include dancing, singing, *peekhaane*³¹ and sketches. (Daouda Fall, teacher, Gaé).

Remaining one-Self for refugees as a community struggles with becoming an-Other one as a temptation of asylum or statelessness. That is why instead of ‘uprooting’ or “assimilation” (Sorensen 1997; McPherson 2010) integration is all about negotiation, conversation and adaptation or exchange (Malkki 1997; Polzer 2008a). There lies the potential of borderland cultural and identity resources in the transformative agency of refugees. Also illustrated in the discourses above, the politics of cultural politics among and from refugees has obviously found receptive conditions and community attitudes to be freely expressed. Moreover, As Malkki (1995, 1997) claimed, there is no loss of cultural agentlessness in the cultural reworkings and interactions with hosts, but an exchange and reproduction of culture amongst ethnic and/or national and cross-national kin. Elaborating from Malkki (1995, 1997) and others, Donnan and Wilson call this is “a

³¹ The *Peekhaane* are incantatory songs that are performed with chorus and rites to get the alligator out of the river.

transformation" (Donnan and Wilson 1999:116). Yet the rationale that lies behind supersedes mere entertainment.

In effect, let us not see cultural or identitary exchanges as instances of philanthropic attitudes only. Not only would that be unrealistic, but as symbolic and mental resources, they would be isolated from a material world in which they do more than bringing people together or maintaining boundaries between them. They can be seen as symbolic or identitary strategies and or resources aimed at spiral resource acquisition (Strang and Ager 2010:603-04). In that sense cultural strategies reflect economic integration and are resources of economic transformation.

Economic Transformation: From Survival to Reproduction Strategies

Cultural and interracial strategies of mixing are also driven by a realistic or materialistic rationale of economic integration. Marriage and cultural performances may aim at cultural expression and bridging, they can be vectors to economic and social strategies of survival and livelihood making. For men and women among refugees, getting married with a Senegalese host can secure many advantages such as a civil status that may provide civic rights such as nationality in the long term. Getting employed, setting up a business, or finding farming or housing land are different needs that can be acquired through identitary mediating strategies such as marriage.

From the perspective of collective social change and for local host communities, economic transformation also touches on the issue of how economic cultures meet as well as the socioeconomic impact of increased demographics induced by deportation on infrastructure and urban planning and growth. Refugees and hosts form one and the same community in terms of cultural economic practices. Farming, stock breeding, fishing and trade (mostly for Wolof and Toucouleur hosts) are these activities, except in rural Gaé where trade is rare. There are not many changes at this level, except that refugees and hosts face the same economic and social challenges such as poverty and low income; to the extent that

the bulk of refugees have now turned to farming. The few number of Fulbe has lost their cattle during the events. Many have turned to farming and trade while trying to reconstitute a new livestock with kin in other sites along the river or in other places. But definitely, many of refugees have double employments in Dagana. Some are holding little shops or have their charts in the local market of sand and gravel transportation. Others are bricklayers and doing many other jobs. And let me tell you, things are going quite well! (M. Harouna, Dagana).

Refugees in Dagana have carried their household economic practices of organising a solidaric household food security by interrelating compounds through women's organisations and the female household leadership in gathering earnings and managing expenditures and savings from small businesses. This pattern of cultural reproduction has stricken local hosts who are used to a male leadership of household economy, even though women increasingly are those who raise funds in urban households of Dagana. In rural Gani, the Wolof refugee women that have returned from opposite Gaé have also reproduced the economic organisations they were helped to set up in Senegal. These are the women's promotion

associations and tontines that function with the support of the ANAIR and other NGOs on funding and capacity building.

Perhaps the meeting point between individual and collective economic transformation is between individual strategies refugees use to integrate the local cross-border economy, on the one hand, and the policy and community strategies used, on the other, to contain the negative effects of the refugee influx and exploit its positive ones. Urban Dagana is a rice producing centre of the developed agricultural perimeter of the River Valley, albeit much more on the left bank than on the right. Besides small herders and a few fishermen, the village of Gaé is also 80% dominated by farming much more than Gani. In both areas the influx of refugees has increased stakes in land tenure and ownership as well as in the farming infrastructure and materials (machines, motor pumps, fertiliser stocks, water channels, etc.). But in both areas local trustees and big men – merchants, politicians, local civil servants and religious and community leaders – are the main owners of land and mostly privatised farming infrastructure. They are also the main or rare well paying employers in farming and other little jobs (shopkeeping, cattle breeding, transportation). Most refugees get employed by these economic trustees or cultivate their own land on a rental basis. Admittedly, this has been mainly possible in rural Gaé for refugees and in rural Gani for returnees, because of the increasing ethnic homogeneity and the availability of land³².

When the rainy season draws nearer we call those refugees who had left their own land to recover their property. For those who didn't or came from other places and were resettled here, we try and find out negotiated arrangements. We lend them some land according to the capacities of the village. Those who don't find land accommodate with the other activities...the government helped returnees open a shop to sell basic commodities such as tea, sugar and staple food. Some of them hire pirogues for fishing. Most of these activities are practised on an individual basis. (I. Sarr, Gaé).

While it is true that local traditional authorities helped in land tenure in rural Gaé-Gani dominated by family holdings, refugees in urban Dagana had most of the time to invest their own money to hire farming land which only civil servants or refugees' elites could afford. Otherwise, most refugees, mainly the younger, were employed by other farmers in the mechanised urban smallholdings. However, though refugees felt useful and/or exploited to some extent, they also acknowledged the supportive mobilisation of local authorities and communities. In any case, they made their way through for most of them.

Since the whole influx of refugee manpower could not integrate the basic economic sectors that generate income to an acceptable level for refugees, many of them, mainly among the Toucouleur and the Wolof, used the UNHCR asylum programmes. These are usually from the urban camp of intellectuals, or the deported civil servants, who claimed political refugee status to get asylum in western countries (USA, Canada, and France). After many years they spent making ends meet and some savings, others entered the networks of regional and international migration. Cross-border migration as a day-to-day practice works as a subversive channel to economic integration. Whatever the migratory form may be, refugees and locals

³² Not because land is accessible, but because landlords are aging and local youth have migrated or spend more time in fishing as they think the latter activity yields more profit than farming in rural-Gaé.

reactivate ancient solidaric channels and networks of economic activity (Fresia 2006, 2009). Migration re-emerges as an ancient economic practice and structural pattern of the political economy of the River Valley. More specifically, cross-border economic migration is basically illicit in Dagana and Gaé though allowed somehow by implicit arrangements and the regulatory avoidance attitude of local authorities towards smuggling (Fresia 2004, 2006). Connected with Senegalese repatriates and expelled intruders that used to farm on the right bank, many refugees indulge in this underground economy. Though difficult to measure, the scope and impact of economic transformation on cross-border people and localities may be better grasped when linked with the social and cultural changes as well as the political challenges, stakes and decisions they implicated.

Political Transformation: Political Mobilisation and Growth in Borderlands

As we noted about cultural practices, there is a political dimension reflected in the nationalist function of refugees' membership structures that serve in the political transformation of the borderland. The integration of refugees in northern Senegal and the coextensive social transformation it triggered undoubtedly accelerated the urbanisation processes in both urban Dagana and rural Gaé. Local governance has been a decisive structural element in this complex of multidimensional change and the refugee integration and agency it has involved. Actually, as refugees acknowledge themselves, the policy environment and decisions geared from wider local government planning has been the decisive drivers of the transformation of refugee camps, into a refugee-district in urban Dagana-Senegal, and into a refugee-village in rural Gaé. Political transformation therefore refers here to three interrelated processes leading to the political growth of host localities. First, it includes the policies aimed at managing and responding to refugees' settlement in cross-border Dagana.

As one of the first political posts of colonial government and economy, Dagana harboured a relatively big population which political importance in local and national electoral politics of big man representation and patronage is well known to politicians. In addition, it is administratively important as a chef-lieu de département and economically provided by one of the biggest industries in Senegal, the Compagnie Sucrière Sénégalaise, and an industrial rice-growing centre. As I noted earlier, its rural village of Gaé is also an important religious centre for border populations of both Senegal and Mauritania. For these reasons and its border location, Dagana remained coveted by local as well as national politicians.

In 1998, the mayor of Dagana who was from the leading opposition party at that time (the present day ruling PDS of President Wade) had to defend his parliamentary seat and one of the main bastions of his political formation through legislative elections. Attending the refugees would therefore resource this political enterprise of securing this mandate of local governor that started two years before in 1996 – one year after the disengagement of relief organisations in the refugee relief. In urban Dagana the refugees, mainly those amongst them who got naturalised, or the repatriate Senegalese, were an electoral reserve of 600 voters.

I think that it is absolutely fair that people who have now acquired a Senegalese nationality be approached by local politicians for political competition and participation in local governance, and what's more refugees

children who were born in 1989, 1990 or 1991 are now of age. They have become potential voters it would be legitimate to visit since as in addition they are citizens of the town.

The same situation was prevailing in the then Communauté Rurale of Gaé where the President of the council was ruling since more than a decade. This explains why in urban Dagana and rural Gaé this political stake was conjugated with local needs of service delivery, infrastructure building in the framework of regional planning, and patronage relationships between political authorities and local traditional and religious notabilities.

When refugees settled in 1989, all these authorities met to talk about the then new situation. Since then they have been attending to their well-being. Land has been given for farming and housing to every household leader. We also welcomed here many repatriates...they have also been given housing land and they live today in the village of Alpha where they settled on arrival. They have all come back together so they have the same rights and opportunities as the peoples of Gaé. For that reason it is difficult to make the difference today between settlers and the locals. They came with bear hands for most of them and had troubles to make ends meet and take care of their children. That is why the village school fund raising group decided that the refugees and repatriates children don't contribute and get the school materials we could afford. Today we don't need to do that anymore, as equalities have nearly waned between refugees' children and ours. (D. Fall, Gaé).

