

“West African Border Markets and Regional Integration from Below”

African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE) Conference organized within the 50th anniversary conference of Edinburgh University’s Centre of African Studies

Panel session

6-9 June 2012

Organizers: Olivier Walther, *Centre for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies, Luxembourg* and Denis Retaillé, *University of Bordeaux III – CNRS, France*

Concept and objectives

The idea that regional development in West Africa depends on the combination of two spatial strategies – circulation and production – stems from different bodies of literature which, until recently, had remained separate. These are firstly, the historical approach developed initially from the case of the pre-colonial organisation of the Sierra Leone-Guinea region by US historians¹; and secondly, the geographical approach developed from the analysis of the Sahel region by francophone geographers².

Despite their different backgrounds, both approaches share a view of markets as both *nodes* of transnational trade networks and *places* in production territories, i.e. locations where the space of flows meets the space of places. A general interpretation of territoriality in West Africa can thus be developed via the analysis of two different and sometimes conflicting spatial systems: circulation space, whose primary characteristic is a reliance on urban centres organised along trade routes, and production space, characterised by a central-place distribution of urban centres, similar to that posited by classic spatial analysis models. Despite their critical importance to African economic integration, scholarly work examining the conflicting or complementary relationships between these two spatial systems has been rather limited. Most studies deal principally with either the commercial or the productive dimension of border regions.

A second point of convergence between the two approaches is that both see spatial development in West Africa as being highly dependent on shifts of trade flows and production activities. In a pre-colonial context strongly marked by shifting climatic potentialities and political unrest arising from wars and slave raids, trade routes and production areas were likely to shift over time. Throughout West Africa, uncertainty has led traders and producers to focus on mobility at the expense of fixed investment. This has resulted in an urban organisation consisting of a very large number of markets which do not vary significantly in

¹ Howard A. 1976. The relevance of spatial analysis for African economic history: The Sierra Leone-Guinea system. *Journal of African History* 17(3): 365–388; Howard A, Skinner DE. 1984. Network building and political power in Northwestern Sierra Leone, 1800-65. *Africa* 54(2): 2–28; Howard AM, Shain RM. (eds) 2005 *The Spatial Factor in African History. The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptual*. Leiden: Brill.

² Retaillé D. 1995 Structures territoriales sahéliennes. Le modèle de Zinder. *Journal of Alpine Research* 2: 127–148 ; Retaillé D. 2005. L’espace mobile, in Antheaume B, Giraut F. (eds) *Le Territoire est Mort. Vive les Territoires! Une (Re)fabrication au Nom du Développement*. Paris: IRD: 175–202; Retaillé D, Walther O. 2011. Spaces of uncertainty: a model of mobile space in the Sahel. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 32(1): 85-101.

terms of size or economic function, whose activity can display large fluctuations over time. This economic organization was disrupted by the colonial and post-colonial spatial organisation: new economic and administrative functions were assigned to urban centres, space was divided on the basis of specific types productions, and control was imposed on migrants and nomadic populations. Independent West African states and development programmes both tended to pursue productive strategies of development. Local entrepreneurs, in contrast, developed flexible and versatile patterns of mobility across West Africa and the world, especially in border regions, which offer a favourable location both for merchants willing to develop transnational routes and for entrepreneurs wishing to invest in productive activities in what can be considered as a form of integration “from below”.

Against this background, the objective of this panel is to bring the historical and geographical approaches together by investigating the dynamics of West African border markets and their implications for regional integration ‘from below’. The panel examines four interrelated issues: (1) What were the relationships between the circulatory and the productive spatial systems in pre-colonial West Africa? (2) How were markets affected by the colonial and post-colonial spatial organisation? (3) How do contemporary border markets contribute to regional integration? (4) What are the strategies developed by regional and international bodies to accompany the development of functional cross-border regions and border markets?

Abstracts

David Skinner, Santa Clara University, USA
dskinner@scu.edu

States, Markets and Islam in the Gambia River Region and the ‘Northern Rivers’

For many centuries prior to 1800 states of various sizes, trade networks and Islamic communities had been developing in the Gambia and ‘Northern Rivers’ regions. The territories to the north, east and south of the Gambia River basin had long been sites for state formation, trade and the settlement of Muslim educators; and the migration and trade networks based in these territories extended to the south and southwest to provide additional means for the creation of states, markets, family networks and centres of Islamic propagation. While families from Mande ethnic groups were prominent in this process, members of Wolof, Fula and other ethnic groups also participated. Most of these political, economic and religious activities were stimulated by internal factors, but the intensification of European trade interest in the 17th and 18th centuries contributed to the growth of new states and economic enterprises.

This paper focuses on the formation of states, the competition for markets and the pursuit of Islamic goals in the two regions during the 18th and 19th centuries when Europeans contested with African notables for political, economic and religious space. By the time European intervention began African states, economic production for local and regional markets and Islamic centres had been well established. The Gambia River basin was connected to many interior and coastal centres such as Kankan, Timbo, Falaba, Kukuna, Moriah, Port Loko, Madina and the Sierra Leone peninsula through a series of political, economic, religious and ethnic networks. Subnational and transnational identities, memories, institutions and networks contributed to enduring patterns of behaviour and aspirations. It is the argument of this paper that colonial boundaries created after the Berlin Conference did not erase the prior formations of political, economic and religious networks which will be examined in some detail in the paper. Research about the period since independence indicates that memories about the

precolonial era are profound and cross-boundary contacts are lively.

Allen M. Howard, Rutgers University, USA
ahoward@rci.rutgers.edu

Resources, Power, and the Integration of Production and Circulation Space: The Sierra Leone-Guinea Plains, 1850-1900

An important tool for interpreting the relationship of circulation space to production space in the pre-colonial period is the notion of social power, broadly defined here to include political and cultural, as well as economic, dimensions of resource accumulation and power. Spatial approaches to power enable us to determine how traders obtained resources to construct and maintain nodes that promoted exchange and also how they employed networks to reach their commercial goals or to block competitors. This approach is particularly important in those areas such as Northwestern Sierra Leone where exchange in market places was limited and where most traders operated out of their households or where householders facilitated exchange among traders. The spatiality of power focuses, among other things, on households where traders and those who organized commercial space extracted the labor of slaves, wives, and junior kin and where such people resisted extractions and asserted their own strategies. Studying the spatiality of power also requires looking at sites where political authorities intervened to prevent traders from challenging them or to favor some traders over others. This paper explores the relevance for Africa of such theorists as Allen Pred and also speculates about the how understanding the pre-colonial spatial relationships of power to circulation and production has continuing significance for the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Olivier Walther, Centre for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies, Luxembourg, and
Denis Retailé, University of Bordeaux III – CNRS, France
Olivier.Walther@ceps.lu, d.retaille@ades.cnrs.fr

Border Markets, Regional Trade and Economic Networks in West Africa

To date, most of the literature on cross-border economic networks in West Africa has considered networks in a metaphorical way. The aim of the paper is to go one step further by considering networks as an analytical concept and show how network analysis could be applied to the study of regional trade in West Africa. After a brief review of the literature, this exploratory paper discusses two main issues related to regional trade. We start by discussing how recent development in regional trade in West Africa, brought by urbanization, liberalization and globalization, have contributed to challenge the social structure of traders. We then discuss the changes brought to the spatiality of regional trade by looking at the influence of the spatial location and of the geographic scale on the traders capabilities to trade. In both cases, we argue, social network analysis is an underestimated tool to estimate how traders progressively adapted to the social and spatial changes of economic activities, notably increasing market relations and border-related activities. By combining social and spatial ties together, we ultimately show that the structural position of economic actors can be used to reconsider the centrality of places. By doing so, the relational approach developed in this paper invites to reconsider the geographic organization of West African societies.

Marie Trémolières and **Philipp Heinrigs**, Sahel and West Africa Club, OECD, Paris
Philipp.Heinrigs@oecd.org, Marie.Tremolieres@oecd.org

Regional market sheds, border markets and food security

Draft paper for ABORNE/CAS Jubilee Conference, 5-8 June 2012 (Not for general distribution or for citation)

STATES, MARKETS AND ISLAM IN THE GAMBIA RIVER REGION AND THE 'NORTHERN RIVERS'

David Skinner – Santa Clara University

Introduction

Nation-building and the formation of national identities have proved to be difficult, if not impossible. Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson and other scholars have questioned the reality of nation-states, although the ideology of nationalism has been enshrined in contemporary international organizations and political leaders often act as if they represent unified national states. To do otherwise would diminish their influence and power in the global system. African and other states which developed during the twentieth century were based on the premise of the reality and superiority of nation-states as a 'rational' form of political organization. African leaders adopted the model and used the language of nationalism to seize control from the new imperialists.

The imperial systems of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had little interest in building nations from their colonies, although here and there some 'national' institutions were developed for the benefit of more efficient administration and to reduce the economic costs of imperialism. France had federations and so did Britain (Nigeria), there were colonies – some with enough European settlers to demand a prominent voice in governance – and 'protectorates', and there were corporate-managed economic zones, authoritarian police states and even colonies within colonies. Boundaries inside of federations and between colonies were for the convenience of administration and reflected the rather haphazard nature of how new imperialism developed in the nineteenth century, based on the relative ingenuity and power of European states.

After sixty, one hundred and in a few cases even longer periods of colonial activities African nationalist leaders framed their demands and based their organizations on the premise that these new ‘national’ boundaries represented the least difficult option for developing nation-states to compete within the international system. To reject these boundaries and attempt to construct others, most nationalists concluded, would open up the continent to a host of disputes and conflicts that would destabilize Africa at a time that required vigorous economic development and social reform. In most emerging states ‘traditional rulers’ were subordinated to or co-opted by the nationalist political institutions. In almost all states single political party systems of governance were created, often followed by military coups that installed authoritarian regimes incapable of building national unity. Although some national states have begun to establish more representative multi-party political systems and to create more responsive economic and social programs, recent crises and conflicts continue to demonstrate that national identity and national boundaries remain serious issues in African affairs.

Political, Economic and Religious Networks

Based on research in the territory contiguous to the Gambia River and the region known as the Northern Rivers (Rivières du Sud by the French) in Guinea/Sierra Leone, this paper explores the development of regional economic, religious and political systems that had emerged prior to nineteenth century European imperialism and the influence those systems continued to exert during the colonial and post-colonial eras. The systems to which this presentation refers developed from the extensive trans-Saharan economic networks that originated long before the emergence of Islam in the seventh century C.E. The extension of Islamic influence through conquest and settlement across northern Africa during that century and the subsequent conversion of some of the local inhabitants resulted in the introduction of Islamic ideas and institutions in Sahara/Sahel/Savannah borderland towns and the establishment of new communities.

Commercial and religious relationships produced significant Islamic settlements within small kingdoms and city-states. Among these were Takrur, Walata, Wagadu (ancient Ghana), Ja (Dia, Jakha), Jenné, Gao, Kābura and Timbuktu. Many clans (singular: *qabīlah*, plural: *qabā'il*) in the region from the Fulfuldé and Mandé language groups became notable for their economic and religious achievements and for spreading Islam through the establishment of networks that

connected most of West Africa with regional and trans-regional affairs. These *qabā'il* emanated from Fula (Fulāni/Peul), Serakuli (Serakhollé), Mandinka, Wangara and other ethnic groups in the Sahel/Savannah region north and south of the Senegal and Niger Rivers. By the beginning of the sixteenth century C.E they had founded numerous towns and sections in cities throughout the savannah and into the forested area, expanding commercial and productive enterprises, implanting Islamic ideas and creating the institutions necessary to fulfil religious responsibilities. Although Islam was a minority religion among the populations of West Africa at that time, the Muslim merchants, land-owners and scholars contributed many economic and spiritual services to local rulers and other notable families. These Muslim settlers, in turn, became notables, acquired wives from prominent families and further expanded their institutions and networks.

During the next three hundred years these *qabā'il* became well-integrated into the political, economic and social affairs of West Africa, built new commercial networks, developed agricultural plantations, financed craft industries, created missionary (*da'wah*) projects and established mosques and systems of education from pre-school to post-graduate levels. Islamic states were founded, and their ruling houses, spiritual advisors, merchants (*jūla*: long distance trader, from *jaulah*: circuit, round trip) and landlords were positioned to capitalize on the European demand for local products and slaves for the Atlantic trade system. Well before European merchants, missionaries or colonists intruded into the interior of West Africa Islamic kingdoms, city states and commercial towns were being established in the Gambia River region and the 'Northern Rivers' territory. Representatives from *jūla*, Mandinka Moré, Jakhanké, Torodbé, Bunduké became integrated into the social, economic and political affairs in these territories. They acquired land, built merchandising establishments and hostels, developed plantations, created the infrastructure to promote Islam; and they used their regional and trans-regional contacts to connect their commercial and religious activities with the extensive networks in West Africa.

The Gambia River Region

The early small kingdoms and the Kaabu empire was established by Mandinka warriors called *sòninkee* (not to be confused with the Soninké). These rulers were not Muslims but often had Muslim scholars who provided them with advisor to supplement their own spiritual power (*jálang*). Many notable Islamic *qabā'il* had founded towns and were providing economic and

religious services in the region by the eighteenth century: Turé, Sisé, Jabi-Gassama, Suwaré, Dumbuya (Koroma), Fofana-Girasi, Daramé, Sané, Kamara, Silla and others. Due to the influence of scholars in Islamic centers such as Futa Toro, Bambukha, Bundu, Jakha and Futa Jallon a dynamic spirit of *daʿwah* had developed. Missionary fervor, coupled with a desire to expand trade connections and create markets, led to the establishment of political alliances and even to proclamations of militant *jihād* by a few scholar-merchants. These tendencies became particularly prominent during the nineteenth century.

The markets in the Gambia River region had always been lucrative and became even more profitable as Europeans became less interested in slaves and focused more on the demand for local products and the supply of European manufactured goods. Muslim merchants and scholars used their established centers of operation to expand their control over trade, to enhance the influence of Islamic ideas and to create social and political institutions. They began to construct Islamic states and in the process came into conflict with already established ruling houses, in some cases with their Muslim advisors and ultimately with European imperialists.

The Turé of Kombo. Muslim scholars from the Turé *qabīlah* had been settled at Gunjur in Kombo for several generations when they launched a war against *sòninkee* rulers in the 1840s. Central to the dispute was the mistreatment of Muslim workers and the levying of un-Islamic taxes. The Muslims desired to control their own labor and markets and to prosper under Islamic law. British officials described it as a “holy war”, but sustained military action occurred only after 1872 when Fodé Ibrahim Turé, known as Kombo Silla, proclaimed *jihād* against the non-Muslim rulers. Fodé Turé had studied with Fodé Samankalé Sillaba at Darsilami in Pakao. Fodé Sillaba, who had studied in Futa Tuba (an important educational center established by the noted Jakhanké scholar al-Ḥājj Sālim Gassama around 1804), had launched his own *jihād* in Pakao in 1843. Fodé Turé for a time consolidated his control over most of Kombo and areas of lower Casamance, providing the incipient Islamic state with markets, labor and taxes that were used to finance military operations, schools, mosques and administrative costs. The small state endured for just over twenty years and succumbed to British and French forces in 1894.