Without having specific programs dedicated to the refugee problem, local governments successfully attracted the financial and logistical rents located in the relief industry. Through the appropriation of NGO's programs and the UNHCR's financial support, the refugee camps as well as the exiled populations were political resources to be converted into a political and economic capital of localities. Camps of Dagana 1 and Dagana 2 were transformed into a district in Dagana-Senegal while that of Gaé³³ became a village.

It is in 1989 that refugees were settled here on arrival. At that time the site was just taken as an emergency shelter. It is only in 1998 that it has been restructured and serviced with regular standards. All the refugees who were installed there were given housing land. Today the district is provided with water, electricity and public lights at the expenses of the Municipality. There are town facilities such as a primary school, a college, and a dispensary which has been recently renovated with funding of the OFADEC. If it was called the refugees camp in the past, today people proudly refer to it as the district of Darou Salam where are mixed different citizens of Dagana. The term "refugee" tends even to disappear from common parlance. (Y. Samb, Dagana).

Second, political transformation encompasses the consequences of policy interventions on the refugees' political consciousness and conditions (status, rights, representation and voiceness). In that respect, it is of notice that no distinction has been made between refugee settlements and repatriated and expelled nationals of Senegal in local responses to the refugee issue. In Dagana, refugees could interact freely on a daily basis with local government and traditional leaders through their elites who serve as teachers and nurses in the refugee school and dispensary. Though not nationals as a community, refugees could also make their voice heard through the mandate of the local representative of the repatriated in the local

³³ Interestingly, Gaé itself passed from the status of a communauté rurale to that of a Commune in 2009 due its new demographics.

council. They believe that they owe much of their political and socioeconomic assets to this seat in the local council through which all the deported populations are still represented:

It is these guys who spoke for us so that we could gain a lot of favours and the land we are living in and farming. Weren't it so, we wouldn't be given the land. (H. Moussa, Dagana).

I can even say that some refugees have a better living than many locals. When you look at the district which has been founded in 1998 and developed for building in 2000 you see that we have build a number of two-floor houses that is superior to many other districts of Dagana that were erected far before 1989. And we did it within one decade. You can see then how fast our district has grown. (M. Harouna 18 July 2010, Dagana).

Suffice it to go and visit the district to realise that it is planted in one of the best sites of the town. The site itself was in reality reserved for administrative and communitarian infrastructures in the framework of our regional planning strategy. If you pay attention you can see that it is surrounded by the technical and professional college for Women, the Customs headquarters, the Hospital, the Schools Inspectorate, while inside you have the Case des Tout-petits³⁴, the Women's Hall, etc. Only public equipments were supposed to be built on that site, but the Municipality erected there the camp and restructured it into the new refugee district of Darou Salam. (Y. Samb, Dagana).

Gradually, refugees themselves became parted between adults and youngsters who were all naturalised as newborns in Senegal. Such naturalisations happen through that of some adult refugees who play with the border in gaining a new status and attached rights and opportunities in their daily strategies to shift from "assisted" to "autonomous" exiles. This is part of a hidden politics of inclusion of an exile population indeed.

Indeed, the different achievements and services are not only for refugees, but for all the people who live there, including repatriates. In addition, there *children who were born here, and are Senegalese*, who know nothing of Mauritania, are our nationals who have the right to such services. Some refugees and their children already have their national identity cards and are naturalized and considered as citizens of Senegal. Therefore, we have to attend them as *full citizens* without any distinction... Some refugees have been naturalised though many of them *play with the juridical vagueness of the status*: sometimes they claim their Mauritanian nationality to benefit from the advantages attached to the refugee status, and other times, they claim to be from Dagana-Senegal to be able to attend to their own business here. Given that they have both their refugee and national identity cards, or the Senegalese birth certificate, they can easily *change faces and tame situations* to their favour (Y. Samb, Dagana).

Splitting the household on both banks of the river is a strategy to play with humanitarian structures and states agencies. Very often, the *younger go back* to Mauritania for a limited period of time to seek opportunities over there, while the *older and women stay* in Senegal for their safety but also to benefit from assistance provisions which they trade for other goods and enjoy their assets here such as houses, small business and the relief system. (Y. Samb, Dagana).

Third, political transformation has to do with the political mobilisation these processes have involved. If refugees were not seen as different from other national repatriates it is because the latter were the intermediaries who were used in the political mobilisation of refugees in local and even national politics.

³⁴ The *Case des Tout-petits* is the equivalent of a day nursery and is a national program of construction of pre-primary school centres for kids between 3 and 5 years in Senegal, mainly in rural areas. They are equipped with high-tech and ICT facilities and focus on folklore education of kids through national and foreign languages.

Mauritania was infiltrating refugee camps along the border because Senegal has been sponsoring the refugee nationalist movement such as the FLAM and political parties such as the FRUIDEM³⁵ until 1993.

At some point between 1989 and 1992, before Senegal and Mauritania resumed their diplomatic relations, Fulani groups linked with the nationalist parties and movements of Black Africans above were crossing the border to recover their cattle that were stolen during the events.³⁶

Political transformation was also reflected in the implication of the refugee diaspora that constituted in West and Central Africa as well as in the North America and Western Europe. Especially as those who left through the UNHCR program were often proposed by refugee organisations and were chosen among the intellectuals of the elites' camp of Dagana 2. Urban growth in Dagana has been financially and politically supplemented by the remittances from this diaspora and their civic engagement in the capital city of Dakar and abroad.

It is one of my friends who served at the same time as a nurse-helper in the dispensary of the camp who sent me part of the money that built my house in 2003. He and other compatriots often sent money for the dispensary and the school to function, notably after the departure of the UNHCR and some NGOs in 1995. (M. Bâ, Dagana).

One of the main lessons to draw from the dynamics of political transformation above is that it is a result of policy, perception and practice by various actors at the same time. Mingling with the other area changes, political mobilisation has been particularly instrumental for exiles to strike back to "home" for recognition.

Striking Back for Recognition: Ethnic Nationalism and the Two Homes

When they were deported after they have been despoiled, wounded and their families split, refugees certainly lost their citizenship but they also lost some form of humanity and dignity when the Mauritanian government refused to recognise them as refugees, even though this was not new for them as Black Africans if we look at the archaeology of the refugee problem (see also Marty 2003, Ngaidé 2006). In Senegal, the government also ceased recognising them as refugees at some point in their exile (Santoir 1998:116). For that reason, they expect two forms of recognition. A *formal recognition* that acknowledge firsts the refugee problem as a national question in which the government has entire responsibility, while a *functional recognition* deals with what is implicated by the former in terms of rights, status, and justice.

³⁵ Front de Résistance pour l'Unité, l'Indépendance et la Démocratie en Mauritanie, belonging to the political party the Mouvement National Démocratique (MND).

³⁶ The Senegalese press reported that these refugee groups were retaliating commando raids sent by Mauritanian Government (see also Gnisici and Trémolières 2004:24). However a more plausible explanation is the cultural argument which has it that the cattle raiding concerned only Fulani refugees who was practicing the *ruggo*, an activity through which the young Fulani shows courage and temerity in order to gain respect and even his wife by stealing cattle mostly during the night (see also Santoir 1998:105). This activity was also noted in other sites to the east of the River Valley. Yet in Dagana one interviewee told us that it was part of the nationalist political struggle as some refugee intellectual elites headed these armed groups of cattle raiders that were legitimised in the discourse of refugee organisations in the former camps.

While Mauritanian refugees in Dagana and Gaé have gained a formal recognition from their government, refugees are still longing for an effective functional recognition. Between the two ends, refugees' political mobilisation has built on the socioeconomic assets they have accumulated from local integration in northern Senegal to strike back to their country. However, refugees main medium in striking back for recognition consist of identity practices.

The material or practical layer in the refugees' struggle for recognition has consisted of the different tactics they used to get integrated in the local economy or to retrain the multiple resources emerging out of the integration process and the borderland and asylum regimes (new social capital including ancient networks they had, economic assets, humanitarian assistance, local labour and household opportunities). The property accumulated during deportation and in the course of integration (land, small business, household economy) and the advantages (education, sanitation services, facilities and housing) must be sustainably made profitable. Refugees have gained the possibility to diversify and make their social and economic capitals yield other profits in a resourcing spiral. Many of them are bi-nationals now and circulate in the cross-border transmigrants and the diaspora. As emancipated figures refugees eschew the national and humanitarian strategies of organised repatriation by re-conquering the State and foiling its secret project of making the refugee *subject* and *issue* invisibles. Incidentally, refugees question the national arabisation project of his home country that has been at the heart of his deportation.

The identity layer which has proven more important for refugees – because it was also reasonably more accessible – consisted of a permanent and well organised strategy of going national while accommodating with host and borderland identities. The fundamentally political character of the deportation is the fact that expulsions have reinforced the ethnicization of the Fulani who had been principally targeted for their cattle (Santoir 1998:104, Marty 2003). However, the lead taken by the Toucouleur and the Fulbe, namely in urban Dagana where they are nearly half of the “others camp”, and more than half in the “intellectuals' camp”, mobilisation involved everybody and consisted of culturally bonding refugee ethnic groups and sites along the border, as well as networking them with the diaspora and other refugees that scattered in the urban centres of Senegal.

From the beginning of their settlement, national identification was made possible through the political structures that have been set up in the sites and animated the ethnic nationalism of Black Africans (Marty 2003, Sow 2003, Fresia 2009). As it implicitly derives from the refugee narratives, the strength of such organisations is due to many interrelated factors. Probably most important, is the ethnic undertone of the deportation project. The memory of state racism and arabisation against Black Africans is the ideological basis of such cultural and ethnic nationalism that is secretly and meticulously organised within and between camps and abroad as well.

When we realised that the exile would take much more time, we set up associations such as first of all the ARMS and then the AMRS³⁷. The objective of the first organ was to prevent refugees from scattering and

³⁷ The Association des Réfugiés Mauritaniens du Sénégal (ARMS) was first created and patronised by the FLAM who quitted in 1993 to create the Association Mauritanienne des Réfugiés au Sénégal (AMRS) when they were accused by the FRUIDEM of

mixing with the Senegalese population. We needed to preserve our Mauritanian identity given that we could have been dispersed amongst the Senegalese and no one would be able to distinguish between the two people sharing the Wolof, Fulbe, and Toucouleur. Committees were organized towards this end to help us recreate the Mauritanian system notably in domains of education, sanitation and culture. (M. Bâ, chief nurse, Dagana).

Refugees kept their own imagination of themselves as “travellers” who are in their host home-place but not in their (vital) home-space of origin.

People like the chief nurse M. Ba who manages the dispensary and I were sent here from Thiès. I was sent here and prompted to teach in the camp's school. Organisations therefore helped us to maintain and strengthen ties amongst the Black Mauritians. *The most educated were ventilated* from other sites in Dakar and Thiès where most organisations were based to the sites along the border to lead the camps and mobilise the people for the good of all, and the ultimate goal was and *keep separated from the Senegalese context while being in Senegal*. (H. Moussa, Dagana).

Though it weakened them at the same time, politicisation of refugee elites by opposition parties in Mauritania also added to this strength, and the local politics of incorporation in Senegal. Cultural identity functioning as a political or politicised identity is exemplified in the gathering between the political opposition and the ethnic group of Haratin towards Wolof and Fulani in the early 90s (Santoir 1998: 104).

At a more emotional and cognitive level, the mentality and desire of “recognition” is to resist and overcome the politics of “awe” and “pity” that politicise relief and work as a denial of refugees’ and returnees’ individual and collective selves. However, both maintain their opinion about the origin and character of their refugee condition, in other words, a problem of national identity.

Mauritania has the same problem as Rwanda, Burundi and South Africa. The Apartheid regime wanted to impose the Afrikaner language to Blacks who refused and revolted against the policy in Soweto. This has resulted in the xenophobia that characterises South Africa today. Whenever Mauritania is inscribed in a dynamic of stability Arabian nationalists raise the issue of the Arab language which they want to impose upon Blacks. The problem in Mauritania is the same today. I thought that the regime of Abdel Aziz would forget about that language issue, but seemingly it is not the case. (M. Harouna, Dagana).

Probably because it has not translated into functional recognition through recovery of property and reparation of injustices, organised repatriation started in 2007 has also proven to be a vector of ethnic nationalism. This is explicit in the returnees’ discourse of re-integration and home that settled in Gani from Gaé.

Local delegates of national political parties came to see us sometimes about elections. But we refused to follow them because we also can form a village committee with our relatively important number of 30 returnees. We told them that if leaders want our vote they have to come and talk to us directly. We want people to feel we are back home now and we are aware that we have to be politically active to get recognized as a community. And we know what to do and how to do it. (F. Sarr Gani).

clientelism and factionalism for the sedentary Toucouleur and Wolof. On the divisions and factionalism of refugees political organisations see Fresia (2009: 106-109) and Marty (2003: 502-504) and Sow (2003: 127-130).

Now it's clear that we will go back home, especially as we know that we cannot do everything we want here in Senegal. There's not enough land for all and we have been told we will have at least our own land at home. We will make do with what we will find at home. Because we know that we won't get all that we had in Senegal. For instance, we can speak our mother tongue Wolof and other African languages here, which we cannot do freely in Mauritania. There we are told we cannot. That is an issue. I will speak Wolof may be but I'm told it is not recognised over there. In reality Mauritania is not home for the Wolof. (M. Sarr, Gaé).

The result has been formal recognition which is exemplified in the resumption of repatriation and some transnational shifts at both local and national policy levels.

Organised Repatriation: Formal Recognition

In June 2007 President Sid Mohamed Ould Abdallahi promised to Refugees that they would soon return home. A tripartite agreement is signed in Dakar between Mauritania, the UNHCR and Senegal which brought back all the former major humanitarian actors in the scene. Between July and September refugees are visited by the delegates of the Government led by Yahya Ahmed Ould El Waghef who promised "each one of [refugees] to be restored the rights of a Mauritanian citizen".

This announcement resounded as a heart sweetening promise to Mauritanian refugees who then froze their political activity in the camps to get ready for the return which started in January 2008. By October 2008 4,700 refugees were already repatriated. Not only did many of them come back in northern Senegal because of unmet promises of a full recognition and functionally effective repatriation, but on 6 August 2008 a military putsch against Ould Abdallahi revealed the resentment of the return of Black Africans by Arabian nationalist. The coup was linked to the new sympathy of Abdallahi for the refugees and the new government of Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. The Fulani refugees are specially unwanted home, not only because they lost more and would claim more, but also because of their forefront role in the nationalist movements of Black Africans in Senegal (Santoir 1993, 1998, Marty 2003, Fresia 2009).

Despite the ambivalent strategy of the new regime, consisting of repatriations without reparation and full and immediate recovery of citizenship rights, a whole institutional architecture is monitoring the organised repatriation. The ANAIR is the main organ in charge of the program while the AMDH³⁸ and the CORMS³⁹ are the new refugee and human rights watchdogs. But even though 72 convoys have been organised and 780 households or 3,453 persons have been repatriated in the Trarza region that concerns this study, the most important issues are still pending. The national refugee law adopted in 2004 is nearly totally oriented towards foreigner in Mauritania, the 2005 decree is also dedicated to international migration⁴⁰ monitoring and many refugees have not received their nationality documents (UNHCR 2009:2). In the Trarza region,

³⁸ Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l'Homme.

³⁹ Coordination des Organisations de Réfugiés Mauritaniens au Sénégal.

⁴⁰ One of the main reasons why Mauritania is reluctantly monitoring the return of its Black national is that its securitised migration policy in the framework of the EU-West African and Sahel fight against illegal migration and terrorism, has been used to fight the nationalist movements whose leaders among refugees are targeted. To the 100 border posts that already exist along the River Valley more than a new hundred (102) will be added in the next couple of years on the southern and eastern borders. See Ammour (2008).

returnees have started benefitting from various forms of humanitarian assistance: housing, relocation, schooling, sanitation, agro-pastoral funding support, training, etc. Yet, like all the 7000 returnees numbered by the UNHCR in late October 2009 returnees in Gani and Dagana-Mauritania from northern Senegal feel that recognition is limited and not functionally realised.

On their return refugees wanted to recover their land but the government has not resolved this issue until now. How can they repatriate a Mauritanian national who has been deported for 21 years in Senegal with bear hands and give him a cow and a small piece of land in a place he never lived before? What is more, they expect this refugee to start a new life. This isn't the best way they can solve the problem. (M. Sarr, Gaé).

The fact is that many returnees found Moors on their land or in their houses. They were not told things would be like that. Worse than everything, the ministry of interior asks them to wait because the time has not come to talk about land and houses. Four weeks ago, at the end of May, a refugee has been arrested because he settled in his farm which had been occupied by a Moor. He was finally freed but the Moor harvested and sold his crops and no one saw the refugee again. Where are *truth* and *reconciliation* in the story? The Mauritanian government is not yet ready to *arbitrate* and *acknowledge* the truth. (H. Moussa, Dagana)

More than a limitation or unachieved repatriation and recognition, the CORMS denounces the closure of the Commissariat d'Appui aux Réfugiés et aux Personnes Déplacées as part of a wider

... integration policy which ultimate goal is to make us renounce our legitimate claims to Mauritanian citizenship, and which meets the political objectives of the authorities of our country, Mauritania, who want to foil the repatriation program. An intention which is not new all the more...and we denounce the Arabian obsession of the Arab-Berber hegemonic minority⁴¹.

(Trans)national Shifts

Expectedly, despite the poor start of organised repatriation there are some effects of refugees' striking back and going national in cross-border Dagana. Some transnational shifts manifest in slight adjustments and a relative new and increasing tolerance of local authorities towards certain subversive practices or claims by refugees. But this looks rather more like some sense of powerlessness of local authorities towards the resistance outlook of refugees and their conquering economic strategies. All the more than both local hosts and refugees encroach the border in the absence of formal cooperation between border regions. This happens regardless of increasing break off in bilateral relations between Senegal and Mauritania. In Dagana-Senegal, smuggled goods are channelled from the other bank of Dagana-Mauritania in broad daylight and borderlanders are indifferent to these pirogues shuttling across the river.

We are sometimes disarmed and obliged to let things go as they are, but facing the situation of clandestine crossing and smuggling that involve refugees who reuse ancient networks and conduits along the river banks. Yet we have to face it despite limited means. (M. Sane, Sous-prefect, Dagana).

The same can be said of rural Gaé and Gani where trade and other activities sustain each other thanks to the silent regulation of the border by local authorities among which community elders, traditional authorities and religious leaders of both banks. Religion and the importance of economic differentials as well as kinship

⁴¹ Declaration of the Coordination des Organisations de Réfugiés Mauritaniens. Dakar, 11 July 2010.

ties are the main drivers of the implicit regime of indifference that has established on the border. Since 2007, with the help of the refugee regime, the rigid boundary regime imposed by military presence had been replaced by a more open one regulated by “practical norms”⁴² (Titeca and Herdt 2010:573-74).

In the beginning it was very difficult for refugees to cross because they had to show their refugee cards or their national identity cards for some of them. We were brought to discuss that among the elders of the village and with the border police when they took over the army in 2007. The aim of our discussions was to facilitate the crossing to refugees and locals as well by simplifying the procedures. The district delegates, the imam and I as village chief went to see the police. We told them what we wanted because it was possible. It was only kin that were crossing everyday and we did not see that to be a problem. They asked us to go and see the sous-prefect of Teekaan but we did not find that necessary given that we could find out arrangements amongst us at the village level. We finally got a consensus and from that day on refugees can cross the river without being bothered by anyone (I. Sarr, Gae).

At the level of national governments Senegal has totally resumed its open border policy in the north, but this has no effect on the ground yet, because the Mauritanian government has been on the contrary increasingly gating its borders in its extraverted migration policy. Though at the local borderland level of Dagana clandestine and loosened crossing and smuggling are undisrupted, there have been several diplomatic disputes between the two countries around contentious issues of transportation, trade and international migration policies. Not to mention the persistence of the humanitarian slippage manifested in the standstill of the organised repatriation since 2008, despite the comeback of the UNHCR and other NGOs.