Turé and Sisé in the ‘Maba Wars’. Turé and Sisé *qabāʾila* were well established in the north bank area of the Gambia River and were hosts for a noted cleric, N’Diogou Ba, from Futa

Toro. As in Kombo, tensions over insults, taxes and resources had built between Islamic communities and non-Muslim rulers and several small wars had occurred. In 1861 a son of N'Diogou, Ahmadu Ba ('Maba'), who had studied in Mauritania, declared a *jihād* which was supported by the Sisé, the Turé and others, but Maba was killed in a battle for control of Sîn in 1867. What ensued for several years was a civil war between Muslim factions for control over territory, economic resources, ports and markets in the districts of Pakala, Salūm and Baddibu north of the Gambia River. The strongest faction was led by Biram Sisé whose main port was Kau-ur, and he became involved in a conflict south of the river when he supported Musa Molo Baldé against Fodé Kaba Dumbuya in 1885. In the late 1880s political administration of the north bank territories was redefined through provisions of treaties, backed by military force, and became part of British and French spheres of influence and subsequently imperial territories.

The Dumbuya of the South Bank Region. Many branches of the Dumbuya *qabīlah* (descendants of the Koroma from Wagadu and Mali) migrated from Bambukhu, crossed the Falémé River into Bundu and south and southwest following the professions of *jūla* and *karamoko*. Fodé Bakari Dumbuya settled in Gumbel where he established a large *karanté* and married Hawa Gassama. Their second son was Fodé Kaba Dumbuya who was educated by his father and later by Simoto Kemo Sanuwo (Saghanughu) who had studied at al-Ḥājj Sālim Gassama's school in Futa Tuba. After further migration Fodé Bakari settled at Kerewan Dumbuto on the Gambia River where the numerous *tullāb* from his school cleared land for a large farm on which he grew rice and millet, the excess of which he traded, and he began to collect taxes on the river trade to buy supplies for his school. His son Fodé Kaba Dumbuya launched what he called a *jihād* in the 1860s to cleanse the region of unbelievers but many Muslims, including his Gassama relations, did not support him. Fodé Kaba incurred the wrath of the Baldé family who were creating their state to the south (Fuladu). He sought the assistance of Muslims in Baddibu and received horses and fighters from them, but this involved him in the civil war being fought there. At its greatest extent Fodé Kaba's state included all the towns along the river from Jarra through Kiang, into Fogny Casamance, and south to the territories of Fuladu and Pakao. By 1888 he was very wealthy and controlled many markets in the south bank area but he had made many enemies and stood in the way of French and British territorial

expansion. Ultimately, he was forced to ‘retire’ to Madina in Casamance where he had many agricultural villages. A final dispute with the British and French led to his death in 1901.

The ‘Northern Rivers’ Region

The religious and *jūla* networks from the north and northeast contributed to the creation of many Islamic influenced commercial and agricultural settlements in the ‘Sierra Leone-Guinea’ borderlands before the eighteenth century. These communities continued to be closely integrated into the extensive economic and *daʿwah* activities of their Mandé co-religionists, and migrations in the late seventeenth/early eighteenth centuries augmented settlement and promoted the development of Islamic kingdoms and market towns. Large plantations were developed to take advantage of the long-distance and regional trade opportunities; and Islamic schools, mosques, public ceremonies and *daʿwah* projects were financed from the proceeds produced by trade and the collection of taxes. Among the notable *qabāʾil* families involved in these developments were Yansané, Fofana-Girasi, Dumbuya (Koroma), Turé and Sankoh. When British representatives of the Sierra Leone Company and the Church Missionary Society (Church of England) developed relations with local rulers and merchants they described the region as “Mandingo country”.

The Moriah Kingdom and the ‘Yula Tribes’. In the late seventeenth century a Muslim scholar and political leader, Fodé Mamadu Katibi Turé, led a group of his family and other Mandé to Tambakka Kingdom where they founded Moriadi (‘small Moriah’) on the Kolenté River. Through marriage, economic activities and spiritual services he and his entourage built a large community and acquired new allies. Within a few years they continued the migration to the west and founded or conquered several towns, finally arriving in a region that was given the name Moriah (“a place for Muslims”) with its capital at Furikaria (Forécariah). In the region many Mandé *qabāʾil* (Yansané, Dumbuya and Sankoh) had already established commercial towns and promoted Islamic ideas and institutions. These *jūla* families (the ‘Yula tribes’), especially the Yansané became responsible for crowning each new ruler (*alimami*) of Moriah kingdom. For more than 150 years Moriah remained a transit point for trade networks to the north (into Guiné Bissau and the Gambia River region) and to the east (Kankan and Timbo, Futa

Jallon), encompassing many states and large commercial towns; and its system of *karanté* educated Muslims in the region.

Jūla, Jakhanké and the Consolidation of Networks. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries several prominent *qabā'il* played key roles in the expansion of commercial and Islamic institutions. They facilitated the construction of important centers of trade, created plantations and connected merchants with landlords and buyers. Also they provided the educational and *da'wah* organizations that led to the Islamization of the region. For this paper three families have been chosen to illustrate this process.

The Dumbuya (Koroma) of Sumbuya, Kukuna and Madina (Lungi). Two sections of the Dumbuya, following the migratory path from Bambukhu, arrived in the Northern Rivers region prior to the founding of Moriah. One branch, descendants of Faran Lahai Dumbuya built Kukuna on the Kolenté River, and the other, led by Fenda Muhammadu (Modu) Dumbuya, established several towns in Sumbuya Kingdom. One of Fenda Modu's sons, Dala Modu, established Dalamodia on the outskirts of Freetown in 1799 and built Madina across the Sierra Leone River in 1806. The *qabīlah* is devoted to Islam and among the most active *jūla* in the region. The rulers of Kukuna provided a key transit location for trade from Futa Jallon to the coast and south to Freetown, and they attracted several notable scholars to provide their territory with education and missionary work, among the scholars were Kemo Muhammad Silla, Sulaiman Serakuli Turé and Tumany (Uthman) Kébé. Madina and the towns in Sumbuya became centers of trade and production and locations for schools and mosques. Dala Modu was particularly active in creating plantations, facilitating trade and providing scholars for two local kingdoms (Kaffu Bullom and Loko Masama) and in the Colony of Sierra Leone.

The Sankoh of Melikuri, Tawiya and Port Loko. Another *jūla* family important to the development of commerce and Islam in the region arrived in coastal Guinea early in the eighteenth century and established settlements at Taigbe in Melikuri, at Tawiya on the Kolenté River and in Port Loko, a significant trade center east of the colony. They became town chiefs (*alkali* or *alimami*), depending on the location) in the three settlements, and the towns/city states were important connecting sites in the regional trade networks, including Sumbuya, Kukuna, Futa Jallon and Freetown. Descendants of the original migrants established many villages in the region in order to oversee trade and spread Islam. The Sankoh were devoted Muslims (Fodé

Mamadu Sankoh was a noted scholar and teacher.) and attracted scholars from the Sisé, Fofana and Kamara, among other *qabā'il* to help arrange for schools, mosques and rituals. They were closely allied with the Dumbuya with whom they coordinated commercial transactions throughout the Northern Rivers region and its hinterland. The region was particularly known for its production of salt, palm nuts, rice, poultry, camwood (for red dye), beniseeds (sesame), kola and cloth; and cattle was a major import.

Fofana of Malagia, Port Loko and Gbilé. Fofana-Girasi is one of the recognized *qabīlah* among the Jakhanké and was well-established in the Northern Rivers region during the eighteenth century. It had a settlement in Furikaria but one of its major towns was Malagia from which it exercised political influence and sent out scholars to develop Islamic institutions. The Fofana forged useful alliances with the Dumbuya and Sankoh clans, and one of its important scholars, Ibrahim Konditu Fofana, was well-known in the region during the eighteenth century. Two of his sons established *da'wah* programs, one east of the colony and the other just north of the Kolenté River. The eldest, Konditu Mohamadu (Modu) migrated to Port Loko and married the sister of an influential Bunduka merchant, Mohamadu Bundu, who was chief of two towns in the Koya Kingdom south of Port Loko. Konditu Modu was a prosperous merchant, owned considerable property and acted as a landlord for traders travelling from the north with products for Sierra Leone. His sons were prominent political leaders and operated their schools in Port Loko. Konditu Modu's younger brother, Fodé Ibrahim Tarawali Fofana, developed a well-known university in Gbilé on land provided to him by the Sankoh *alimami* of Tawiya. Fodé Tarawali was educated at Futa Tuba, and he operated his very large institution for almost fifty years, serving also as a spiritual advisor and diplomat for the *alimami* of Moriah. His *da'wah* programs were continued by two sons, Lamina and Fodé Lusaini, and by a grandson, Shaikhu Lusaini Tarawali.

Borderlands Are Not Boundaries

In a formal sense all of the states discussed in this paper ceased to exist by the end of the nineteenth century. The territories were absorbed into the colonial regimes of Great Britain, France and Portugal. However, the kinship, religious and commercial networks, while somewhat attenuated, did not disappear. The kinship groups and their connections created through marriage, Islamic education and commercial activities continued to operate long-distance trade

networks and local cross-boundary micro-markets during the colonial era and in the period since independence.

Numerous family histories indicate that young men from notable Muslim *qabā'il* were sent for advanced studies in Arabic, Islamic law, philosophy, theology, the biography of Muḥammad, history and other subjects in religious centers in Mauretania, Futa Toro, Futa Bundu, Jenné, Pakao, Futa Tuba, Timbo and Kankan. Scholars also migrated from these and other centers to establish new schools in the colonies. These arrangements were made through the connections and networks that had been created during the course of many centuries. Another important factor that contributed to these educational and spiritual interactions was the spread of *ṣūfī ṭuruq* throughout West Africa, a process that had begun centuries earlier but became especially significant during the nineteenth century and continued during the colonial and post-colonial eras. British and French officials often remarked about the potential threat of these educational and *da'wah* movements, especially as some of their leaders had demonstrated their militancy by proclaiming *jihād*, resisting colonialism or developing alternative political and educational structures. The Tijaniyya and Muridiyya *ṭuruq* were particularly active during the colonial era. From time to time colonial reports raised the alarm about the activities of *al-mahdīy* (the Mahdi: The “rightly guided” who is prediction to appear and foretell the beginning of the end of time) who was preaching rebellion in borderland areas.

Commercial networks and borderland markets also continued to operate in colonial and post-colonial times. Both long-distance trade and local markets in animals remained active in the Gambia River region and along the “Falaba Road” (that connected with the “Upper Niger River Plain” and Kankan) after colonial administrations were established. Cattle, goats and sheep were important for commerce, and poultry (and eggs) were staples of local markets. Fula merchants were very active in the cattle trade (and as butchers), and some Mandé families also participated in these networks. For example, in 1914 seven Fofana brothers from Guinea made a camp on the Falaba Road in north eastern Sierra Leone, and the next year they constructed Weredala (“cattle compound”). They were descendants of the Fofana migratory group that settled in the Northern Rivers in the seventeenth century. Members of the family also resided in Manjoro and Karina on the Falaba Road, and in all their towns and villages they constructed schools and mosques and engaged in long-distance trade and local marketing.

Local (micro-markets) commerce continued in the borderlands of the British and French colonies and later in the national states despite the creation of new political boundaries. In the upper Gambia River/Casamance borderlands Gambisara, a large Islamic and commercial town that had been divided by the new boundary, remained a vigorous commercial center with many important schools. In earlier times Gambisara had been part of the Pakao and Futa Tuba networks. Along the Atlantic coastal and “Futa-Scarcies” corridors in the Northern Rivers region (connecting with Moriah, Futa Jalon, Futa Tuba and further north) borderland markets in Melikuri, Tawiya, Kambia, Kukuna, Samaia and other towns continued to flourish. The different products provided through French and British colonial and post-colonial connections contributed to the vitality of these markets, sometimes through smuggling operations. Islamic networks also continued to operate in these areas, stimulated in part by the *ṣūfī tūruq* and later by non-governmental *daʿwah* organizations that provided funds for school buildings, supplies, teachers and missionaries in the post-colonial era.

Given the volatile security situation, political instability, and the lack of economic and social services in many locations in these regions, initiatives by local communities have been developed in borderlands in order to aid and protect residents and refugees from military conflict situations. Kin groups have taken in many family members from across ‘national boundaries’. An issue to consider is if the current national state system is not viable then what kinds of alternative social, economic and political structures might be more successful in fulfilling the needs of the residents of African societies.

Bibliography

Abun-Nasr, Jamil M. *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World*. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006.

Babou, Cheikh Anta. *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1852-1913*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007.

Barry, Boubacar. *La S n gambie du XVe au XIXe Si cle: Traite n gri re, Islam et conqu te coloniale*. Paris :  ditions L'Harmattan, 1988.

Darboe, M. N. "The Gambia: Islam and Politics." In *Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed*, edited by William F. S. Miles, pp. 148-158. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007.

Fisher, Humphrey J. *Ahmadiyyah: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Fage, J. D. *An Atlas of African History*. London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, 1958.

Fyfe, Christopher. *A History of Sierra Leone*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Giesing; Cornelia and Valentine Vydrine. *Ta:rikh Mandinka de Bijini (Guin e-Bissau): La m moire des Mandinka et des S oninke du Kaabu*. Leiden : Brill, 2007.

Goody, Jack. "The Mande and the Akan hinterland." In *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, edited by Jan Vansina, Raymond Mauny and L. V. Thomas, pp. 193-218. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Harrell-Bond, Barbara E., Allen M. Howard and David E. Skinner. *Community Leadership and the Transformation of Freetown (1801-1976)*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Hodgkin, Thomas. "The Islamic Literary Tradition in Ghana." In *Islam in Tropical Africa*, edited by I. M. Lewis, pp. 443-461. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Holden, Jeff. "The Samorian impact on Buna: an Essay in Methodology." In *African Perspectives: Papers in the History, Politics and Economics of Africa Presented to Thomas Hodgkin*, edited by Christopher Allen and R. W. Johnson, pp. 83-108. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Howard, Allen M. and David E. Skinner. "Networks and power in nineteenth-century Sierra Leone." *Africa*, 54.6 (1984): 2-28.

Howard, Allen M. and Richard M. Shain, eds. *The Spatial Factor in African History*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005.

Hunwick, John. "Notes on a late fifteenth-century document concerning 'al-Takrūr'." In *African Perspectives*, edited by Christopher Allen and R. W. Johnson, pp. 7-33. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Jalloh, Alusine and David E. Skinner, eds. *Islam and Trade in Sierra Leone*. Trenton, N.J.: African World Press, Inc., 1997.

Jalloh, Alusine. *African Entrepreneurship: Muslim Fula Merchants in Sierra Leone*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999.

Konneh, Augustine. *Religion, Commerce, and the Integration of the Mandingo in Liberia*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1996.

Levtzion, Nehemia. *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968.

Levtzion, Nehemia. "Islam in the Bilad al-Sudan to 1800." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, edited by Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, pp. 63-91. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Person, Yves. "Ethnic Movements and Acculturation in Upper Guinea Since the Fifteenth Century." *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 4.3 (1971).

Quinn, Charlotte A. *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia: Traditionalism, Islam, and European Expansion*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972.

Rodney, Walter. *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545 to 1800*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979.

Saad, Elias, N. *Social History of Timbuktu: the role of Muslim scholars and notables 1400-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Sanneh, Lamin, O. *The Jakhanke*. London: International African Institute, 1979.

Schaffer, Matthew. *Djinns, Stars and Warriors: Mandinka Legends from Pakao, Senegal*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Sidibe, Bakari K. *A Brief History of Kaabu and Fuladu, 1300-1930: A Narrative Based on Some Oral Traditions of the Senegambia*. Banjul: Oral History and Antiquities Division, 1974.

Skinner, David E. "Islam and Education in the Colony and Hinterland of Sierra Leone, 1750-1914." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10.3 (1976): 499-520.

Skinner, David E. "Mande Settlement and the Development of Islamic Institutions in Sierra Leone." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 11.1 (1978): 32-62.

Skinner, David E. *Thomas George Lawson: African Historian and Administrator in Sierra Leone*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1980.

Skinner, David E. "The Incorporation of Muslim Elites into the Colonial Administrative Systems of Sierra Leone, The Gambia and the Gold Coast." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29.1 (2009): 91-108.

Skinner, David E. "Da'wah and Politics in West Africa: Muslim *jamā'āt* and Non-Governmental Organizations in Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. In *Development and Politics from Below: Exploring Religious Spaces in the African State*, edited by Barbara Bompani and Maria Frahm-Arp, pp. 99-130. London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2010.

Skinner, David E. "Islam in Kombo: The Spiritual and Militant *Jihād* of Fodé Ibrahim Turé," *Islamic Africa*, 3.1 (2012).

Suret-Canale, Jean. "Touba in Guinea—Holy place of Islam." In *African Perspectives: Papers in the History, Politics and Economics of Africa Presented to Thomas Hodgkin*, edited by Christopher Allen and R. W. Johnson, pp. 53-81. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Wilks, Ivor. "The Position of Muslims in Metropolitan Ashanti in the Early Nineteenth Century." In *Islam in Tropical Africa*, edited by I. M. Lewis, pp. 318-341. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Wilks, Ivor. "The Juula and the Expansion of Islam into the Forest." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, edited by Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, pp. 93-115. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Resources, Power, and the Integration of Production and Circulation Space: The Sierra Leone-Guinea Plains, 1850-1900

Allen M. Howard, Professor Emeritus
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ USA 08854

Prepared for the 2012 ABORNE Conference, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, Scotland, in
conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of the Centre for African Studies

This is a draft. Please do not quote or use without permission;
Comments are welcome at ahoward@rci.rutgers.edu

Introduction

In the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains region during the second half of the 19th century, traders and their allies integrated what Retaillé and Walther have called production and circulation space. (Retaillé and Walther, 2011) These traders included “big men,” whose ancestors had long lived in the plains; descendants of immigrant settlers who had inter-married locally; and recent settlers from the upper Niger River basin and Futa Jallon (see map). Some traded primarily in the plains, some were mainly hosts (*diatigi*) to traveling *juula*, and some sent kin to trade to the far interior, or combined long-distance commerce with trading in the plains or acting as a *diatigi*. All had an interest in promoting order along routes that served their operations. Their commercial strategies required them to accumulate and invest resources in physical production, social reproduction, and local exchanges and in extensive network building that promoted flows.

Such traders resided in households that had a fixed location, they traded out of their households, and they used their households to facilitate the movement and exchange of mobile traders from within and beyond the plains. In part their resources came from the labor and skills of their household members, who farmed or carried out other productive work. Traders also generated resources through social means — friendships and marriages, titles and offices, and knowledge and skills that translated into followerships. Thus, in addition to the resources gained from their trading operations, these traders accumulated resources through their place-based households and their social power, then used those resources to promote and give order to circulation space.¹

These traders and their allies contributed to forming and maintaining a relatively stable, yet dynamic, macro-regional framework that I have labeled the Sierra Leone-Guinea system. (Howard 1976)² They did that by promoting exchange within the plains and facilitating the inter-connection of the plains with neighboring regions. Their efforts complemented the activities of thousands of petty traders and farmers who carried small quantities of produce to exchange centers and also of the rulers of inland states and merchants and authorities in Freetown and the Sierra Leone Colony.³ Although certain families, towns,

¹Here social power is defined broadly to include cultural and political forms of power. In spatial terms, it could mean the capacity to shape space or actions-in-space through forceful interventions, as when rulers hired warmen to open or shut a road or when colonial authorities employed naval vessels to collect customs dues. For examples, Howard 2005b.

² The Sierra Leone-Guinea plains as defined here reached from south of the Ribbi River north to the Rio Nunez. Freetown and the Sierra Leone Colony should be considered part of the plains, not separate entities.

³ In this paper, the focus is on large-scale and inter-regional traders and their allies. In my larger work, I examine the important space-forming activities of farmers, petty traders, the rulers of large inland

and roads had played an important part in trade since the 18th century, or even earlier, the spatial organization of commerce in the plains and in the larger macro-region had become more complexly integrated from the mid-1800s onward and the volume of traffic increased many fold. The Sierra Leone-Guinea system at its highpoint consisted of several commercial corridors (see map), each comprising several parallel roads. Although the corridors had components that originated far back in time, only the Coastal Corridor, which ran roughly north and south, and the Futa-Pongo/Nunez Corridor were well established in the early 19th century. The Futa-Scarcies Corridor was not consolidated until the 1850s and the Falaba Road Corridor until the late 1860s. When those two east-west Corridors were developed and integrated with the Coastal Corridor and lesser criss-crossing pathways, the roads of the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains had a grid-like pattern with many options for mobile traders. While its overall structure remained stable during the last decades of the 19th century, its component parts changed considerably in relative importance. Particular pathways were blocked or opened, and particular towns and town sections rose and declined as exchange points and facilitators of flows.⁴

Mobile traders fell roughly into four categories: members of ordinary farming households and other petty traders who moved about within the plains; kin and agents of big men located in the plains who traveled to the coast or inland; *juula* (mainly Mande- and Pular-speaking professional traders) who were based in the interior and manned circuits throughout the macro-system; and kin and agents of former *juula* and other traders and merchants settled in Freetown and along the coasts who traveled inland. These traders -- who moved within the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains or all the way across it -- were able to carry out business because stable traders and their non-trader allies facilitated travel and exchanges. They did so by building commercial networks and employing political-military alliances, at times using force. Among the networks were those formed when local "landlords" enabled migrant "strangers" from the interior to settle in the plains and, then sometimes, to establish their own households. Local *diatigi* also acted as hosts for mobile *juula*, aiding their exchange of commodities in the plains (including Freetown and other coastal sites).⁵ The political-military strategies of settled traders and their allies were designed to challenge commercial rivals and also to weaken war leaders and others who wanted to limit or attack commercial movement on the roads.

Both fixed and mobile traders faced difficult choices regarding the spatial use of their resources. Traders fixed in places who invested in promoting circulation were able to draw in more commodities, build more extensive networks, and send their agents over a wider area. They also were aware of the costs of such actions and had to be careful not to spread their resources too thinly. Mobile traders were able to take advantage of alternative roads and exchange points, but only to a certain degree. Those moving from the interior to the ocean-side, for instance, could not secure reliable "friends" in every coastal exchange site.

In sum and synergistically, the strategies of many traders shaped the dynamic system and gave it a certain stability – which in turn created a framework for subsequent actions. By making choices about building up their centers, allying with big men located elsewhere on a certain road, and sending their agents to particular inland exchange centers, stable traders

states, and merchants and authorities in Freetown and the Colony of Sierra Leone. (Howard in preparation)

⁴ Howard, 1976; Howard, in preparation, provides a detailed history of the towns, roads, and corridors of the system.

⁵The landlord-stranger network initially was a patron-client relationship, although it could evolve into an alliance among equals. Many prominent "strangers" from the interior first gained their local footing in the plains through such a relationship; when they settled, they often provided their hosts with social, religious, and commercial ties to the interior.

contributed to flows through the system.⁶ By organizing caravans, moving goods through space, and buying and selling products along the way, *juula* and other mobile traders stimulated production, contributed to local exchanges, and helped to increase the resources of their settled trading partners.

Households, Resource Accumulation, and Circulation

In the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains, including Freetown and the Colony, the household was at the core of many trading operations and also was a major space-shaping institution.⁷ Households were critically important in circulation because their members generated and accumulated human, material, and social resources and because they also directed the use of resources that facilitated the flow of people, commodities, and information. Many of the resources generated by households were derived from the labor and skills of their members, but households also engaged in many kinds of exchanges that generated resources.

Commercial households took many forms ranging from couples trading together out of a rented room to compounds numbering hundreds of kin, clients, and enslaved people. Households varied greatly in size and composition, and thus in their capacities for obtaining, concentrating, and dispersing resources — and their ability to trade and shape space. Members' labor produced food for consumption, housing, and commodities for use or sale, and also enabled households to carry out exchanges with other units, meet obligations to authorities, and trade.⁸ While small units might have one or two servile assistants, large households had many dozens of slaves and dependents who could assist in gathering, processing and transporting commodities. Well into the colonial era, traders located in the plains and the more distant areas of the interior drew upon the labor of enslaved people in their operations.

Large trading households existed throughout the Sierra Leone-Guinea region, including Freetown. Some were headed by professional *juula*, others by *diatigi* serving traders, and still others by “big men” (or in some instances “big women”) who did not always identify themselves as traders, but nonetheless engaged in substantial amounts of trade or supported the activities of traders. Their units had the potential to trade on a greater scale and a more regular basis than small households not only because of sheer size, but also because of the diversity and specialized skills of their members. They contained widely varying arrays of slaves, clients, kin, affines, allies, and professionals who assisted them directly and indirectly in commerce. Household members led trading parties, captained boats, oversaw sorting and

⁶ In Freetown, the rivers, and the heads of navigation towns, Sierra Leonean, European and other traders established factories and shops, which also served bringers from the plains and other regions of the Sierra Leone-Guinea system and complicated the spatial patterns described here. (Howard 1999, forthcoming)

⁷ In my larger work, I treat households as one of several types of firms and look at the composition, resources, and space-shaping actions of other firms.

⁸ A primary difference between the households of the wealthy and powerful and of ordinary farmers was the number of their servile and dependent laborers. While a peasant household might range in size from two people to a few dozen, a household headed by a big man or, in some instances, a big woman might comprise 100 or 200 members, or even more. Among those with the greatest capacity to obtain and direct household labor were rulers and others holding political titles, elders within initiation societies, war leaders, Qu'ranic teachers, and important traders. For slavery in Sierra Leone, Grace 1975. For historical cases see Sierra Leone Archives (SLA) Colonial Secretary Minute Papers (CSMP) 4186/1893; SLA/Native Affairs Minute Paper (NAMP) 213/1892; Parliamentary Papers Cmd. 3020, 1928; and Northcote W. Thomas, *Anthropological Report on Sierra Leone*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1916, 158-161.

loading of commodities, and joined in daily buying and selling. Such skills enabled some household firms to specialize in high value items, such as kola, or, conversely, to deal in a wide range of goods, thus keeping the units operating over a longer season and through downturns in particular commodities. The wives of traders played very important roles in household firms; they cooked and processed foods and other crops, provided domestic services, and supervised children and young adults. Wives were especially valuable in those houses that served long-distance trade, where they might organize the household to provide services to caravans that contained numerous traders and carriers. If they spoke the languages of *juula*, they typically translated and assisted in transactions. Some large-scale traders sent their wives, junior kin, and agents to reside in other centers, where they carried on business, channeled carriers, and sent information to the core unit.

Trading households and other firms also varied greatly in their capacity to form and sustain commercial, social, and political networks. Networks ranged from narrowly instrumental contracts to multifaceted ties among traders who were linked by kinship, marriage, ethnicity, political affiliation, and diverse business connections.⁹ It is impossible to study a total network -- which might refer to the sum of social life within a community, or to all the exchange partners in an economic system -- but partial networks that have historical significance can be isolated, defined, and analyzed. Because of the friction of distance and the need to be in touch with subjects and allies, title holding authorities tended to have dense networks with a radius of ca. 20 to 30 miles (ca. 30-50 km.) from their centers. Most big men involved in regional trade had networks reaching ca. 60 miles (100 km.) or more, while *diatigi* serving inter-regional *juula* might have networks extending 200, 300, or more miles (ca. 300-500 km. or more), reaching the breadth of the Sierra Leone-Guinea system. Historical examples of different kinds of traders reveal network strategies that concentrated narrowly on particular towns and routes, as well as strategies that forged connections along several commercial corridors and in rival centers. Through such networks, traders organized the movement and exchange of a wide range of commodities, arranged credit, and facilitated the flow of information about the availability and prices of goods, safety of roads, conditions in distant towns, and trustworthiness of suppliers and buyers.

To understand the long-term, historical relationship of production and circulation space fully, however, it is necessary to go beyond the specific commercial networks of traders and to analyze political alliances and the exercise of social power within towns, along major routes, and over wider territories. Much of the political life in the region involved cooperation and conflict among alliances of title holders, war leaders, and other big men, including traders. David E. Skinner and I have demonstrated how long-term political shifts, particularly the rise of important towns, can be understood in terms of changes in the networks and alliances of big men and their kin groups. (Howard and Skinner 1984)

⁹ A diffuse relationship was a multifaceted one, that is to say, the bond involved various activities and responsibilities, and had a "moral" and often emotional content. On the other hand, a specific relationship was one that was narrowly "functional" and had limited "moral" or social/cultural content. Of course, many relationships were somewhere between the two poles and could change over time. The terms local network and extensive network have spatial referents. Obviously, each is a relative term. But in general, a local network was one in which people could get in touch with each other regularly and easily, traveling a day or less. An extensive network was one in which physical separation interfered with daily, though not necessarily regular, contact. Networks also varied in their degree of density. A dense network was one in which many members were in direct contact with each other. In other networks, members reached each other only by going through a key person or a series of persons. (Howard 2005a) These concepts draw upon the now-classical work of British social anthropologists and more contemporary theories. For a critical overview of new developments in social network analysis, Drewal 2008, 106-140, 185-186.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, traders, title holders, big men, and others who promoted and benefited from trade allied together. They developed spatial strategies that sought to coordinate actions over trade routes, safeguard the passage of traders, promote the flow of commerce, and increase the nodality of their towns, town sections, and households. They invested economic, social, cultural, and political/military resources in gaining dominant positions along the roads that came to comprise the Futa-Scarcies and Falaba Road Corridors.¹⁰ Their strategies also involved strengthening their positions in the Coastal Corridor, including links with traders, community authorities, and colonial officials in Freetown. Traders and commercially oriented title holders and big men, some of whom had experience as war leaders, hired professional warmen and took other actions to protect towns and roads against brigands, weaken commercial rivals, and challenge other power holders who opposed their pro-trade policies. Such strategies boosted households and towns through the flows of commerce and, less directly, by strengthening social exchanges and cultural practices. It would be incorrect to suggest that people carried out cultural practices simply for instrumental reasons. Nonetheless, it is clear that mobile Muslim *juula* from the interior were attracted to those centers in the plains, including Freetown, where they found co-religionists and also that Islam provided part of the core for some long-term alliances.