Conclusion

This paper investigated the agency of Mauritanian refugees in northern Senegal in their local integration. I had a theoretical aim of understanding the theoretical relationships between refugee regimes and border regimes and an empirical aim of demonstrating how, despite their being a socio-political “minority”, refugees actively took part in their integration and the incidental transformation of the yet unfavourably rigid border regime. In effect, the relationship between the border regime and the refugee regime is not unidirectional. In this case study, it appears that refugee regimes could also impact on border regimes though very slightly, and in this empirical case study this happened through the mediation of a multidimensional transformation of the borderland by refugees’ agency and through some transnational policy shifts.

Though they have been caught by a 22 years asylum regime which they did not escape or challenge all the structural and formal determinants, refugees appropriated local integration as well as the underlying refugee and border regimes by means of various resources inscribed in the border region, but also from the national and international spheres where they are linking with their diaspora. They used two main ways of resourcing the border and refugee regime. Identitary and material practices across the borderland and beyond in the course of asylum and integration have proven effective in lessening the austerity of refugee and asylum regimes, while driving local authorities more than national governments to slight adjustments to the relative

⁴² The new silent regime consists of practical solutions to a local problem of enforcing official norms. This “bricolage” makes room for social norms of cooperation, collaboration and trust between kin and interdependent economic partners. It is mediated through the power of local notabilities while not utterly challenging the authority of states in the minds of the locals.

emancipation of refugees. It is true that this has not led to functional or complete recognition as expected and claimed by the exiles political leadership, even after two waves of selective and organised repatriation. Nevertheless, the transformation of border and asylum regimes, thanks to functionally effective refugee agency, has largely illustrated the need to go beyond the warehousing paradigm.

Posing the hypothesis of a post-humanitarian academic and policy paradigm of refugee studies may yet require a deeper understanding of the ways in which borders and refugees are much related. Situational and comparative analyses of this link have been offered by other studies which we tried to invite in a new empirical context, but like these studies, borders are admittedly socially and historically uprooted instruments of state policy. Despite the transnational shifts induced by refugees' transformative agency, border and refugee regimes still serve a kind of politics which postmodern border politics of knowledge tends to question. There are in effect ethical issues on borders in a context of cultural "debordering" and political "rebordering". In this guise, border regimes challenge both the moral economy of African regional integration and unity, and the trajectory of Mauritania's national identity politics as well./.

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To Zanzibar and back:
Comorian mobilities in colonial and post-colonial Zanzibar¹

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In August 2009, the Zanzibar immigration commissioner, Mwinchum Hassan Salum, announced that his office would start confiscating the passports of Zanzibaris of Comorian origin under the pretext that they had failed to naturalise as Tanzanian citizens, as they had been instructed to do by the first president of Zanzibar, Abeid Amani Karume, in 1968.² This announcement followed a refusal to issue passports to a number of Zanzibaris: one of them, a woman travelling to Kampala on business, was eventually granted a temporary document but was told that it would be confiscated upon her return and that she would be required to naturalise as a Tanzanian citizen before being granted further travel documents. Somewhat ironically, the father of the woman in question had followed Karume's instructions to the letter, naturalising as a Tanzanian citizen in March 1969 and returning his French passport to the French consulate in June that same year. However, although his Zanzibari-born daughter was a minor at the time (and was included in the passport returned to the French) she was apparently not included in the naturalisation order and therefore was not considered to have benefitted from her father's naturalisation. Hopes that this was an isolated incident were dashed in November 2009 when a group of pilgrims intending to travel to Mecca were also refused passports. This prompted leaders of the Comorian Zanzibari community to write to the Union government (which has the final say on immigration and nationality) and prepare to take legal action. In the event the issue was dropped and Zanzibaris of Comorian origin are once again accepted as bona fide Zanzibaris, and thus Tanzanian citizens.

Comorian Zanzibaris could only guess at the reasons behind this decision, and although the commissioner explicitly denied the accusation it does seem that the move was politically motivated. Several individuals suggested that the intention was to disqualify a minister in the Union government who was apparently of Comorian origin and was potentially a candidate at the 2010 presidential elections; however, given the dubious legality of the commissioner's decision it seems unlikely that such a move would have had any effect—and in the event the politician did not run. Nevertheless, the fact that the episode occurred at all is revealing in the wider context of

¹ Comorians means Wangazidja and Comoro generally means Ngazidja.

² *The Guardian* (Dar es Salaam), 27 August, 2009, p1.

Zanzibari politics and renewed expressions of community identity in Zanzibar following several decades of official disapproval and/or prohibition.

For older members of the Comorian Zanzibari community, the announcement—as Salum made explicit—raised the spectre of a similar declaration made by Karume. On 15 November 1968 Karume announced that “all Comorians ceased to be citizens of Tanzania from yesterday unless they [had] renounced their status of French subjects and [had] been officially accepted as citizens.”³ In contrast to the 2009 episode, Karume’s decision was explicitly political. Karume stated that Comorians were playing “a reactionary role” in revolutionary Zanzibar, and confirmed that Comorians who were ministers or members of parliament would be required to resign their posts immediately and refund the salaries that they had received. The political character of his declarations was underlined by his excluding civil servants from the latter declaration: “they were human beings and they could not be deprived of a possibility to earn their living” (*loc. cit.*). Once again, the suspicion among the community was that a specific individual was being targeted, in this case Abdulrahman Babu, one of the leaders of the revolution and something of a thorn in Karume’s side despite having been sidelined into relatively powerless positions in the Union government on the mainland; and once again, it seems that the strategy failed since Babu was not removed from his post.⁴

If the 2009 episode went relatively unnoticed outside the Comorian Zanzibari community, in 1968 Karume’s announcement was followed by anti-Comorian demonstrations organised by the ruling Afro-Shirazi Party that were inscribed within a long-term policy of anti-communitarianism on the part of the revolutionary government: the murder and subsequent expulsion of “Arabs” (in particular, but other Asians too) during and immediately after the revolution; the closure of ethnically-based institutions (including the Franco-Comorian school and the Comorian Association); and the “abolition of races” and the notorious forced-marriages of 1970.⁵ Although these policies were aimed at a range of groups considered not to be Zanzibari by the revolutionary government, the repeated attacks on the Comorian Zanzibari community, particularly given the small size of the community and its lack of either economic or political power, merit closer inspection, particularly since a fear of persecution persists among the Comorian Zanzibari community today. In this article I wish to explore the shifting and interdependent strategies employed by Comorian Zanzibaris and by the French in colonial Zanzibar as the former struggled to maintain an identity that accorded them certain advantages and the latter attempted to preserve a foothold in a British-dominated East Africa. Although I do not, in this article, wish to discuss the post-colonial period, it is clear that these strategies have contributed to contemporary Zanzibari perceptions of the Comorian community.⁶

Comorians and Zanzibar: the establishment of a community

Both the Comoro Islands and Zanzibar are part of the Swahili socio-cultural complex. Along with most other settlements of the east African littoral, these islands have been part of an economic,

³ *The Standard Tanzania*, 16 November, 1968, p1.

⁴ Babu’s father was apparently something of a Comorian nationalist and had left the Comoros in the early colonial period for a self-imposed exile in Zanzibar. However, although Babu was born in Zanzibar, and neither he nor his father appear to have registered at the French consulate, both would nevertheless have been French subjects under French law (MAE/DAR/21).

⁵ See Martin (1980) on forced marriages.

⁶ I intend to discuss contemporary Comorian identity in Zanzibar in a future publication.

cultural and linguistic community through and between which individuals, communities and goods have circulated for two millennia or more. Comorians have long been present the length of the coast; according to Ibuni Saleh a number of families have been present in Zanzibar since the 18th century and there were certainly Comorians resident in Zanzibar by the time the Imam of Muscat, Seyyid Said, moved his administration there in 1840.⁷ By the time the European powers began to exert their influence in the region links between the two archipelagos were sufficiently well developed for Seyyid Said to feel it necessary to complain to the British about French interference with his trade with Comoros.⁸ This trade was clearly a lively one: the Comoros exported primary materials (cattle and goats, hides and skins, rope, millet, tortoiseshell, *ntsambu*, honey, cassava, shark fins, cowries and betel)⁹ while Zanzibar mostly sent back manufactured goods (above all cloth, but also pottery, glass and metal items such as knives). People moved too, both to trade and to seek a living, and Ngazidja certainly exported slaves to Zanzibar. The wars, famines and volcanic eruptions of the mid-19th century also saw large numbers of Comorians settle in Zanzibar: Richard Burton estimated the number of Comorians in Zanzibar in the mid-1850s at 2000 (Burton 1872) while in 1862 William Sunley, the British consul in Ndzwani, thought there were between three and four thousand;¹⁰ “thousands” more arrived in the late 1870s and early 1880s: “dhows full of Comorians are arriving in Zanzibar,” reported the French consul in Zanzibar in 1882.¹¹

Comorians filled a variety of roles in Bu Saidi Zanzibar: from ministers, soldiers and interpreters in the sultan’s service, to fishermen, carpenters and rope-makers.¹² Both of Seyyid Said’s sons and successors, Majid (1856-1870) and Barghash (1870-1888) recruited Comorian soldiers—Majid hired 130 of them as troops to fight off the invasion by his brother Thuwaini, Sultan of Oman, in 1859; possibly as a result of this influx there were a sufficient number, and with a sufficient sense of community, for Majid to name heads of the Comorian community; by the end of the century there were perhaps 500 Comorian soldiers in the sultan’s army. Comorians of Hadrami origin in particular also provided religious leadership: most notable among them was Ahmed bin Abubacar bin Sumeit, chief kadhi of Zanzibar in the early 20th century.¹³ Far from being outsiders, Comorians were part of the local population: recognised as a distinct group, their Hadrami Arab ancestry, real or imagined, allowed them to take their place alongside the Omanis, the Hadramis themselves, and the Indians, as one of several communities in the Swahili world.

Politically it seems that Seyyid Said exerted, or was happy to have it believed that he exerted a notional suzerainty over the Comoros (and, indeed, as far as Nosy Be: he was particularly

⁷ There were “a few hundred Comorians already in residence here”, engaged in fishing, rope spinning and petty trade. Saleh (1942). Some would undoubtedly have fled the Malagasy slave raids of the late 18th and early 19th century).

⁸ Imam of Muscat (Seyyid Said) to Lord Palmerston, 19/08/1847, ZNA AA1/4.

⁹ Lelieur de Ville-Sur-Arce (1821) says there was more trade at Ngazidja than at the other islands: despite the constant wars the island was clearly a prosperous place, and there is evidence that Ngazidja also exported foodstuffs to Ndzwani for on-sale to European ships (Sunley; EIC passim). *Ntsambu* is a uniquely Comorian foodstuff (see Walker, forthcoming)

¹⁰ ZNA, AA1/5. In 1857 Sunley wrote that food shortages had prompted emigration to Zanzibar “three times in the past decade” (*loc. cit.*).

¹¹ Ottavi B/3; Ledoulx, 265/591.

¹² e.g. Holman (1835), Burton (1872), Kersten (1978).

¹³ See Al-Farsy (1944), Martin (1971), Bang (2003).

unhappy when France annexed the island in the 1840s) much as he did over the other minor states of the African coast; his links with Mwali were strong enough for Jumbe Fatima, the queen of the island, to marry one of his cousins, Said Muhammad Nassur in 1852. Relationships with the other islands were also close and Seyyid Said's son, Sultan Barghash (1870-1888) sent both troops and weapons to the sultanate of Itsandra on Ngazidja in its wars against the neighbouring sultanate of Bambao in the 1870s and 1880s (particularly as France offered military support to the latter); and there is evidence that the sultan of Ndzwani's acceptance of French protection in 1886 was partly in rebuff of Zanzibari claims over the island.¹⁴ Generally, however, it is clear that there were close links between the islands.

Although France had occupied Mayotte in 1841, the British had long frequented the anchorage at Mutsamudu on Ndzwani: prior to the opening of the Suez Canal it was a valuable and popular supply station for ships of the East India Company. Britain, through the consulate in Zanzibar, had also established a relationship with Fumbavu, the ruler of Itsandra, and had signed anti-slavery treaties not only with him but with the rulers of Mwali, Ndzwani and Bambao.¹⁵ In 1848, in response to French activities in the region, Britain opened a consulate on Ndzwani, thus strengthening its influence on the island; however, this consulate was closed in 1866 following revelations (by David Livingstone) that the consul, William Sunley, employed slaves on his plantations.¹⁶ Sunley remained on the island but was not replaced as consul, and the delimitation of spheres of interest in Africa in the 1880s finally led to a withdrawal of a formal British presence from the Comoros and a consolidation of French authority.

The Protectorates

During the 19th century Comorians from all islands appear to have been represented in Zanzibar;¹⁷ however, its proximity to Zanzibar, its stronger social and cultural links, the repeated wars of the mid 19th century, and the social upheavals during the colonisation process in the late 19th century, all led to Ngazidja becoming the island from which most Zanzibari Comorians hailed. In 1886 France, from its base in Mayotte, declared protectorates over the remaining Comorian islands, and while this move met with resistance on all the islands, in the case of Ngazidja Zanzibar was closely involved. The move was controversial: it was based on the cession of the entire island to France by Said Ali ibn Said Omar, the ruler of Bambao, despite the fact that he had no authority to do so. Resistance came from the sultanates of Itsandra, north of Bambao and closely aligned with Zanzibar; and Mbadjini, in the south of the island, which was

¹⁴ The extent of Zanzibari authority should not be overestimated: any attempt at annexation of the islands by Zanzibar would certainly have failed. French claims that Zanzibar authority had been extended over the islands seem to have been at least partly based on an assumption that the red flag that flew over Ndzwani was the Zanzibari flag; it was not: the flag of the sultan of Ndzwani was also red (as were the flags of many other Arab rulers). In 1289AH (1873AD) Barghash forwarded a letter of complaint against Jumbe Fatima, Sultana of Mwali, to the French Consul in Zanzibar, the implication being that Mwali fell within the French sphere of influence and not that of Zanzibar (MAE Z/A/123).

¹⁵ Sultan Ahmed of Bambao, also known as Mwinyi Mkuu, was described as a rather unprincipled individual and not held in high regard by the British. He did not respect the terms of the treaty, which he apparently signed with great reluctance.

¹⁶ In the early 19th century the sultan of Ndzwani twice offered to sell his island to the British. On Sunley, see Clendennen & Nottingham (2000).

¹⁷ In the 1860s there were a sufficient number of Wandzwani (or "Johannamen") in Zanzibar for David Livingstone to recruit his porters almost exclusively from their ranks (Clendennen & Nottingham, 2000; cf. India Office archives L/PS/9/48).

negotiating with a representative of the German East Africa Company for German protection.¹⁸ If the German intervention never materialised, Itsandra's relationship with Sultan Barghash involved the French consul in Zanzibar. The French position was particularly difficult since not only was there was a great deal of animosity between Barghash and France's protégé Said Ali, based on Zanzibar's historical alliance with Itsandra and fomented by Barghash's pro-Itsandra entourage, but Barghash's increasingly close relationship with the British also (if perhaps not entirely logically) incited him to an anti-French stance. However, as the French consul exerted pressure on Barghash not to intervene in Ngazidja, the *fait accompli* of the French protectorate and tacit British support for a French sphere of influence over the Comoros, Barghash had little choice but to acquiesce.¹⁹

Zanzibar nevertheless remained a centre of resistance against the French presence in Ngazidja. A small but vocal group of exiles continued to foment anti-French sentiment on the island and France required a strategy to win over the Comorian opposition. Barghash was allegedly capricious in his treatment of Comorians, and France recognised an opportunity in a case brought by a Comorian by the name of Mohamed bin Sultan in front of Barghash's court regarding the inheritance of an estate in Lamu (part of the sultan's dominions). The sultan's court ruled against Mohamed, who, based on his status as a native of what was now a French territory, appealed to the French consul, Emile Piat. Piat assumed jurisdiction and found in Mohamed's favour.²⁰ This episode, in early 1887, allowed Piat to offer French protection to all Comorians who registered at the consulate, having effectively demonstrating to the Comorian community of Zanzibar where their best interests lay. This was made quite explicit in exchanges between the consul and Paris: not only did the episode demonstrate French power in Zanzibar, reports of French superiority would ideally filter back to the Comoros and bolster the reputation of the colonial regime in the islands. Henceforth, therefore, policy would be to offer French protection to all Comorians who wanted it.

The take up was initially slow: only five Comorians registered with the consulate between 1887 and 1890. Then, on 23 December 1890, 19 Comorians registered, and another 82 registered between January 1891 and November 1896.²¹ Although the numbers were small given the size of the Comorian community, Comorians were well aware of the advantages of appealing to the French consul for assistance and many did so despite not being registered. Somewhat ironically, many of these Comorians had fled Ngazidja in order to escape French colonial control. Indeed, the community seems to have grown particularly rapidly during this period, both as a result of the difficult conditions in Ngazidja and the attractions of Zanzibar. Opportunities for formal employment on their home island were few: in an oversupplied labour market, the only colonial company of any size, Léon Humblot's *Société Anonyme de la Grande Comore*, paid wages significantly lower than those offered on the other islands: Fr3 to Fr5 per month, extremely low both compared to Fr20 at Nosy Be, and in view of a head tax that was raised from Fr5 to Fr 15 in the early 1900s. Emigration was the only solution for Comorians, and participation in the prosperous

¹⁸ Optimistically, given that the German in question, a Dr Schmidt, had no authority to represent the German government and that the German government made it quite clear that assistance would not be forthcoming (*Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* 1886; see also MAE Z/A/150 and A/137).

¹⁹ Barghash's police chief was a particularly anti-French Comorian from Itsandra named Kari Hadji. Perhaps fortunately for the French, Kari Hadji died in 1887.

²⁰ MAE Zanzibar A/65, A/143.

²¹ MAE Zanzibar A/114. This increase in numbers led to a complaint from the consul, Lucien Labosse, that he had neither the time nor the resources to register all the Comorians who showed up.

economy of the Sultanate of Zanzibar was a more attractive proposition than labouring on the plantations of an economically and socially moribund Mayotte.

Despite the influx of migrants, the number of Comorians in Zanzibar seems to have remained relatively constant. Suggestions—inscribed within local debates of a political nature—by the French authorities in Comoros and by Humblot that there were ten to fifteen thousand Comorians in Zanzibar were fanciful: given that the vast majority of Comorians lived in town it was simply not credible that one in four of an urban population of perhaps 40,000 could have been Comorian.²² The 1910 census gives a more reasonable figure of 2313, of whom only a fraction were registered at the consulate. Accepting this figure leaves aside for the moment questions of ascription of identity, for not all Zanzibaris of Comorian origin would have been prepared to be embraced by the French state; others would have, with time, assumed alternative Zanzibari identities. The description “Comorian” was a category with a fluid membership, all the more so since the nature of the relationship between Comorians and Zanzibar meant that many of them were “at home” on the island. They were described as being well organised, and a good number were clearly well off, possessing houses, *shambas* and slaves.²³

Consolidating French status

In 1893 Hamad bin Thuwaini acceded to the throne of Zanzibar. Not particularly well disposed towards Comorians, one of his first acts was to refuse the French consular court jurisdiction in the case of a Comorian woman who had accused her Comorian husband of assault, stating that the husband was a Zanzibari subject. The sultan appealed to Rennell Rodd, the British Consul, who informed the French consul that British policy was that Comorians who had arrived in Zanzibar before the establishment of the French protectorate over Ngazidja in 1886 were not entitled to French protection. Although French jurisdiction had apparently been established by Piat in 1887, Zanzibar since had become a British protectorate and the matter was now one that concerned the British.