Peoples' political, social, cultural, and commercial strategies were intertwined. Settled *juula*, *diatigi*, leaders of Mande- and Pular-speaking communities in Freetown, and big men heading sections in towns such as Port Loko and Kambia sent emissaries and commercial agents widely throughout the plains, to Futa Jalon, and to the upper Niger River basin. Conversely, they hosted traders, official emissaries, and other travelers from throughout the Sierra Leone-Guinea system. Some notable figures stationed wives, kin, and junior allies in towns along the main routes to strengthen their local ties for social and political, as well as commercial reasons. Bonds of Islam drew many together: people sent their children to study with learned *alfas*, and community elders provided hospitality for heads of Muslim states and traveling scholars. Certain towns and town sections became associated with mosques, courts, and Muslim practices, which drew the faithful. (Skinner 1976, 1978, 2004) Information on prices of goods, safety along trade routes, and conditions in distant towns circulated widely as traders and others moved along the inter-connected roads.

Conceptualizing Spatial Dynamics and Structures

In looking at the relationship of the larger patterns of circulation to places where traders conducted business, nodes in networks, and centers of social reproduction, power, and cultural practice, I have found the theories of John Agnew and Allen Pred very useful. Both conceptualize places in order to understand people's actions, the constraints on actions, and the ways in which spatial structures come into existence and are changed. Their theories enable us to see how social and other forms of power were critical to processes of space formation at all scales. Building contestation and power into an analysis makes it possible to examine the origins and dynamic of structures while avoiding systemic determinism.

Of great value is Agnew's notion of place as the locale for action and practice, the location of social reproduction, and the locus of meaning. (Agnew 1993) Historically in the plains, people cooperated around and also contested daily life and commerce in family compounds, shops, docks, and many other sites. Households were the sites for many daily practices such as food preparation and consumption; for social reproduction through marriage, child raising, and control of members; and for meanings connected with status and rank

¹⁰Elsewhere, I have described in detail and analyzed the networks and alliances of traders, title holders, and big men in connection with the development of corridors and particular commercial sectors (Howard 1999, 2009, in preparation)

(which in turn were linked with religion, gender, age, and other elements of identity and association). Traders and allies of traders used their resources to care for kola trees, build boats, erect wharves, and sponsor commercial parties, but also to carry out other place-specific activities, such as wedding ceremonies, peace-making assemblies, and Muslim prayers.

Agnew's concepts can be extended to describe and interpret local and sub-regional networks, alliances, institutions, and associations. Daily practices occurred across space as people moved about and carried out numerous activities through local networks. Individuals and collectivities shaped spatial patterns through migration and material and cultural exchanges. In reproducing their own centers, traders assisted partners and allies by promoting the flow of goods, social support, and ideas. Flows of people and resources thus helped to reproduce the connections among more distant places, while flows of ideas generated common meaning over wide territories.

The meanings of daily life activities and of social reproduction were critically important to larger processes of space-formation.¹¹ When Muslims led prayers and taught the Qu'ran in their houses, *karanthe*, and mosques, they gave their section of a town a meaning-in-place that oriented allies and traveling *juula* toward them. (Skinner 1978) They also created sites for generating and reproducing a certain kind of masculinity that contrasted with the masculinity of, for instance, war leaders who drew on indigenous sources of spiritual power (although leaders combined various sources of power and "marked" landscapes in diverse ways). (Howard 2005b) The masculinity practiced by Muslims became known to others as they performed rituals and moved about, and was reinforced through their networks.¹² Actions-in-places, including the use of social and other forms of power, thus shaped not only places but also wider patterns of circulation.

The spatial order of the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains and macro-region during the second half of the nineteenth century did not emerge by an evolutionary process, nor was it simply a response to market forces. Places, routes and corridors, and networks of exchange became integrated into a system through complex processes of cooperation and contestation, including war. Authorities, title holders, other big men and traders in the plains and adjoining regions used alliances, social and political power, and armed force to control towns, work with allies to ensure the safety of roads, and weaken or defeat rivals and opponents.

As traders and others shaped contested places and routes of the Sierra Leone-Guinea system, they contributed to its overall patterning while also modifying components and altering the framework of future actions. Pred's insights are particularly valuable in theorizing action within dynamic, historically specific contexts:

Social and spatial structures are to be conceptualized not simply as barriers to individual or collective action but also as fundamentally involved in the production of such action as the ever present contextual conditioners of human agency and continually reproduced or transformed outcomes of human agency.... Society is always and everywhere constituted by the time-space specific practices of actual people, by the execution of time-space specific projects that are the medium and outcome of social relations, the medium and outcome of power relations. (Pred 1990, 9-11)

Whether they were only momentarily fixed or were stable over decades, the structure of centers and roads affected traders' choices about which route to follow, where to trade, and

¹¹For a discussion of the relationship of place to space, Hubbard 2005.

¹² The relationship of gender, social power, and space are addressed in Howard, 2010 and in preparation.

who would make a reliable exchange partner. *Juula* in the major towns of the Upper Niger or in Freetown often had a very wide perspective and set of options. On both their outward and return journeys they could select among East-West Corridors and even among particular routes in those corridors, depending on their perception of hazard, amenity, and prices. Although they had fewer options about roads to travel, traders within the plains itself could select among “friends” in river towns and elsewhere when choosing where to sell commodities and buy imports. The decisions of mobile traders and their sponsors, therefore, could add to the resources of traders and authorities in particular towns, who in turn made new economic, social, and political decisions. Cumulatively, such decisions strengthened the nodality of certain centers, concentrating commercial functions in those places, which affected subsequent strategies. Thus, while making circulation decisions within dynamic structures, both mobile traders and stable hosts, traders, and their allies contributed to maintaining and modifying centers and structures.

Historical Dynamics and Spatial Analysis

The spatial history of the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains and the wider macro-region raises fundamental questions that are relevant to other times and territories. The plains region had certain particular characteristics which help to explain the integration of production and circulation space through the processes described above. Those characteristics did not necessarily prevail elsewhere in West Africa during the late nineteenth century, or during later periods in Sierra Leone and Guinea. First of all, it should be noted that, in the pre-colonial era, the macro-region probably had moderate population density and productive surplus compared with other areas of West Africa. Some areas, such as parts of the Sahel, were more sparsely populated and had a lower level of output, while other areas, such as the Akan-speaking area around Asante, were much more densely populated and richer. Underlying resource bases affected the capacity of traders and power holders to accumulate and invest spatially. Little research seems to have been done on this fundamental issue.

Second, except for local food and commodity trade in some centers, market places either were absent or were of minor importance in the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains. Exchange occurred in households, firms, or other spaces that were not market places. (Howard 1981) This in part reflected the lack of sizeable and densely populated towns in the region.¹³ Third, while powerful political entities were located on the perimeter of the plains, the region itself lacked large states and, instead, was characterized by numerous mini-states. In addition to their capitals, those mini-states often contained other towns and large villages. The existence of many centers of politics and exchange allowed for shifts in their relative importance and a fluidity of trading routes during the 19th century. As the production and flow of commercial and other resources increased after mid-century, that same fluidity made possible the relocation of nodal activities to growing centers and clusters of centers. In a synergistic manner, as traders and big men invested resources in particular places and in links between those places, they were able to channel trade and other flows, gain more resources, and then further invest them. Those processes resulted in a more complex spatial differentiation and the development, at least temporarily, of central place hierarchies and more heavily traveled roads.

Socio-political struggles help to account for the concentration of commercial activities in certain places and zones within the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains and the macro-region¹⁴ The

¹³The exception to this statement is the city of Freetown, which I treat as an integral part of the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains region from its founding. In this paper, I lack the space to fully conceptualize the spatial role of Freetown, but see Howard 1968 and Howard in preparation.

¹⁴Some of these issues were explored in the keynote address to the 2011 ABORNE conference; see

history is much more complex than a story of how traders, individually and collectively, sought to shape space in ways that enhanced their interests. Traders fought over sites and routes and were both assisted and challenged by power holders and authorities. Rivals sought to block each others' strategies. Since the development of the commercial order within the plains and the Sierra Leone-Guinea system was highly contested, the history of circulation space cannot be analyzed without examining access to and use of social power that includes gender, religious, and other dimensions of identity and association.¹⁵

This framework makes it possible to compare how local and regional spatial histories have been connected with global shifts in commerce, technology, and politics. During the second half of the 19th century, the cumulative decisions of many traders and others who invested resources in space formation were affected by the power of British authorities in the Colony of Sierra Leone and of the interior Islamic *almamates*. Spatial patterns also were affected by changes in the technology of Atlantic shipping and communication and in the capacity of some Colony-based firms to partner with British capitalists who provided goods on credit that then circulated in the plains. During that period of time, other areas of West Africa had much different political and commercial relationships to Atlantic capital and the West African Muslim world, differences that would have to be built into any comparisons across time and territory.

In the early twentieth century, British and French colonial rule radically altered the plains region and destroyed the overall Sierra Leone-Guinea system by asserting their political and military power, establishing borders, and controlling border crossing. The imperialists established a new spatial order within each of their colonies by privileging certain administrative centers and by investing in rail systems and feeder roads that led to the rise of new commercial centers and the decline of old ones. New technologies, especially the railroad, and changes in the organization of global capital, enabled foreign corporations to transform centers in the colonies of Sierra Leone and Guinea, and to capture circulation space in territories that had been controlled primarily by African traders. Those fundamental changes -- along with heightened competition from commodities produced in West Africa and elsewhere and fluctuations in prices that were set globally -- affected local traders' decision-making. Such changes also greatly reduced the capacity of most, though not all, African traders to generate resources and thus shape local places and the wider patterns of circulation. (Howard 2007 and in preparation)

20th century Sierra Leone witnessed the transformation from an economy based on agriculture to one based on mineral extraction, particularly diamonds, along with the large-scale urbanization of Freetown and other major changes in the size and function of towns. Leading Fula traders, for instance, made strategic shifts in investments, going into housing,

Howard, forthcoming.

¹⁵Traders and those who allied with or opposed them were gendered actors in complex, fluid social fields. In my larger work, I examine how the long-term development of the Sierra Leone-Guinea system was connected with interactions among people who generated new understandings of what it meant to be male and female and with struggles among people who presented different gendered selves. For the history of commerce, several aspects of those changes were important, including the ways in which women traders gained new bargaining power vis a vis men and thereby altered gender relations. My book, however, looks particularly at masculinity -- at the ways in which male traders challenged men who were not traders by accumulating resources, men struggled over commercial places and other sites that had gendered meanings, and men formed gendered networks, such as when merchants bonded across racial lines in all-male commercial associations. The identities of men and women traders were formed through interaction with others in spatial contexts of social and cultural change and of differential power and access to resources. For a brief overview of critical spatial approaches to identity, see Martin 2005.

transport, and diamonds, sometimes while maintaining older businesses, especially cattle dealing. (Jalloh 1999) Those decisions were associated with shifts in population, urban functions, and macro-regional and global channels of circulation -- and also with changes in the sources of social power and in modes of masculine leadership within households and ethnic and religious communities.

More recently, traumatic changes have deeply affected the capacities of African traders and their spatial strategies. From the 1990s, when regional wars and massive population shifts meant that some towns rose rapidly in size and importance, while others precipitously declined, many traders opted for strategies of heightened mobility and operations centered in a few profitable border zones. But there is no guarantee that such strategies will prevail under conditions of heightened globalization and as diamonds are exhausted, states continue to have weak space-forming capacities (with few resources to affect production or urban wages), general impoverishment worsens, and larger areas are privatized by foreign firms.

Since the late 1700s, the relationship between the space of places and the space of flows in the Sierra Leone-Guinea plains has changed significantly several times. From the mid-1800s to the colonial era, African traders integrated those spaces through their capacities to accumulate and invest resources using various strategies. In other periods, while some African traders prospered through regional and international commerce, most had less capacity to acquire space-forming resources because of the impact of global forces, overwhelmingly powerful competitors, and a low level of income among the general populace. Their strategies were accordingly different than during the apogee of the Sierra Leone-Guinea system.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agnew, John. 1993. "Representing Space. Space, Scale and Culture in Social Science," in James Duncan and David Ley, eds., *Place/Culture/Representation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Atkinson, et al, eds. 2005. *Cultural Geography. A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts*. London and New York: I. B. Taurus.
- Drewal, David Singh. 2008. *Network Power. The Social Dynamics of Globalization*. Yale University Press.
- Engle, Ulf and Paul Nugent, eds. 2010. *Respacing Africa*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Fyfe, Christopher and Eldred Jones, eds.. 1968. *Freetown: A Symposium*. Freetown and Oxford: The Sierra Leone University Press and Oxford University Press
- Grace, John. 1975. *Domestic Slavery in West Africa with Particular Reference to the Sierra Leone Protectorate, 1896-1927*. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Harrell-Bond, Barbara E., Allen M. Howard, and David E. Skinner. 1978. *Community Leadership and the Transformation of Freetown, 1801-1976*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Howard, Allen M. 1968. "The Role of Freetown in the Commercial Life of Sierra Leone," in Christopher Fyfe and Eldred Jones, eds. *Freetown: A Symposium*. Freetown and Oxford: The Sierra Leone University Press and Oxford University Press, 38-64.
- 1976. "The Relevance of Spatial Analysis for African Economic History: The Sierra Leone- Guinea System," *Journal of African History* 17:3, 365-388.
- 1981. "Trade without Marketplaces: The Spatial Organization of Exchange in Northwestern Sierra Leone to 1930," *African Urban Studies* 11, 1-24.
- 1999. "Islam and Trade in Sierra Leone, 18th-20th Centuries," in Alusine Jalloh and David E. Skinner, eds. *Islam and Trade in Sierra Leone*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 21-63.
- 2003. "Contesting Commercial Space in Freetown, 1860-1930: Traders, Merchants, Officials," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 37:2-3, 236-268.
- 2005a. "Nodes, Networks, Landscapes, and Regions: Reading the Social History of Tropical Africa 1700-1920," in Howard and Shain, eds., *Spatial Factor*, 21-140.
- 2005b. "Remarking on the Past: Spatial Structures and Dynamics in the Sierra Leone-Guinea Plains, 1860-1920s," in Howard and Shain, eds. *Spatial Factor*, 291-348.
- 2007. "Mande Kola Traders of Northwestern Sierra Leone, Late 1700s to 1930." *Mande Studies* 9.
- 2010. "Actors, Places, Regions, and Global Forces: An Essay on the Spatial History of Africa Since 1700," in Ulf Engel and Paul Nugent, eds. *Respacing Africa*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- forthcoming. "Sierra Leone-Guinea Boundary and Border Zone Trade: Historical and Comparative Perspectives." (presented at 2011 ABORNE conference, Lisbon).
- in preparation. *Traders, Accumulation and Spatial Contestation: Commercial Change in Sierra Leone and Guinea, 1780-1930*, in preparation.
- Howard, Allen M. and Richard M. Shain, eds., 2005. *The Spatial Factor in African History. The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptual*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Howard, Allen M. and David E. Skinner. 1984. "Network Building and Political Power in North-western Sierra Leone, 1800-1865," *Africa* 54:2, 2-28.
- Hubbard, Phil. 2005. "Space/Place," in David Atkinson, etal, eds. *Cultural Geography*, 41-48.
- Jalloh, Alusine. 1999. *African Entrepreneurship. Muslim Fula Merchants in Sierra Leone*. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies.
- Jalloh Alusine and David E. Skinner, eds. 1999. *Islam and Trade in Sierra Leone*. Trenton:

- Africa World Press,
- Martin, James. 2005. "Identity," in David Atkinson, et al, eds. *Cultural Geography*, 2005, 97-102.
- Pred, Allen. 1990. *Making Histories and Constructing Human Geographies. The Local Transformation of Practice, Power Relations, and Consciousness*. Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press.
- Retaillé, Denis and Olivier Walther. 2011. "Spaces of Uncertainty: A model of mobile space in the Sahel," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*. 32, 85-101.
- Skinner, David E. 1976. "Islam and Education in the Colony and Hinterland of Sierra Leone (1750-1914)," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 10, 499-520.
- 1978. "Mande Settlement and the Development of Islamic Institutions in Sierra Leone," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*. 11, 32-62.
- 2004. "Dala Modu," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Carol. 1976. *Regional Analysis*. Vols I and II. New York, Academic Press.