In deference to the British, instructions from Paris were that any Comorian employed in the Sultan’s service lost all claim to French protection, even after they left service. However, France did claim jurisdiction over Comorians who had arrived in Zanzibar before 1886, provided that they were registered at the French consulate, thus extending French protection only to those who requested it. The British refused: accepting that all Comorian-born individuals were French *protégés* status would allow them to claim rights under the 1844 treaty between France and Muscat which, amongst other things, granted France most favoured nation status and extended to French subject rights that the British did not wish to see granted to the substantial Comorian population of Zanzibar.

The French response might well have been to let the matter drop; however, there was pressure from two directions. The French colonial ministry was putting pressure on the ministry of foreign affairs to exert their authority over Comorians in Zanzibar and encourage them to return home

²² In 1891 Humblot conducted an informal census in Ngazidja which indicated a strong gender imbalance among adults: about 8000 men for 15000 women. This was cited as proof that 7000 men had emigrated to Zanzibar. Somewhat disingenuously, Humblot neglected to account for fatalities in the recent wars, emigration to other islands and Madagascar, and the fact that it had been the practice of Comorians to sell male slaves on the mainland while retaining the women “for breeding” (FMSG/MAD/399/1066, FMSG/MAD/267/598, GGM/6(8)D5).

²³ Successions, MAE passim.

and to either palliate the labour shortages on the other islands or pay taxes on an increasingly impecunious Ngazidja:²⁴ this clearly required that they be considered French subjects. At the same time, the local Comorian community was also insisting that they be recognised as French. In 1898, a petition (written in Arabic) addressed to the minister of foreign affairs and signed by 80 Comorians resident in Zanzibar, complained that the French steadfastly refused to register them, insisted on the fact that they were inhabitants of the Comoros, “where our families are, our children, our houses and our possessions. ... If we live in Zanzibar, it is only in search of our livelihood and in no sense to make it our homeland. ... Nothing must separate us from the French government.”²⁵

The British remained intransigent; notes were exchanged between London and Paris. The principal stumbling block seemed to be the French request that the very small number—disputed, but no more than 105—of individuals who had been on the French register prior to 1886 be recognised by the British as French subjects, but the British refused even this minor concession.²⁶ However, as the two governments negotiated the Entente Cordiale, it became clear that the matter was not worth arguing and in 1904 the British suddenly announced that they were prepared to accept “as being under French protection all persons who were born in Comoro, irrespective of the date on which they settled in Zanzibar *and all direct descendants in the male line of Comorians who left their native country at a date subsequent to the declaration of the French protectorate.*”²⁷ If this were not enough, usage later extended the definition to anyone of Comorian origin, regardless when their ancestors left the Comoros.

This was to remain the accepted definition of a Comorian until 1954 and accorded all members of the Comorian community certain advantages, should they choose to accept them; registration at the French consulate was no longer a prerequisite for being recognised as a French subject, at least in the eyes of the British. They benefitted from immunity from British jurisdiction, even though the French consular court had been closed in 1904: in particular, the police were not permitted to enter a Comorian house in the absence of the French consul (or one of his representatives); the French consul was also responsible for the management of the estates of deceased Comorians; and, of course, Comorians travelled on French passports. In the early years Comorians were exempt from many of the regulations applicable to natives; this allowed, for example, Comorians to buy alcohol, a right which more than one member of the community turned to their advantage.

Natives and the school

Although there were cultural associations of a social character at an early date—the earliest references to a Comorian Association date from 1911—the first formally constituted Comorian Association seems to have been established on 1 January, 1917 with the aim of assisting Comorians in need. There were clearly operational problems with this association, since another

²⁴ The administration on Ngazidja, operating on a very small budget, had not only inherited a substantial personal debt owed by the former sultan, Said Ali, to Léon Humblot, it was also required to pay the costs incurred by the government of New Caledonia in maintaining a group of Comorian prisoners deported in 1891 (Martin 1984).

²⁵ A/6.

²⁶ Negotiations were somewhat complicated by the fact that more than a few of these individuals were not only not Comorian, but had very tenuous claims to French protection. One individual’s claim to protection seems to have been based on the fact that his brother worked at the French post office (A/6).

²⁷ Cave to Ottavi (AB27/40), emphasis in original.

Comorian Association was founded on 11 June, 1924, this one explicitly inscribed within an ongoing debate within the Comorian community over the maintenance or abandon of costly customary events associated with marriages, to which I will return below. However, there was a more immediate political problem to be confronted: the proposed reclassification of Comorians in Zanzibar as “natives” under the Interpretation and General Clauses (Amendment) Decree of 1925. Comorians, as French subjects, had generally been exempt from many of the controls imposed upon the native population in Zanzibar but over the years the British had gradually (if tentatively) eroded French capitulatory rights in Zanzibar by, for example, closing the French consular court and extending the laws prohibiting the sale of liquor to Comorians (this latter seemed to have encountered little opposition from France). The 1925 Interpretation Decree was a significant step since rather than explicitly including (or excluding) Comorians from specific decrees, it placed Comorians in the category of native and thus subjecting them by default to all legislation applicable to natives.

By 1925 French policy seems to have been to offer little resistance to legislation aimed at extending British control over the Comorian community as long as their status as French subjects was not challenged. However, from a Comorian perspective, their reclassification as native would—among other things—exclude their children from Section A in the government school, thus denying them the opportunity to learn Arabic. As the community pointed out, in a petition addressed to the French consul in February 1925 (this time written in French), Comorians were Arabs and could in no sense be conflated with Zanzibari natives from the African mainland.²⁸ Despite their protests, the Comorians were indeed reclassified, and as a result decided to set up their own school where their children would learn not only Arabic, but English, French and Swahili too. The community took up a subscription to fund a fact-finding visit to the UK (sic) to establish just how to go about setting up a school, and raised the impressive sum of Rs 25,000.²⁹ They were saved the trouble, however: the French consul, also taking an interest, persuaded the colonial administration in Madagascar that it would be in their interests to support the school and in 1930 they sent a colonial inspector, one Charles Poirier, formerly a colonial administrator in the Comoros, to report on the matter. As Madagascar considered the matter, the Comorians used the money to set up a school themselves in an attempt to demonstrate that they were not, after all natives.

The school seems to have been well supported: there were 282 pupils when Poirier inspected in 1931, and following his recommendations Madagascar funded a teacher, a Comorian by the name of Abderemane ben Said, who arrived in 1931. This was the extent of French support, however, and it proved insufficient: by 1935 the school was bankrupt, Accusations of fraud were made against the treasurer and as the school’s supporters (some as far away as Mozambique) became aware of the problems they ceased their financial support and withdrew their children. In 1936, with only 61 pupils on its books, the director of the school board, Sh. Burhan Mkelle (exerting a little gentle blackmail perhaps) informed the French consul that the French School of Zanzibar would be forced to close its doors-.

André Bertrand, the consul, wrote to Madagascar, arguing that French honour was at stake. If the school closed the Comorian community—French subjects—would lose status, and it would rapidly become common knowledge in Zanzibar that France was incapable of looking after its own. There was also the matter of the knock-on effects on the sports club and the Comorian Boy

²⁸ PRO CO 618/47/13.

²⁹ About £1200.

Scouts. It was, the consul pointed out, the only school that received no government support and had done very well to last as long as it did.³⁰ In 1936, therefore, the Government of Madagascar assumed full budgetary control over the school. With perhaps some fortuity, the Franco-British convention of 29 July 1937 on the abolition of capitulations in Morocco and Zanzibar guaranteed that “French schools shall continue to enjoy in the territories of the Sultan of Zanzibar the same freedom as in the past, particularly in regards to the teaching of French”.³¹ Although this did not entitle the school to Zanzibari government funding, it would guarantee the school’s independence and protect it from closure. In 1938, therefore, and following some pressure from the minister of colonies, the French ministry of foreign affairs accepted that the school was of some importance to French status and agreed to match the funding provided by the government of Madagascar, to the sum of 25,000 francs per annum. It was recognised that, despite repeated attempts to downgrade their status in Zanzibar, the British valued the Comorian community, finding them to be well-educated and assiduous employees; many of them held positions of responsibility in the civil service; others were teachers and religious leaders with some influence locally. It was thus doubly advantageous for French prestige if these devoted servants of the Sultan’s administration were French subjects educated in a French school.

WW2 and conflict within the community

In 1940, following the fall of the French government, the French consulate in Zanzibar closed and with it the French school. By now local policy restricted free education in Zanzibar’s schools to Zanzibari and British subjects: foreigners (mostly French Comorians and Portuguese Goans) were required to pay fees. However, given the exceptional circumstances, it was decided that Comorian pupils would be admitted, free of charge, to the government school as long as hostilities continued. There was a condition however: parents of Comorian children who wished to attend the government school were required to sign a document disavowing any support for the Vichy administration and confirming their support for de Gaulle’s Free French forces. This apparently straightforward requirement proved to be problematic.

In December 1940, the former administrative assistant in the consulate, a Comorian Zanzibari by the name of Mohamed Salem, convened a meeting in the Comorian school hall in an attempt to persuade the Comorian Association to call upon its members to collectively renounce their French citizenship and naturalise as Zanzibaris. Not unsurprisingly they refused. Salem, a somewhat venal character, was not highly regarded by the Comorian community: it was, apparently, common knowledge that in his tenure at the consulate—where he had been employed since 1915—he had systematically defrauded Comorians of their inheritances, liquidating estates at artificially deflated prices in connivance with accomplices and then pocketing the difference.³² Somewhat ironically, this practice had apparently led a number of Comorians to naturalise as Zanzibaris in order to avoid falling victim, posthumously, to his

³⁰ Zanzibar government policy was that primary schools should not teach European languages and would not support any school that did so.

³¹ Article 21 of the Franco-British Convention on the Abolition of Capitulation in Morocco and Zanzibar of 29 July 1937.