Border Markets, Regional Trade and Economic Networks in West Africa

Olivier Walther, Centre for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies, Luxembourg,
and **Denis Retaillé**, University of Bordeaux III – CNRS, France
Olivier.Walther@ceps.lu, d.retaille@ades.cnrs.fr

Paper prepared for the 2012 ABORNE Conference, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh,
Scotland, in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of the Centre for African Studies

This is a draft. Please do not quote.

1. Introduction

Since pre-colonial times, West African traders have developed original ways of doing business that have attracted increasing attention from various disciplines. Historians, in particular, have documented the historic roots of trade networks, focusing either on the historical development of a specific type of product or on traders' historical adaptation strategies (Curtin, 1975; Brooks, 1993; Howard & Shain, 2005; Howard, 2010). The geographic expansion of such networks across West Africa and the world has also received a great deal of attention from geographers, who have studied in detail the spatial strategies of ethnic groups involved in trade (Grégoire & Labazée, 1993; Lambert & Egg, 1994; Soulé, 2000; Grégoire, 2001; 2003; Walther, 2009). At the same time, political economists have expressed an increasing interest in the social embeddedness of economic networks in West Africa, as well as a growing concern about their regulatory performance under the current conditions of liberalization and globalization (Boone, 1994; Meagher, 1995; 2005; 2010). While those networks increasingly supply West African urban centers, they are often accused of undermining the action of the state, as they rely mostly on informal or illegal practices and thus create new vulnerabilities.

To date, the historical, spatial, and political economy perspectives dealing with economic networks in West Africa have considered these in metaphorical terms or as a heuristic device for dealing with informal relations or spatial arrangements. Hardly any studies have used social network analytic tools and theories to examine the structure of relations between the economic agents themselves and between social actors and their institutions. The aim of this exploratory paper is to fill this gap by considering networks as an analytical concept and applying theoretical models provided by relational theories of social interaction. Our main purpose is to highlight the potential contribution of social network analysis to the analysis of West African trade patterns and to propose a theoretical framework that will guide future empirical investigations. As this paper argues, a network approach can have methodological and thematic advantages.

From a methodological point of view, this contribution argues that social network analysis is a credible alternative to the two main economic approaches developed so far to analyze regional trade: the flow approach which estimates the intensity of agricultural and manufactured goods exchanged between markets or countries (see Herrera, 1998), and the price approach which uses market prices as a proxy to estimate regional integration (see Fafchamps & Gavian, 1997; Aker, et al., 2010). Analyzing trade without necessarily considering the intensity of flows or the level of prices, but focusing on social actors, can

be of great value in a context of informal and unrecorded trade circuits, hidden actors, parallel routes and clientelist ties.

Network analysis can also contribute to addressing important thematic questions related to regional trade in West Africa. This paper explores two of them. We start by discussing how recent developments in regional trade in West Africa, brought on by urbanization, liberalizations and globalization, have contributed to challenging the social structure of traders. We then discuss the changes brought to the spatiality of regional trade by looking at the influence of spatial location and geographic scale on traders' abilities to trade. In both cases, we argue that the value of social network analysis in understanding how traders have progressively adapted to social and spatial changes in economic activities, by considerably increasing market relations and border-related activities, has been greatly underestimated.

2. The missing connection between network analysis and African studies

Two major reasons explain why network analysis has as yet hardly been applied to Sub-Saharan African societies, and most particularly to regional trade. First, community studies initiated in the 1970s by British sociologists and anthropologists in Africa were not recognized as a mainstream area of interest among network scientists. Second, approaches applied concurrently by both economists and geographers contributed to overshadowing formal network analysis to the profit of econometrics or qualitative studies.

2.1 Network analysis in Africa

At the beginning of the 1970s, the application of social network analysis to economic networks looked promising in Africa. Taken collectively, three books that were published simultaneously could have formed the basis for a formal investigation of economic networks in Africa.

In *Customs and Politics in Urban Africa*, Cohen (1969) documented the historical development and political implications of a trade diaspora among the Hausa of Ibadan in Nigeria. He notably showed that Hausa traders had established diasporas, defined as nations of “*socially interdependent, but spatially dispersed, communities*” (Cohen, 1971: 267), in order to decrease transaction costs among the members of their community. The importance of trade diasporas to pre-colonial and colonial long-distance trade was also thoroughly explored in Meillassoux's (1971) edited volume on *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*. This work provided an impressive collection of case studies dedicated to the transformations of West African trade to changes brought by slave trade and colonization and proved inspiring for the analysis of both the social structure of long-distance trade and the spatial arrangements of flexible networks.

Simultaneously, in *Social Networks in Urban Situations*, Mitchell (1969) and his colleagues from Manchester introduced an analytical approach to networks in urban sociology and social anthropology. They showed how social network analysis was “*complementary to and not a substitute for conventional sociological or anthropological frameworks of analysis*” (Mitchell, 1969: 8). At that time, social scientists working in Africa on networks were particularly interested in social stratification, rural-urban migration, kinship, dispute settlement, economic cooperation, and patron-client networks (Peil, 1978). Unfortunately, and despite its considerable value, this community-based approach was progressively

marginalized among network scientists, who moved from Britain to the United States and towards more mathematical developments (Scott, 2006: 32).

As a consequence, to date network analysis has rarely been used in Sub-Saharan Africa. Existing studies mainly focus on the impact of social networks on kinship (Bollig, 1998), health conditions (Adams, et al., 2006; Ayuku, et al., 2006) or on the role of social networks in coping with vulnerability (Schneegg, 2006; Schneegg and Stauffer, 2007). A number of scholars focus on hunter-gatherers based on the – rather evolutionary – idea that such societies “resemble that of our early ancestors” and allow to discover the “possibly adaptive origins of human social networks” (Apicella, et al., 2012: 497, see also Hamilton, et al., 2007; Hill, et al., 2011). Formal social network analysis has also been used to investigate the relations between social networks and the diffusion or adoption of innovative agricultural techniques (Matous, 2010; Todo, et al., 2011) as well as the relationships between the spatial distribution of social networks (Matous, et al., 2011). However, regional trade remains a *terra incognita* of social network analysis in Africa, despite its key importance for the development of both rural and urban African societies.

2.2. Networks as chains

The second explanation for the lack of social network approaches in scholarship on African trade is linked to the fact that other approaches have proved more popular among economists and geographers. In the 1970s, Boutilier (1971) introduced the distinction between two spatial structures which he called the ‘relay’ and the ‘network’. ‘Relays’ were conceived of as chains of actors, each of them supplying goods to the limits of another ethnic group, whereas ‘networks’ were supposed to transport goods over long distances through traders who crossed ethnic boundaries. Since then, literature has shown that the ‘relay’ organization could no longer be applied to the post-colonial spatial organization of trade. Nevertheless, the idea that social actors are organized in some kind of a chain has survived and has influenced the way West African networks have been conceptualized by economists, historians and geographers.

Documenting the spatial and social organization of the production and circulation of one particular product, economists usually divided the productive systems vertically into homogeneous sub-sectors, known as *filières* (see Duteurtre, et al., 2010). In West Africa, the contribution of this approach was to highlight that economic *filières* were often based on closely embedded ties, be they family, ethnic or religious. Well-known examples include the supply of cement to Niamey and of onions to Abidjan, which is predominantly organized by the Aderawa merchants of Niger (Grégoire, 2003); the hardware or spare parts business by Igbo from Nigeria; or the cattle business dominated by Fulani herders or Hausa traders (Quarles van Ufford, 1999).

Despite its usefulness for understanding the organization of economic activities, the *filière* approach only captures a fraction of the business landscape of a region. Most notably, its emphasis on one product leads to neglecting the fact that traders usually deal with several products at the same time in order to protect their businesses from uncertainty, which can include the closing of a border, rapid changes in import legislations, droughts, or change in consumers’ taste. The *filière* approach also fails to take into account the complementarities between traders working on the same markets but with different products, and the diasporas that arise from the concentration of people and goods in certain market places.

The idea that networks are predominantly composed of chain elements organized in a hierarchical way has also permeated geographic studies. For instance, Grégoire's (1992, 1993) classical study of Hausa traders shows that networks are controlled by a limited number of 'chiefs' (*chefs de réseaux*) who are localized in large urban centers. These wholesalers trade agricultural products, notably cereals that are of critical importance for landlocked countries in the Sahel. They exercise their influence over numerous representatives in charge of collecting agricultural products in rural areas, who have power over a score of local dependents in charge of buying goods to the producers in the countryside. According to this hierarchical conception, each of the actors has a precise task to perform and is linked to a patron by clientelist ties. Following the chain of actors, one can easily go from the farmer working in his field in a remote production area to the largest merchant involved in large-scale trading from a major West African city, which is a straightforward way of representing the social and spatial structure of economic activities.

However, it can also be argued that such a pyramidal conception does not take fully into account the diversity of horizontal ties that very often bind actors from the same hierarchical level and the diversity of profiles that such actors can have. What are the relations between the chiefs, middlemen and local collectors themselves? Can one of these agents shift from his hierarchical position and make its way into another category? Who is the most central actor of the network and who plays a brokerage role? Focusing exclusively on the hierarchy of trade organizations does not permit to study how social structures facilitate or constrain the business activities since the relevant actors and ties are not all taken into consideration.

3. Exploring alternative approaches

The purpose of network analysis applied to African networks should not be to replicate existing studies but to explore alternative approaches to the literature already devoted to this part of the world. One of the great advantages of this approach is notably to bridge social and spatial studies. In what follows we particularly explore the combination between brokerage, peripherality and long-distance trade, since it appears that brokers and border markets have received less attention from the scholarly literature than central actors and central places. The next two sections discuss more precisely the social distinction between brokers and central actors on the one hand, and the spatial distinctions between central places and border markets and between long- and small-distance trade on the other hand.

3.1. The social structure of economic networks

Economic studies have long shown that, despite the informal nature of their activities and a highly uncertain business environment, West African entrepreneurs face three fundamental problems: make information exchange secure when business partners are separated by long physical and cultural distance; make business flows secure and without delay throughout the continent; and establish trust and credit relationships between business partners (Fafchamps, 2004). Cohen (1969) demonstrated that such obstacles were overcome by the creation of strongly embedded business networks founded on kinship, ethnic, and religious ties. Since then, as Meagher (2005) noted, the new economic sociology literature has emphasized the importance of such "embedded" ties in reducing risk, pooling complementary skills, improving access to new markets, and safeguarding property rights

when formal contracts are not possible. In a business environment with little reliance on formal institutions, these elements contribute to the embeddedness – or ‘closure’ in Burt’s (2005) terms – of West African traders in a dense network of customers and partners. Prominent examples of strongly embedded economic ties include notably the Mourides, the Soninke, the Hausa, or the Dyula.

On the other hand, recent studies have shown that a strong degree of embeddedness can also have disadvantages: established networks may exclude many entrepreneurs and suppliers when limited to a minority, encourage bosses to recruit people like them, undermine meritocracy and favor the well-connected rather than the well-qualified (Quarles van Ufford & Zaal, 2004, Smith-Doerr & Powell, 2005). These studies have also highlighted that the ethnic and religious diversity of traders has increased, making “*commercial identity no more exclusive*” (Warms, 1994: 101). Thanks to the internationalization of trade, African traders have developed a more universal entrepreneurial culture (Quarles van Ufford, 1999; McDade & Spring, 2005; Beuving; 2006; Dobler, 2008) than what used to be the case before the accelerated liberalization and globalization of the 1980s.

The development of new ties that stretch beyond the bounds of the local business community, both socially and geographically, has certainly not lead to the complete disappearance of embedded ties in the context of a more market-oriented economy. Patron-client relationships have proved resilient in Africa (Ensminger, 1996). However, while exchanges were previously based mainly on strong ties, firmly embedded in kinship or ethnic groups, the opening of trade to world markets has encouraged the development of brokerage relations that are predominantly made of weak ties based on symmetrical and reciprocal bonds between peers. These weak ties are made necessary by the need to do business with distant partners who are located in Europe, in North and Latin America, the Middle East or China, and who may not share the same origin, religion, culture or language.

These elements lead us to posit that West African traders are increasingly forced to combine strong embeddedness within the social group with brokerage ties beyond the group if they want to enter new global markets. As Meagher (2010: 17) argues, these traders need to find a “*balance between norms of group solidarity and more instrumental linkages across social cleavages*”. Extending Burt’s (1992, 2005) work on the relationships between embeddedness and brokerage, we argue that such a cohesive group with diverse external contacts provides a mix that is suited to informal nature of regional trade in West Africa in the absence of alternative or appropriate formal structures.

This idea is close to what Uzzi (1996: 684) formulated, albeit in a very different context, when he noted that “*a theoretic optimum between the countervailing effects of under- and over-embeddedness exists when a network is composed of a mixture of arm’s-length and embedded ties*”. This is highlighted by the fact that the relationship between embeddedness and economic performance is non-linear but follows an inverted U-shape curve. Fleming, et al. (2007: 939) developed a similar idea in their study of small worlds created between patent co-authorship in the US. For them, “*small-world networks simultaneously exhibit high clustering and low path length*”, which means that such networks are created both by a strong embedment in local clusters and by distant ties which provide innovative ideas. Small worlds have strong cohesion and brokerage, which make them well adapted to

change and uncertainty.