³² Salem was responsible for a substantial debt to the consulate, discovered by Bertrand in 1940 and repaid personally by the latter in order to avoid further shame as the French government collapsed. It has to be said that Salem was undoubtedly encouraged, if not trained in this venture by Lucien Caumeau, consul from 1924 to 1928, who was an equally unsavoury character and who similarly appropriated the estates of deceased Comorians in his role as executor before being posted to Paraguay. The scale of Caumeau’s fraud was discovered by his successor, René Goubin.

predations. However in 1940 Salem clearly thought his best interests lay in abandoning France and throwing in his lot with the British; he himself naturalised as a Zanzibari, and together with a small group of supporters he set up a breakaway association, the Fighting France Comorian Association, aligned with de Gaulle. Although the remainder of the community, perhaps unaware of the details of events in Europe, remained faithful to the Vichy government in Madagascar, the Zanzibari government henceforth recognised Salem's splinter group (which only had 300 members out of a total Comorians population of perhaps ten times that) as representative of the Comorian community in Zanzibar. The majority of the community—members of the Comorian Association—were marginalised and, since they refused to align themselves with Mohamed Salem and (by implication) with de Gaulle, were excluded from the Zanzibari government schools. Even worse, in December 1941, the Comorian school reopened under the auspices of the Free French delegation in Nairobi and the control of Salem's FFCA.

This split, although centred upon an individual, Mohamed Salem, was nevertheless inscribed within a chronic (some might say structural) opposition within the Comorian community. Divisions within the community, expressed as disagreements over the retention of expensive customary practices (particularly weddings, but also funerals) of Comorian origin, are made explicit in the rules of the associations. Thus the rule book of the 1924 association stated that members "shall not be a member of any of the Comorian County Societies (*mji*) to which his parents may have belonged and that he shall in no case pay the traditional "*kata*" (marriage tax) or "*muongoleo*" (life tax) to any of his said county societies".³³ These "taxes" were contributions to life cycle events that were and remain a feature of ritual practice in Comoros. The competing Comorian association, the Comorian Association Liberal Party (or Hizbu-el-Ahrar), founded on 9 June 1925, imposed no such restrictions on its members. As one might expect, the latter party was mostly composed of older Zanzibari residents who wished to assert and maintain their Comorian identity in exile while members of the former were younger, often recent arrivals from Comoros who had no desire to be bound by the archaic customs of their native land in modern Zanzibar.

The history of the Comorian associations of Zanzibar is replete with fractures and dissent. In 1928 Lucien Caumeau, the French consul, commented on the two preceding groups but announced that they had been reconciled in 1929; in 1933, however, the consul was requested to mediate again, and it was proposed that there should only be one association. This appeared to be the case until the war, when the above split occurred; and although reconciliation was again proclaimed when the consulate reopened at the end of the war, in 1950 the consul once again received protests that a "Comorian Community" was being formed in opposition to the Comorian Association.

Regardless of the formal names bestowed upon the associations, within the community the two factions were known as Yaminis and Shimalis. The Yaminis (whose wartime manifestation was that of the Free French) were against the costs of customary practice:

In the old days funerals had to be accompanied by big feasts and payments and often people couldn't afford it. So when someone died, the family hid it and said nothing to anyone, and they would be trying to raise some money, and often the person wouldn't be buried for several days. This is not Islamic ... so a group of Comorians decided that the funeral expenses should be stopped. These people set up a group called the

³³ A/13.

Ahsab Yamin.³⁴ The costs were often very high, because the whole *mji* had to be fed, and if you had a mother from one town and a father from another you had to feed two *mji*, and so on.

Members of the Yamini party were said to be well-educated and well-placed while the Shimalis were servants and menial workers, and while there is evidence that this broad characterisation has some truth to it, there were also divisions within families. Another informant recalls:

The Yaminis were highly educated and often highly placed, and they were for de Gaulle; the Shimalis were against de Gaulle ... but they were already split, the split pre-dated the war. When my grandmother died in 1934 there was already a divide between Yaminis and Shimalis, and the family argued over whether they should pay the *muongoleo* or not. My father was Shimali and his brother was Yamini. My uncle won and they didn't pay.

The seriousness with which some regarded the split should not be underestimated: one well-known Yamini forbade his children from visiting Comoros lest they be subjected to undesirable influences. However, one shift that was noticeable was the tendency in the post-war period for the Comorian-born to support the Shimalis while the Zanzibari-born preferred the Yaminis. Clearly by now the Comorian cultural practices that had enjoyed the support of their ancestors (symbolic of their group identity and certainly a factor in the community's cohesion) no longer had relevance for the locally-born Comorians, who were now comfortable with their place and identity in Zanzibari society, while those who were themselves immigrants felt it desirable to retain their cultural practices and social networks. Since many of these new arrivals did not speak Swahili, these preferences are an understandable manifestation of their uncertain status and identity in post-war Zanzibar and the desirability of maintaining at least symbolic links with the Comoros lest a return be necessary. In the post-war period, as large numbers of Comorian Zanzibaris opted for Zanzibari nationality, this was not without significance.

Comorian Zanzibari identity

For much of the 20th century policy in Comoros and in Zanzibar alike had been to maintain the French subject status of the Comorian community in Zanzibar. In the early years of the century this strategy was a response to fears of a depopulation of the island and part of a policy of encouraging them to remain engaged, if not return. Indeed, one French colonial governor, Pascal, was so worried that he travelled to Zanzibar to talk to senior members of the community and persuade them they had nothing to fear from Said Ali and could come back. Unfortunately it seems his intentions were misunderstood: the British administration (no doubt baffled as to why a French colonial governor should make a day-trip to Zanzibar) assumed he was intending to remonstrate with Comorians who had become British and warned him off. It appears he returned to Mayotte without meeting anyone at all; but he remained particularly insistent on the need to extend French protection to the Comorians of Zanzibar.³⁵

In 1902 controls were imposed upon Comorian emigration,³⁶ and although the law was drawn up in the context of concerns about the recruitment of labour for the plantations of Réunion, it could

³⁴ Ahsab Yamin, from the Arabic, literally “the parties of the right”. Shimal means “left”.

³⁵ GGM/7B41.

³⁶ *Décret du 1e février 1902 portant réglementation de l'emigration des indigènes à Mayotte et dans l'archipel des Comores.*

usefully be applied to Comorians heading for Zanzibar. However, it was also recognised that the financial contribution to the Comorian economy from the community in diaspora could be of great importance and the policy was thus one of preventing further immigration, but maintaining the links between the two islands, and therefore the interests of the Comorians in Zanzibar in their homeland. It was clear, then as today, the Comorian emigrants did indeed maintain links, visiting Comoros, bringing (or sending) back gifts and money—in the early years, many Comorians left in order to earn money to pay French taxes—and, often, intending to end their days in Comoros. However, while there were strict controls on movements in and out of Comoros, under the terms of the 1844 treaty, French subjects were free to enter and leave Zanzibar as they chose. There was, as a result, a great deal of clandestine traffic between the two islands, for Comorians who managed to leave Comoros needed not fear being refused entry into Zanzibar.

The French administration was intent on managing movements. Requests for permission to travel to Zanzibar had to be made through official channels: individuals in Zanzibar who wanted to have family members in Comoros join them were required to submit the request to the consul, who would generally approve it and inform the administration in Mayotte. Requests made directly by the intending emigrants in the Comoros would generally not be approved, and requests by those who did not have family in Zanzibar were, similarly, not approved. The strategy was very clear: maintain links with those already absent, encouraging them to remain engaged, but not allow further emigration.

Sustaining this latter policy was difficult, however: conditions in Ngazidja were getting worse. In the early period food shortages, the illegal appropriation of land by the colonial planters, the capitation tax and the lack of employment prompted a steady outward flow. In the inter-war years the colonial failure to develop the archipelago,³⁷ attacks (real or imagined) on Islam and the lack of education. A particular attraction of Zanzibar was the schools—the Zanzibar government schools in the early years, later the Comorian school. Education in the French colony was very poor, partly through a lack of investment—in 1912 there were only three primary schools in Ngazidja with a total capacity of 120 pupils, inadequate to meet demand. As late as 1920 there were still only 200 pupils in the schools of Ngazidja; when Poirier visited Zanzibar in 1931 there were probably almost as many pupils at the Comorian school of Zanzibar as in the entire colonial school system of Ngazidja. Indeed, once it opened the Comorian school attracted a large number of pupils from Ngazidja: in 1933 more than half the pupils were born there. The school enjoyed an excellent reputation on the home island: it taught languages—Arabic and English as well as French—and religion, and books and pens were free. The teaching of religion was a particular attraction. The French secular educational system prohibited the teaching of religion in schools: in Zanzibar, religious instruction was part of the curriculum and children were escorted to the mosque on Fridays for prayers. The administration in Comoros were acutely aware of the problems, and comments on the failings of the French system run through several decades of administrative reports, often accompanied by exhortations to model the French schools in the Comoros on the British schools in Zanzibar.

By the 1930s the French were reconsidering their policy of opposing emigration to Zanzibar, particularly as there was no work for Comorians in Madagascar. “There was a time when this was rigorously forbidden,” the local governor observed,

³⁷ The Comoros were administered as an isolated province of Madagascar, a prosperous colony with which they had nothing in common. This led to such anomalies as the appointment of Malagasy-speaking civil servants and the publication of official notices in French and Malagasy but not Comorian.