Brokers draw resources from the fact that transaction costs are particularly high in a cross-border environment. These costs mean that the resources to collect needed information be marshaled, that distant contacts be maintained and that various national legislations be known. Moreover, brokers need to monitor prices on different markets over long distances, find new trading partners, and maintain contacts with state representatives who are very likely to shift from one position to another, a volatility that hinders sustained investment in social ties (Ensminger, 1996). Most business relations have low transaction costs because business partners have known each other for a long time and are used to performing regular transactions. They are highly embedded in a social and cultural context that provides trust and reputation to those who follow the rules and can punish or exclude those who are untrustworthy or unreliable. But, at the same time, strongly embedded networks also limit the potential for gains because every business partner provides more or less the same products or services. Much larger gains can be expected from less embedded actors, who may be more complementary to each other, have different ideas, and better exploit cultural or monetary differentials.

3.2. The spatiality of economic networks

In a region characterized by poor transport infrastructure and considerable distances between urban centers, the balance between brokerage and embeddedness is likely to be highly constrained by the location of economic agents and by the scale of their business activities.

Building on Greif's (1989) report of how geographic separations between cities were bridged by ancient traders in North Africa, border markets can be considered as a prime location for connecting disconnected parts of markets. These markets attract economic agents with distinctive behavioral characteristics that affect their network brokerage roles and unique relational attributes affecting their control of business information flows. Therefore, we expect brokers to be overrepresented in border markets and central actors to be more present in national centers or capital cities. In other words, we wish to test whether the national borders of the political space where border markets are located also correspond to the "*natural borders [of] the social space*", which Smith-Doerr and Powell (2005: 381) describe as structural holes. Since, as many empirical studies suggest, border markets are very often dominated by foreign traders who act as trailblazers for trade diasporas (Little, 1992; Chalfin, 2001; Grätz, 2004; Dobler, 2008; Walther, 2012), we suppose that a large proportion of these brokers will be either specialists attracted by the potential of border regions, or representatives of more central actors sent to deal specifically with border-related businesses.

The more that traders go into long-distance trade, the more they have to rely on weak ties. As such, cross-border networks go against the general tendency of homophily. As Wellman (1988: 42) notes, "*Finite limits operate so that involvement in dense clusters often entails the loss of other ties. Jointly, these structural processes encourage the formation of ties within clusters and few ties across boundaries*". Cross-border trade also entails a higher risk than local trade, since it aims at bridging business partners that do not necessarily share the same values. However, greater resources can be drawn from the exploitation of long-distance trade, which implies the crossing of multiple and often distant borders, than of

small-distance trade. This can be explained by the fact that crossing a border entails a potential benefit from price, monetary, legal and regulatory differentials that a 'regular' national market does not provide. Profits made in import-export trade depend on the possibility of moving a product with the smallest number of intermediaries and not on the transformation brought to a product itself. Therefore, the geographical extension of African networks, which implies to move from small-scale to large-scale trade, is a necessary condition for the prosperity of traders.

As a consequence, we assume that brokerage opportunities will depend on the scale of business activities carried out by the traders and we expect to find two categories of traders: large-scale traders operating at the international level who should be more likely to have stretched outside the local community to find a balance between embeddedness and brokerage, and small-scale traders working between border cities and privileging locally-embedded ties. This idea of having two categories of traders shares many similarities with Braudel's (1992) historical distinction between long-scale trade and local trade. As Braudel (1985: 58) argues, "*It is not a hazard if, in all countries of the world, a group of large traders stands out from the rest of the merchants, and if this group is always related to long-distance trade*" (our translation). In West Africa, small and large traders make use of the same markets, road infrastructures, and institutions but form two distinct categories separated by their origin, wealth, and education. Large traders are different in the sense that they have benefited from the development of international trade and deregulations that have taken place since the 1980s and, in addition, have successfully built alliances with state representatives and politicians at the national scale.

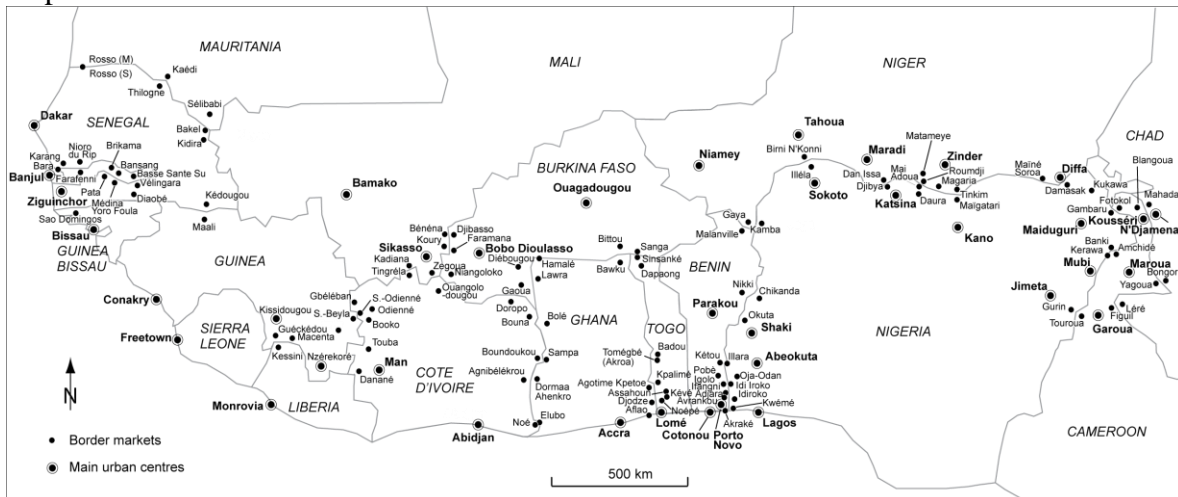
4. The case of West African border markets

4.1. Conceptual framework

Our conceptual framework consists of a combination of three variables that are highly likely to influence the structure of economic networks. First, we consider the social structure of these networks and ask ourselves whether traders are predominantly individuals with connections across structural holes (brokers) or central actors connected to a large number of people. In our work, brokers and central actors are defined by their structural position in the networks rather than by the precise function they occupy in empirical trade negotiations and do not necessarily correspond to the *courtiers* or *grands commerçants* of the French-speaking literature (see Bierschenk, et al., 2000 and Grégoire & Labazée, 1993).

Second, we argue that the location of these brokers or central actors can be crucial for the development of their activities, considering the cost of doing business in an environment where transport and communication infrastructures are poor. Most of the literature focuses on traders located in large urban centers, but other locations such as border markets can significantly affect traders' economic activities (Retaille and Walther, 2011). We consider border markets (Map 1) as emblematic locations of the periphery of the nationally organized economic system, as opposed to more central places such as capital cities or regional centers.

Map 1. West African border markets



Cartography: Walther.

Third, we investigate whether economic activities carried out by traders located in central places or in border markets can have very different scales. Again, border markets provide fertile ground for studying regional trade since they provide small-distance opportunities to traders who exploit local border differentials and offer a particularly favorable location for larger merchants willing to develop long-distance transnational routes. Over the last decades, structural adjustments and urbanization have led to a new demand for cheap goods coming from informal and often cross-border trade, reinforcing the key role of such border markets in the circulation of goods in West Africa. As a consequence, a large number of border markets such as Gaya in Niger, Cinsanké in Togo, or Diaobé in Senegal, to name just a few, have developed into hubs for the transnational circulation of goods, a status that sets them apart from other markets.

4.2. Empirical evidence

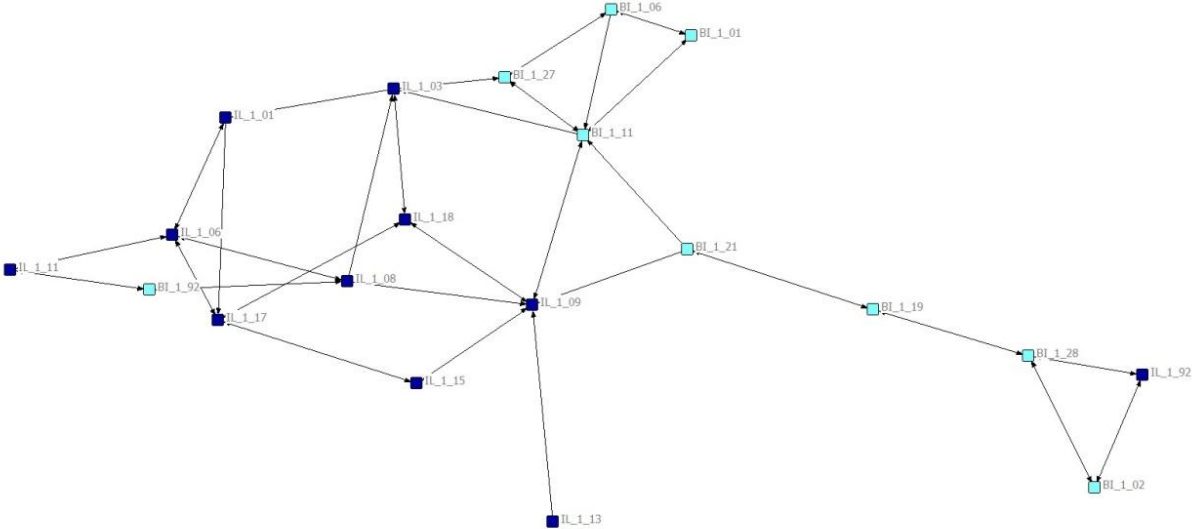
Empirical evidence is based on an on-going study of large traders located in two border regions located between Niger, Nigeria and Benin (see the description of the project at: <http://www.ceps.lu/?type=module&id=39&tmp=1761> for more details). The border areas of Birni N’Konni-Illela and Gaya-Malanville-Kamba are selected. The former is of particular interest due to the highly informal nature of economic activities between Niger and Nigeria and the historical ethnic networks that have developed between them. Located between Niger, Benin and Nigeria, the second case study is slightly more atypical. While border activity is generally dominated by agents specialising in long-distance trade, trade in the area of Gaya is dominated by traders from abroad and illustrates how the emergence of a place of exchange can be linked primarily to the creation of modern national borders. Situated on the fringe of the great pre-colonial socio-political formations, this case study makes it possible to show the emergence of a place of exchange that is less well-documented than other West African border areas. The proximity of the two case studies will facilitate the coordination of the research and the implementation of the surveys. Also, we limit our inquiries to small-sized border markets (compared with larger metropolitan centres such as Sokoto or Kano where traders are also concentrated) in order to facilitate the identification and limit the number of key actors to be interviewed.

Data was collected between January and April 2012 in collaboration with the Department

of Geography at the University of Niamey, Niger. Because the number of actors in the relevant set is extremely large and not precisely known, snow-balling techniques are used to develop a sample of traders. These techniques allow identification of new economic agents from among the subject's existing acquaintances, and are a recognised alternative where fully-enumerated sets of actors are impossible to collect. They typically work by selecting a number of seed nominators during a first wave, using these first interviews to produce a list of nominees, and conducting further interviews until population saturation or a significant sample size is reached. In our case, large traders were identified with the help of freight agents and have an annual turnover of over 100 FCFA million. Surveys conducted in the border markets of Gaya, Malanville, Kamba, Birni N’Konni and Illela focussed on goods whose trade (1) had a certain impact on regional development and (2) did not involve illegal or criminal networks that would make them too difficult to investigate. The following products are of interest for the study: building materials (including cement), cereals and flour (including rice), textile, used clothing.

The Birni N’Konni-Illela network is composed of 54 actors based on 13 respondents. The network does not contain sub-groups or isolates (Figure 1). The Gaya-Malanville-Kamba network is composed of 80 actors based on 24 respondents (Figure 2). Two actors are isolates and two have no regional personal network, because they only mentioned people outside of the border region and were not mentioned by any other actors.

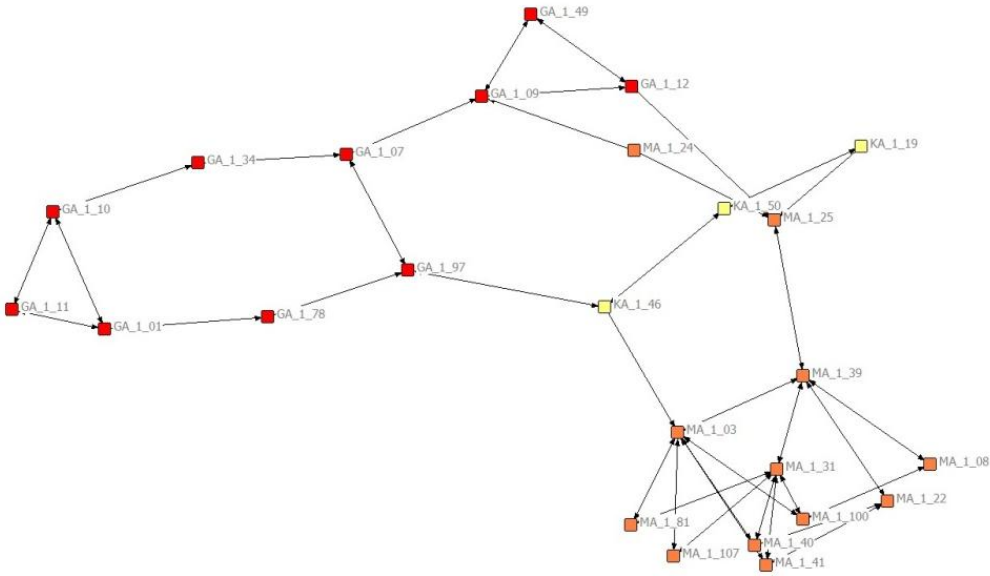
Figure 1. Birni N’Konni-Illela network



Note: traders are identified by markets: light blue=Birni N’Konni (Niger), dark blue= Illela (Nigeria)

Source: Walther, CROSSTRADE project, 2012.

Figure 2. Gaya-Malanville-Kamba network



Note: traders are identified by markets: red=Gaya (Niger), yellow= Kamba (Nigeria), orange=Malanville (Benin)
 Source: Walther, CROSSTRADe project, 2012.

5. Conclusion

The success of economic activity in West Africa does not rely solely on the attributes of the social actors but also and predominantly on their capability to draw resources from the structure of their social relations. Economic exchange can rarely be explained through arm’s-length ties with no prior social bond. Rather, it takes place within a complex set of social interactions. Therefore, a relational approach seems highly relevant for illuminating West African economic activities.

As the preliminary attempt developed in this paper suggests, network analysis could be used to better understand regional economic activities by giving special importance to the *actors* who run economic networks and to the *places* where trade is being concentrated. This approach would provide an alternative to the mainstream approaches in economics that consider either flows of commodities or prices to evaluate the intensity of trade and the degree of integration between markets and to geographic approaches that conceptualize networks as chains. Focusing instead on social actors would offer the opportunity to circumvent a certain number of methodological issues related to the absence of long-term data on cross-border flows and, most importantly, to test two crucial hypotheses which are related to the evolution of the social structure of trade since post-independence times

Firstly, social network analysis could allow investigating the trade-off made by traders between a strong embeddedness in the local community and more open brokerage roles. While embeddedness has long provided a way of minimizing transaction costs, the globalization of West African trade should lead traders to rely increasingly on weak ties when dealing with foreign partners from a different culture. The most successful traders, we

assume, are those who can play both roles: they are embedded in a densely knit core cluster that provides trust and reputation, and at the same time they build brokerage ties between disconnected markets. Secondly, we believe that no other place can better illustrate such a trade-off than border markets. Playing an intermediary role between different nationally organized business networks, these markets are not primarily designed to serve as central places for local trade in West Africa. Their specificity should rather be to develop as hubs for inter-national flows where economic agents can play a brokerage role. Accordingly, we assume that brokers will be overrepresented at the periphery of economic networks where border markets are located. Thirdly, we argue that social network analysis can contribute to distinguishing between small traders predominantly benefiting from local prices and regulatory differentials, and large traders whose success comes preferentially from cross-border long-distance flows and who play a key role in the functional integration of West African countries and cities and their inclusion in the global economy.

By combining social and spatial variables, social network analysis can make an important contribution to the centrality of places. Since, as we assume, border markets are characterized by a predominance of brokers over central actors, this means that the centrality of these markets can hardly be estimated by looking at the demographic size of the urban centers. In other words, it doesn't take many brokers to make a market important. Following this argument, we call for a revision of the usual criteria used to hierarchize cities in Africa, which are most often based on demographic or administrative figures. Rather than the size of places, we argue that it is the role of places in the regional circulation of goods and the presence of key social actors that make some cities more important than others. Again, social network analysis can bring an added value to the spatiality of trade, by giving a precise indication of traders' locations and of their structural role in the economic networks.

That said we do not intend to suggest that network analysis is the one and only method to be used to study regional trade in West Africa. A limitation of the formal network-based approach is that it can hardly explain the intensity of ties and the evolution of the network without referring to more qualitative data. In our case, traders may occupy a more central or brokerage position in the network because of their personal migration history, ethnic group affiliation, political alliance with state authorities, etc. Therefore, we strongly suggest that any network approach to regional trade should be complemented with other (more qualitative) approaches that can focus on the content of relationships.

Trader biographies, which have long been used in West Africa, could provide interesting data, not only because they allow collecting valuable qualitative information but also because asking traders to talk about their career is an excellent way to establish trust and overcome initial reluctance to take part in a more quantitative survey. Biographies can usefully contribute to documenting those factors that drive West African traders to leave their original areas and establish businesses in border regions, the patterns of these migrations, and the foundations of contemporary trade diasporas in border areas. Because they allow following traders over time, biographies can also explain why cross-border economic activity is particularly sensitive to certain political variables, most notably the boycott of ports, the closing of land borders, seizures aimed at traders, violence perpetrated on certain trading ethnic groups, and local and national political crises.

References

- Adams, A. M., Madhavan, S. & Simon, D. (2006). Measuring social networks cross-culturally. *Social Networks*, 28, 363–376.
- Aker, J. C., Klein, M. W., O'Connell, S. A. & Yang, M. (2010). Borders, ethnicity and trade. *NBER Working Paper*, 15960.
- Apicella, C. L., Marlowe, F. W., Fowler, J. H. & Christakis, N. A. (2012). Social networks and cooperation in hunter-gatherers. *Nature*, 481, 497–501.
- Hill, K. R. et al. (2011). Co-residence patterns in hunter-gatherer societies show unique human social structure. *Science*, 331, 1286–1289.
- Ayuku, D., Odero, W., Kaplan, C., de Bruyn, R. & de Vries, M. (2006). Social network analysis for health and social interventions among Kenyan scavenging street children. *Health Policy and Planning*, 18(1), 109–118.
- Beuving, J. J. (2006). Nigerien second-hand car traders in Cotonou: A sociocultural analysis of economic decision-making. *African Affairs*, 105(420), 353–373.
- Bierschenk, T., Chauveau, J.-P. & Olivier de Sardan, J.-P. (2000). *Courtiers en Développement. Les Villages Africains en Quête de Projets*. Paris: Karthala – APAD.
- Bollig, M. (1998). Moral economy and self-interest: Kinship, friendship and exchange among the Pokot (N.W. Kenya). In T. Schweizer & D. R. White (Eds), *Kinship, Networks and Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 137–157.
- Boone, C. (1994). Trade, taxes and tribute: market liberalization and the new importers of West Africa. *World Development*, 22(3), 453–467.
- Boutilier, J.-L. (1971). La cité marchande de Bouna dans l'ensemble économique ouest-africain pré-colonial. In C. Meillassoux (Ed.), *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 240–252.
- Braudel, F. (1985). *La Dynamique du Capitalisme*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Braudel, F. (1992). *The Wheels of Commerce. Civilization and Capitalism: 15th-18th Century – Vol. 2*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Brooks, G. (1993). *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Burt, R. S. (1992). *Structural Holes. The Social Structure of Competition*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burt, R. S. (2005). *Brokerage and Closure. An Introduction to Social Capital*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chalfin, B. (2001). Border zone trade and the economic boundaries of the state in north-east Ghana. *Africa*, 71(2), 202–224.
- Cohen, A. (1969). *Customs and Politics in Urban Africa. A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cohen, A. (1971). Cultural strategies in the organization of trading diasporas. In C. Meillassoux (Ed.), *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 266–281.
- Curtin, P.D. (1975). *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Dobler, G. (2008). From scotch whisky to Chinese sneakers : International commodity flows and new trade networks in Oshikango, Namibia. *Africa*, 78(3), 410–432.
- Duteurtre, G., Faye, M. D. & Dièye, P.N. (2010). *L'Agriculture Sénégalaise à l'Epreuve du Marché*. Dakar and Paris: ISRA – Karthala.
- Ensminger, J. (1996). *Making a Market. The Institutional Transformation of an African Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Fafchamps, M. (2004). *Market Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Theory and Evidence*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Fafchamps, M. & Gavian, S. (1997). The determinants of livestock prices in Niger. *Journal of African Economies*, 6(2), 255–295.
- Fleming, L., King, C. K. & Juda, A. I. (2007). Small worlds and regional innovation. *Organization Science*, 18(6), 938–954.
- Grätz, T. (2004). Gold trading networks and the creation of trust: A case study from Northern Benin. *Africa*, 74(2), 146–172.
- Grégoire, E. (1992). *The Alhazai of Maradi: Traditional Hausa Merchants in a Changing Sahelian City*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Grégoire, E. (1993). La trilogie des réseaux marchands haoussa: un clientélisme social, religieux et étatique. In E. Grégoire & P. Labazée (Eds), *Grands Commerçants d’Afrique de l’Ouest. Logiques et Pratiques d’un Groupe d’Hommes d’Affaires Contemporains*. Paris: Karthala-ORSTOM, 71–100.
- Grégoire, E. (2001). L’essor de négociants africains depuis les années 1970 au Niger et au Nigeria: de la brousse aux entrepreneurs. In H. Bonin & M. Cahe (Eds), *Négoce Blanc en Afrique Noire. L’Evolution du Commerce à Longue Distance en Afrique Noire du 19e au 20e Siècle*. Paris: Société française d’histoire d’Outre-mer, 87–96.
- Grégoire, E. (2003). Réseaux et espaces économiques transétatiques. Paris: Sahel and West Africa Club–OECD.
- Grégoire, E. & Labazée, P. (Eds) (1993). *Grands Commerçants d’Afrique de l’Ouest. Logiques et Pratiques d’un Groupe d’Hommes d’Affaires Contemporains*. Paris: Karthala.
- Greif, A. (1989). Reputation and coalition in medieval trade: Evidence on the Maghribi traders. *Journal of Economic History*, 49(4), 857–882.
- Hamilton, M. J., Milne, B. T., Walker, R. S., Burger, O. & Brown, J. H. (2007). The complex structure of hunter-gatherer social networks. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 274, 2195–2203.
- Herrera, J. (1998). Du ‘fédéral’ et des ‘Koweïtiens’: la fraude de l’essence nigériane au Cameroun. *Autrepart*, 6, 181–202.
- Howard, A. (1976). The relevance of spatial analysis for African economic history: The Sierra Leone-Guinea system. *Journal of African History*, 17(3), 365–388.
- Howard, A. (2005). *Nodes, networks, landscapes, and regions: reading the social history of tropical Africa, 1700s-1920*. In A. M. Howard & R. M. Shain (Eds), *The Spatial Factor in African History. The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptual*. Leiden: Brill, 21–141.
- Howard, A. (2010). Actors, places, regions, and global forces: An essay on the spatial history of Africa since 1700. In U. Engel & P. Nugent (Eds), *Respacing Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 11–44.
- Howard, A. & Skinner, D. E. (1984). Network building and political power in Northwestern Sierra Leone, 1800-65. *Africa*, 54(2), 2–28.
- Howard, A. M. & Shain, R. M. (Eds) (2005). *The Spatial Factor in African History. The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptual*. Leiden: Brill.
- Lambert, A. & Egg, J. (1994). Commerce, réseaux et marchés: l’approvisionnement en riz dans les pays de l’espace sénégalais. *Cahiers des Sciences Humaines*, 30(1–2), 229–254.
- Little, P. D. (1992). Traders, brokers and market ‘crisis’ in Southern Somalia. *Africa*, 62(1), 94–122.
- Matous, P. (2010). Personal networks and practices of Ethiopian farmers. Paper presented

- at the Sunbelt XXX Conference, Riva del Garda, July.
- Matous, P., Todo, Y. & Mojo, D. (2011). Boots are made for walking: The spatiality of personal networks in a pedestrian, phone-free society. Paper presented at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, Seattle, 12-16 April.
- McDade, B. & Spring, A. (2005). The 'new generation of African entrepreneurs': Networking to change the climate for business and private sector-led development. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 17, 17–42.
- Meagher, K. (1995). Crisis, informalization and the urban informal sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Development and Change*, 26, 259–284.
- Meagher, K. (2005). Social capital or analytical liability? Social networks and African informal economies. *Global Networks*, 5(3), 217–238.
- Meagher, K. (2010). *Identity Economics. Social Networks and the Informal Economy in Nigeria*. Suffolk: James Currey.
- Meillassoux, C. (Ed.) (1971). *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mitchell, J. C (Ed.) (1969). *Social Networks in Urban Situations. Analyses of Personal Relationships in Central African Towns*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Peil, M. (1978). Research roundup on African networks, 1974-1978. *Connections*, 2(1), 6–8.
- Quarles van Ufford, P. (1999). *Trade and Traders: The Making of Cattle Markets in Benin*. Amsterdam: Thela Thesis.
- Quarles van Ufford, P. & Zaal, F. (2004). The transfer of trust: Ethnicities as economic institutions in the livestock trade in West and East Africa. *Africa*, 74(2), 121–145.
- Retaillé, D. (1995). Structures territoriales sahéliennes. Le modèle de Zinder. *Journal of Alpine Research*, 2, 127–148.
- Retaillé D. (2005). L'espace mobile. In B. Antheaume & F. Giraut (Eds), *Le Territoire est Mort. Vive les Territoires! Une (Re)fabrication au Nom du Développement*. Paris: IRD, 175–202.
- Retaillé D, Walther O. 2011. Spaces of uncertainty: a model of mobile space in the Sahel. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 32(1): 85-101.
- Schnegg, M. (2006). Reciprocity and the emergence of power laws in social networks. *International Journal of Modern Physics C*, 17: 1067–1076.
- Schnegg, M. & Stauffer, D. (2007). Dynamics of networks and opinions. *International Journal of Bifurcation and Chaos*, 17: 2399–2409.
- Smith-Doerr, L. & Powell, W. W. (2005). Networks and economic life. In N. J. Smelser & R. Swedberg (Eds), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 379–402.
- Scott, J. (2006). *Social Network Analysis. A Handbook*. London: Sage.
- Soulé, B. G. (2000). Prospects for trade between Nigeria and its neighbours. Paris: Sahel and West Africa Club–OECD.
- Todo, Y., Mojo, D.Y., Matous, P. & Takahashi, R. (2011). Effects of geography and social networks on diffusion and adoption of agricultural technology: Evidence from rural Ethiopia. Paper presented at CSAE 25th Anniversary Conference 2011, March, Oxford.
- Uzzi, B. (1996). The source and consequences of embeddedness for the economic performance of organizations: the network effect. *American Sociological Review*, 61: 674–698.
- Walther O. (2012). Traders, agricultural entrepreneurs and the development of cross-border regions in West Africa. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* 25(3-4): 123-141.

- Walther O. (2009). A mobile idea of space. Traders, patrons and the cross-border economy in Sahelian Africa. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 24: 34-46.
- Warms, R. L. (1994). Commerce and community: paths to success for Malian merchants. *African Studies Review*, 37(2): 97–120.
- Wellman, B. (1988). Structural analysis: From method and metaphor to theory and substance. In B. Wellman & S. D. Berkowitz (Eds), *Social Structures: A Network Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 19–61.

Acknowledgments

This research is part of the CROSSTRADE – Informal Trade and Cross-Border Integration in West Africa project supported by the National Research Fund of Luxembourg (C10/LM/783313). Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 2011 European Conference on African Studies (ECAS4) in Uppsala in June 2011 and at the Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) Conference in Grenoble in September 2011. The author thanks Dimitris Christopoulos, Philipp Heinrigs, Carl Nordlund, and Paul Nugent for their helpful comments. Moustapha Koné provided excellent research assistance.

Dr Zoë Groves

Post-doctoral Research Fellow in the Humanities at WISER, University of the Witwatersrand (from October/November 2011).

Email: groves.zoe@googlemail.com

Tel: +44 (0)7809 559724

Transnational Migration and Pan-African Movements: the Case of the Central African Federation, 1953-1963

The Federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland was declared in 1953, linking the three central African territories politically and economically. The decision went against the wishes of the African majority, particularly in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, where Federation was viewed as an opportunity to extend white settler domination north of the Zambezi. The three territories had a history of close association prior to 1953, linked by flows of migrant labour to the urban and industrial economies of the south. Anti-federation sentiment served to unite African political interests in the 1950s, bringing about a moment of pan-African solidarity between the African Congress parties that has remained largely unexplored by historians. This paper inquires into transnational political networks across colonial borders. By highlighting the influence of 'northern' nationalists on African politics during the Federation period, this study complicates the nationalist histories of central Africa and contributes to research on pan-African movements, African diasporas, and the impact of regional migration.

**Traditional Chieftaincy and Regional Integration in West Africa: the Case of
Yoruba Obas (DRAFT, DO NOT CITE)**

Michael Kehinde, PhD
Pennsylvania State University,
University Park, PA
USA

Abstract

The Yoruba geo-cultural space was partitioned by European colonial adventurism in West Africa into three distinct spheres of influence: British (Nigeria), French (Benin) and German (Togo, which later came under French control). Colonial consolidation enforced a 'pulling apart' of each of these fractions, which was further aggravated by colonial socialization processes. Each of these partitioned fractions became significantly influenced by foreign, but distinct influences engendering the development of different colonial (national) identities. Postcolonial interstate politics retained the colonial geopolitical ordering of space, which informed the formation of the Organization of African States (OAU) and several regional economic commissions (RECs) across the continent to ameliorate the divisive tendencies of the ex-colonial boundaries.