[but] I think it might be wise to facilitate to a certain degree the departure of young Comorians who go to seek work in Zanzibar or on the African coast, experience has shown that the Comorian always returns to his country, drawn by ancestral customs, and he brings back his savings. I know regions such as Mitsamihuli where entire families survive on the generosity of their relatives living in the British or Portuguese colonies.³⁸

Restrictions on travel from Ngazidja were, as the above writer observed, strict but relatively easily circumvented. Until 1923 there were no effective controls on the movements of individuals into Zanzibar;³⁹ in 1923 the Immigration Regulation and Restriction Decree was passed but had little effect on Comorians since Comorians were generally permitted to land upon payment of a deposit of Rs 100.⁴⁰ As both the French consul in Zanzibar and the administration in the Comoros were well aware, large numbers of Comorians simply stowed away on steamers or dhows; upon arrival on Zanzibar those who had obtained a permit to leave Comoros paid their deposit while those who did not had the deposit paid by Messageries Maritimes pending their return to Comoros on the same ship eight days later. There was a minor problem with this arrangement, however, in that the majority of the Comorians intended for repatriation found that eight days was ample time to disappear. The consul appealed to the Zanzibar government to imprison them pending their deportation but since they were legally landed in Zanzibar and had committed no crime, this was not possible.⁴¹

Despite increasing controls on immigration (and a period of little or no movement during the Second World War), Comorians continued to move freely between the two islands. The Zanzibari government seemed incapable of enforcing legislation which, by 1945 required Comorians to obtain visas from the British consul in Madagascar before arriving in Zanzibar. Not unsurprisingly, few seem to have complied; and by 1951 unofficial policy was to let Comorians (“notorious for their inability to comply with Immigration Law”⁴²) enter without the proper documentation:

The point is that the Immigration Department are accustomed to treat Comorian immigrants with some leniency and to admit them without very much question, even if they have not got an entry permit before leaving the Comoros. I understand that it is not difficult to obtain exit permit from the Comoros owing to the venality of the authorities there. To refuse entry to all Comorians arriving without an entry permit would mean that we may expect petitions from the Comorian Association.⁴³

³⁸ GGM/2D75.

³⁹ The 1906 Immigration Restriction Regulations decree was suspended following French complaints and by the 1920s the Zanzibari government could no longer justify maintaining the emergency restrictions imposed during the First World War, thus prompting the 1923 decree.

⁴⁰ Somewhat ironically, “Africans” were exempt from immigration regulations, so if Comorians had accepted native status they would have been free to come and go at will. In the event, however, they retained their status as French subjects for the purposes of immigration law while being classified as natives in other contexts. If the immigrant had insufficient means, the deposit would invariably be paid by the Comorian Association if no family member could be found to do so.

⁴¹ B/4.

⁴² AB26/30.

⁴³ AB26/50.

Many of the immigrants would have had no claim to Zanzibari subject status, but the Comorians of Zanzibar certainly did. Until 1945, however, it was generally accepted that the advantages of retaining French subject status outweighed the disadvantages. True, travel was rendered more difficult—French subjects required visas to travel to Tanganyika or Kenya—but otherwise they were entitled to most of the advantages open to Zanzibaris. This changed after World War Two, when growing nationalist sentiment (which was to culminate in independence) led to the prospect of Comorians, as non-citizens, being increasingly marginalised. Access to government schools (not all Comorians wanted to send their children to the French school), scholarships to Makerere University, free health care and employment in the public sector were all gradually being restricted to subjects of the sultan; as Comorians became aware of their impending marginalisation within their own country, they began to apply to naturalise.

Initially there was reluctance on the part of both the British and the French. France, undoubtedly for fear of losing influence and its only real foothold in British East Africa, quite simply refused to allow their subjects in Zanzibar to naturalise, although the expression used was to “change nationality”: erroneously, there was a belief that in doing so, Comorians would lose their French nationality. This was in a context of a reversal of French policy on Comorian emigration and a desire (again, in the context of looming autonomy if not independence) to have educated Comorians return home. The school remained part of this project: educating Comorian Zanzibaris, teaching them French and countering pan-Arabist propaganda, of which France was convinced Zanzibar was a centre, were all part of the project of maintaining a loyal and pro-French group of exiles, all destined one day to return home. If the Comorians educated in the local school were able to find employment as civil servants in French colonies elsewhere, so the thinking went, then they would not be tempted to naturalise as Zanzibaris.⁴⁴

The British, for their part, seemed even more reluctant, despite the esteem in which they held the Comorian community. Although a small handful of Comorians were granted Zanzibari subject status while the French consulate was closed during the war, when it reopened in 1945 the British Chief Secretary informed Comorians that all applications would have to be referred to the French consul, who, of course, refused.⁴⁵ When one frustrated Comorian, Said Mbaye, announced his intention to pursue the matter in the Zanzibari courts, the administration informed him that since the Nationality and Naturalization Decree of 1941 had not been countersigned by the British Resident it was not applicable to persons subject to the Zanzibar Order in Council of 1924, which included French subjects, and his case would be a lost cause.⁴⁶

Not all Comorians wanted to naturalise, of course, and, once again, a little gentle pressure was exerted on the French. In a letter to the French vice consul in Zanzibar in 1948, the President of the Comorian Association, Turkey Mbalia requested that France either provide financial support for Comorian students wishing to enter the British educational system or allow Comorians to naturalise. But he continued,

⁴⁴ The reputation of the French school of Zanzibar was overinflated: reports in the 1950s make it quite clear that the teaching of French in the school was ineffective and in a letter to the consulate in Nairobi the French vice-consul in Zanzibar states that “of all these French subjects living in Zanzibar, six of them speak French, two write it and read it” (Corlouer to Beaudoin, 26 April 1952, MAE Z/A/155).

⁴⁵ AB26/68.

⁴⁶ Whether this slightly bizarre state of affairs was an oversight or deliberate is unclear: it effectively meant that legislation permitting foreigners to naturalise as Zanzibaris was not applicable to British or French subjects.

In this connexion, however, I must remark that the second course suggested is too repugnant to me as Head of the local French Comorian Community, to contemplate, since it is quite obvious that if this flow of naturalisation continues every year, within a generation the intelligentsia of the French Community will be intolerably depleted. However, in the present circumstances, and in the absence of any scheme of higher education for the Comorian youths there is no alternative but to submit to the inevitable.⁴⁷

In 1952, however, both France and Britain changed their minds: for reasons still unclear, Britain decided that (contrary to the French position on the matter) that any Comorian who had arrived, or whose ancestors had arrived in Zanzibar prior to the establishment of the Comoros as a French colony in 1912 was not a French citizen, thus abandoning half a century of policy on the matter. Any Comorian who fell into this category could therefore be naturalised as a Zanzibari without reference to the French consul. At the same time, the French consul apparently realised that the assumption of Zanzibari subject status by a French subject did not entail the loss of French nationality.⁴⁸ The pretence was at least partly maintained, however, and Comorians naturalising as Zanzibaris returned their French identity papers to the consulate; in return the consular agent issued them with a letter of no objection that included the statement that “the acquisition of Zanzibari nationality by the above named does not, ipso facto, incur the loss of his French nationality, his new status not liberating him from his links of allegiance towards France, conforming to the dispositions of articles 87 and 88 of the *Code de la Nationalité française*”.⁴⁹ This was, of course, to prose problems later, but in the 1950s and early 1960s, as independence became inevitable, several hundred Comorians took advantage of the changes in policy to naturalise as Zanzibaris. The French community of Zanzibar was, from a legal perspective, disbanding.

By way of Conclusion

By the beginning of the 21st century few Zanzibaris held French citizenship. A small number had had recourse to French assistance during the revolutionary period—generally those whose links with Comoros were strong—but the majority, even those who had previously held French subject status and had been registered with the consulate in Zanzibar or in Dar es Salaam, lost it following the independence of the Comoros in 1978.⁵⁰ Comorian identity in Zanzibar today

⁴⁷ B/9.

⁴⁸ French nationality is particularly difficult to lose and any renunciation of French nationality outside France must be made before a French consul. Since there was no French consul in Zanzibar between 1936, when the consul in Zanzibar was downgraded to a consular agency, and 1963, it is unlikely that any Comorian would have done so. I can, in any case, find no record of any having done so. See particularly Articles 23-26 of the *Code Civil*.

⁴⁹ B/7.

⁵⁰ Zanzibaris of Comorian origin who held French citizenship by virtue of their Comorian ancestry automatically lost that citizenship on 11 April, 1978 unless they had made a declaration of recognition of French nationality before a French Consul or, in France, before a *juge d'instance* between French recognition of the declaration of independence of the Comoros on 31 December 1975 and 11 April 1978. This apparently arbitrary date was dependent upon the outcome of a referendum on the status of Mayotte, held on 11 April 1976, the outcome of which fixed the (French-recognised) borders of the independent Comorian state. Only members, active or retired, of the French armed forces automatically conserved their French nationality without having to make a declaration. 73-42 of 9 Jan 1973, 75-560 du 3 juillet 1975, loi n°75-1337 du 31 décembre 1975, 76-249 du 18 mars 1976, and 76-250 du 18 mars 1976.

therefore is not based on any difference in legal status between them and other Zanzibaris, or indeed other Tanzanians. They do, however, express their identities through social and cultural practice, and this they have in common with other cultural groups in Tanzania: it is not in any sense indicative of non-belonging for, even if they maintain links across colonially constructed borders.

These expressions of identity are manifested in various spheres: in line with Comorian principles of hypogamous marriage, Comorian women marry into other communities, but the men do not. Food and eating practices,⁵¹ clothing and wedding and funeral practices in Zanzibar mark Comorians out as different, although these practices are also different from practices in Comoros (where Comorian Zanzibari are described as “Tanzanians”, emphasising the differences). Comorian identity in Zanzibar is, as identities are, situational and fluid: one member of a prominent (and old) Comorian Zanzibari family who I know well is always somewhat uncomfortable discussing his “Comorian” identity since, as he repeatedly reminds me, he is Zanzibari. However, while my perceptions of his identity are forged more by a knowledge of his family history (including Comorians identities explicitly expressed by other member of his family) than by his own practice, he nevertheless attends (as do all “Comorians”) social events such as funerals and remains embedded in the Comorians community by virtue of aspects of his identity ascribed by others.

While such individuals avoid describing themselves as Comorian, others actively maintain links between the two islands, links that preserve a perception of the two islands as part of a socio-cultural continuum. Marriages between families, a constant movement of individuals between the islands to attend wedding (in particular) but also funerals: the flights, thrice weekly, between Dar es Salaam and Moroni are inevitably full. These links do not represent relationships between diaspora and homeland as much as links binding a spatial diffuse and culturally diverse community.

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⁵¹ Walker forthcoming.