However, for almost 50 years of the OAU and several years for the RECs, regional integration remains elusive in the continent. This paper argues that traditional institutions, hitherto ignored in the integration agenda, hold significant potentials for integration. The traditional Yoruba chieftaincy system, with its unifying character fits this mold and possesses great potentials that could be exploited in regional integration.

INTRODUCTION

Precolonial West African sociopolitical realities were undone by the colonial territoriality which followed the Scramble. Pre-existing political organizations, kingdoms and empires were dismembered with little or no regard for sociopolitical alignments and settings. Fractions of the same group became incorporated into competing European spheres of influence, thereby spawning contrasting colonial identities. Colonial territoriality was significantly distinct from its precolonial variant as European conceptualization of territory and boundary was different from precolonial African conception of territoriality. Consequently, the emergent colonial (re)organization of society in West Africa engendered the introduction of new and/or modified social structures, prominent among which is the Westphalian state system. The emergent state system welded the twin concepts of territoriality and sovereignty together as it had done earlier in Europe. This conception of territorial sovereignty was foreign to Africa; territoriality was a constantly fluid conception as people migrated, some seasonally, while other permanently, owing to changing socioeconomic conditions – making African “borders” fluid and in a constant state of flux. In effect, the introduction of fixed boundaries as limits of territorial sovereignty, inhibited the freedom of movement of

precolonial Africans as well as the related opportunities of unhindered interactions amongst different groups.

The boundaries created through the Scramble and colonization have been variously described as “dehumanizing”, “arbitrary”, “subsequent” and “haphazard”, as they sundered hundreds of previously existing homogenous social formations into different European spheres of influence. John Reader (1991) reports that 197 such groups were partitioned by colonial boundaries in the continent. Asiwaju (1985) also presented a checklist of 177 boundary-sundered groups across the continent. The bulk of this number is situated in West Africa, being the subject of intensive scramble and inter-imperial competition as evidenced in the conference organized to discuss territorial acquisition being named after the region – the Berlin West Africa Conference.

Political independence was expected to afford the new African leaders the opportunity to right the wrongs of colonization and the fragmentation of socially coherent groups into different territorial formations. However, intra-elite competition and distrust among emergent African leaders scuttled the prospect of territorial realignment as championed by Ghana’s Nkrumah at different forums. Thus the problematic European-ordered boundary regime was inherited and sanctioned as the basis of postcolonial territoriality in (West) Africa. The defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU), which spearheaded the reification of the ex-colonial boundaries, was formed as a compromise between the radical Casablanca bloc, which campaigned for the abolition of boundaries in the formation of the United States of Africa and the liberal Monrovia bloc in favor of the retention of the inherited political boundaries. The consensus leading to the formation of the OAU acknowledged the need for political unification, however that should be the

result of a gradual process of economic integration.

The OAU set the pace and agenda for economic integration and advocated for regional economic blocs as the basic building blocks of pan-African political integration. Subsequently, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was formed in 1975 to lead the integration initiative in West Africa with the primary objective of the creation of a Community of States, where citizens would have the right of free movement, settlement and establishment as well as creating a customs union characterized by free trade amongst member states and common external tariffs (CET) in trades with third party countries. ECOWAS set about achieving these objectives through the instrumentality of treaties, conventions and agreements, concluded by member states. As noted by ECOWAS, its achievements over the past thirty plus years have been negligible. Field work evidence across four ECOWAS member states confirms the position of ECOWAS as being far from attaining its set objectives as movement of goods and persons across land borders (by Community citizens) in the region remains problematic. Free trade amongst member states and CET remains a mirage. This situation is a function of many factors including the overly statist approach to integration in the region. This paper, relying on evidence from field work and extant literature, argues that transborder ethnicity, previously ignored by ECOWAS owing to the fascination with the maintenance of territorial integrity by member states, could indeed be the missing link in the achievement of integration objectives in the region.

Following this introduction, the rest of the paper is structured into five sections: research methodology and conceptual clarification; European boundary making and partition; regional integration in West Africa; and the significance of transborder

ethnicity for regional integration.

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Data for this study was derived from extant literature, including ECOWAS documents, author's previous work on the area and fieldwork conducted in December 2011 Benin and Nigeria. The fieldwork was conducted using indepth interview of officials of ECOWAS at the Commission's Secretariat in Abuja Nigeria; officials of state agencies at the each of the three border crossings; members of borderland communities; community citizens resident in member states other than their own. Participant observation technique was also used as the researcher traveled across the borders to and fro Nigeria and Benin, where he experienced first hand, the troubles involved with crossborder movement in this part of West Africa.

The fieldwork was conducted between December 5, 2011 and December 16, 2011. The locations covered in the research included Abuja (ECOWAS Secretariat), Lagos, Badagry, Abeokuta, Imeko (Nigeria); Ketu, Ipobe, Cotonou (Benin). Pre-arranged meetings had been made with officials of ECOWAS, the Beninese Ambassador to Nigeria and some immigration officials. Meetings were also arranged, with the help of a borderland researcher, with the kings of Ketu and Imeko. Interviews were conducted mainly in English and Yoruba. Officials of border agencies are bilingual, which made the conduct of the research relatively easy. I also interviewed national of different West African countries in Cotonou central motor park as well as the main market. I visited the secondhand clothes/shoes section of the Cotonou main market where I interacted with Yoruba traders – from Nigeria and Benin.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are used interchangeably with borders in most academic and policy documents. They are the juridical extent of state territoriality; they determine the limits of territorial sovereignty of states. In other words, boundaries define the geographic limits of political entities or legal jurisdiction. Anderson and O'Dowd (1999) submit that boundaries are the "container" within which national space is delineated and "contained". Boundaries not only give form and character to the national space they contain, they also separate the geographic space of one political entity from another.

International boundaries are usually the products of agreements or treaties between two territorial sovereigns over the limits of their respective jurisdictions. Though most boundaries are outcomes of agreements, majority of them are imposed on local people by foreign forces. African boundaries fall within this category having been determined and superimposed by imperial powers, with or no consideration for preexisting African social realities. The process that led to the determination of boundaries in Africa was exclusively a European affair without African representation. Such boundaries are therefore more problematic than those determined by authorities representative of their people.

International boundaries are points of state control over flows in and out of nation states. Border posts are constructed, manned by officials of state agencies (customs and immigration). States use borders as an instrument of power and control. Border crossings could be shut to stop movement into a country from a hostile neighbor; they could also be shut to control crime or hunt down fleeing criminals. Borders could also be construed as bridge-building device that link contiguous spaces together. Lord Curzon (1909)

appropriately claims that on borders hang suspended the twin issues of life and death; of war and peace between states.

ETHNIC GROUP AND ETHNICITY

The term ethnicity and ethnic group is derived from the Greek word *ethnos*, which translates as “nation”. Ethnos refers to a group of people believed to share common ancestry and distinctive characteristics. An ethnic group therefore is a culturally distinctive group of people that share a tradition of common origin. Max Weber defines the term ethnic groups as “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of custom or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration.; this belief must be important for group formation...”

What factors distinguish ethnicities? A common origin and common history or what Anderson (1982) refers to as homogeneous empty time in the imagination of the nation. Common cultural practices and belief system identify a group as distinct from another and aid the conception of oneness of members of the group. Language is also a powerful tool in the formation of group identity.

Transborder ethnicity refers to the interactions among fractions of the same ethnic group partitioned by state boundaries. These groups had existed as homogeneous prior to the determination of the boundaries that now separate them. In spite of location in different political jurisdictions, these fractions continue intra-group interactions.

TRADITIONAL CHIEFTAINCY (YORUBA OBASHIP)

Traditional institution of authority has always been central to the Yoruba society and culture. The Yoruba are historically town-dwelling people whose society is organized

around the person of the *oba*, who is the head of the traditional authority system. The *oba* in Yoruba culture is considered as “he who must be obeyed”; the representatives of the gods, etc. The variant of his title *olu* means the “owner of the people”.

In precolonial times, the fortunes of the Yoruba political kingdom was directly related to the effectiveness of the *oba* as the ruler of the kingdom. In the folklore of the Old Oyo Empire, prosperity or poverty was identified with the rulership of different *obas*. For example, in a song depicting the prosperity of Oyo during the reign of *Alaafin Abiodun*, the people sang that “in the days of Abiodun, there was plenty and peace”. The *oba* dictated the character and direction of society in the precolonial times.

Colonialism on the one hand streamlined the power of the *obas* in accordance with “civilized practices”, it also reified it with the might of the colonial authority in the Indirect Rule system. The Yoruba *obas* played a significant role during colonial times as the representatives of the colonial administration in their domains. In postcolonial times in Nigeria, Yoruba *obas* began as very critical elements of the administration of the regional government as they constituted the largely ceremonial upper house in the bicameral legislature as the House of Chiefs. Though that role has significantly changed following military rule and constitutional amendments, Yoruba *obas* nonetheless remain a critical part of contemporary Yoruba society in Nigeria.

EUROPEAN BOUNDARY MAKING AND PARTITION

This section provides a summary of the process that led to contemporary boundaries in West Africa as well as the related partitioning of social and political formations by the resultant boundaries.

It is perhaps axiomatic to state that international boundaries of West African

states are colonial creations. The boundaries emerged mainly in the thirty years following the Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884/85, where the modalities for territorial claims in Africa were arrived at. Following the establishment of *spheres of influence*, respective colonial authorities began territorial expansion into the hinterland of West Africa. The major colonial powers in this part of Africa were France and Britain, while the lesser powers included Germany and Portugal. The bulk of West African territories was shared between these powers, with France and Britain claiming over 90% of the territories. Territorial acquisition entailed the determination of boundaries between the spheres of the different colonial powers. The emergent boundaries were determined and imposed with little or no consultation with the Africans whose territories were being partitioned. Consequently, the supposedly self-determined boundaries that predated colonial rule were undermined. The colonial boundary regime, among others, dismembered several preexisting ethnic groups into two or more nation-states, some of which were in the spheres of different colonial states.

Boundaries were determined by colonial officers who had little or no knowledge about the territories being allotted. Geographic arcs and lines, natural features of river beds, lakes and mountains were employed in the determination of these boundaries. Hence, they have been described as arbitrary, dehumanizing and haphazard. Sir Claude Macdonald, a member of the pioneering Nigeria-Kamerun boundary survey team emphasised the arbitrariness of the African boundaries when he wrote that:

In those days, we just took a blue pencil and ruler and put it down at Old Calabar and drew that blue line to Yola...I recollect thinking when I was sitting having an audience with the Emir of Yola surrounded by his tribe, that it was a good thing that he didn't know that I with a blue pencil had drawn a line through his territory (Macdonald, 1914: 650)

Colonial officers also depended on treaties (mainly obtained under duress) with local African leaders. While this could be regarded as incorporating African realities into the colonial territorial question, care must be taken that many of these leaders did not understand the wordings of those treaties. Furthermore, as African conception of boundary and territoriality differed from the European understanding, relying on such treaties as the basis of boundary making was error-prone. To the precolonial African, boundary was a border zone, without exactness as to the precise extent of territory. Indeed, precolonial African territoriality has been described as being characterized by frontiers of contact where territories and territoriality overlapped (Momoh, 1989). It is no surprise therefore that the boundaries arrived at by the colonialists in Africa did not correspond with prevailing social reality of the time.

All over West Africa, inter-colonial boundaries sundered many coherent ethnic groups into different spheres of colonial jurisdiction. In the French colonial federation, administrative lines, which became international boundaries at independence, performed the function of intercolonial boundaries by dividing coherent groups into different jurisdiction.

Owing to the competition (Scramble) that preceded the determination of these boundaries (group partition), colonial consolidation and state building process required deliberate policies to keep groups apart. Colonial education and other differential socialization processes and colonial administrative styles were instruments deliberately contrived to create distinct colonial identities for partitioned fractions of the same groups. These centrifugal policies and processes

further aggravated the division of ethnic groups into different states.

The boundary making process *balkanized* West African territories. It created many landlocked countries without access to the sea; it also created incongruent states with some being so large as to encompass others like Senegal and Gambia and some so small as to be unofficially regarded as a component part of another as is Benin to Nigeria. Apart from the social problems associated with the partition of ethnic groups, the boundaries also created economic problems for the successor states in West Africa. Landlocked states are dependent on littoral states for shipping needs; colonial infrastructure development was uncomplementary; small markets were created as well as different customs regimes; there have also been irredentist challenges among the Ewe, for example. The colonial boundary regime has spawned a collection of weak states in the subregion as they left a legacy of social, political and economic challenges for West Africa at independence.

WEST AFRICAN INTEGRATION

Given these issues, expectation was rife that following political independence, these boundaries would be reviewed in order to redress the challenges they created. This expectation was not far fetched as nationalist and pan-Africanist agitations have consistently challenged these boundaries. Indeed the first conference of independent African states, the All African Peoples' Conference (AAPC), which included representation from yet-to-be independent states, recommended the abolition of these boundaries and the establishment of a United States of Africa. These agitations led many to believe that the colonial

boundaries would be reviewed following decolonization. However, events leading to the establishment of the defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU), paradoxically led not only to the retention but the reification of these boundaries as the basis of state territoriality in independent Africa. The OAU, representing a compromised position between antagonist alliances or blocs, agreed on the need for African unity. However, the *political kingdom* would only be achieved through progressive functional integration, rather than by fiat as championed by one of the blocs. The OAU hinged African integration on regional economic communities as the basic building blocks and encouraged the establishment of regional communities across the continent.

Subsequently, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 following intensive alliances and negotiations among the states in the subregions. The primary objective of ECOWAS is the creation of a regional community of states, where community citizens have unfettered movement, settlement and establishment. This objective would be achieved through functional economic integration characterized by a common market and custom union, common external tariff, driven by the policy of free movement of goods, services and person, free settlement and establishment of community citizens within the community. To achieve these objectives, ECOWAS has formulated elaborate legal instruments of treaties, protocols, agreements and conventions.

Given the significance of free movement, settlement and establishment for the realization of the objectives of ECOWAS, this paper will focus on the

implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement and the Right of Settlement and Establishment, which came into effect in 1980. The Protocol stipulates a three phased implementation of the freedom of movement of persons and the right of settlement and establishment in the Community, over fifteen years from the definitive entry into force of the Protocol. The first phase is the right of entry and abolition of visa requirements for Community citizens. This phase was to be completed in the first 5 years following the entry into force of the Protocol. During this phase, this right to visa-free movement, for visit of less than 90 days, is subject to the possession of valid travel documents issued by a member state as well as the possession of international health certificates. For visits beyond 90 days, the traveler requires appropriate authorization from the member state where they are visiting.

The second phase, expected to begin from 1985 and lasting until 1990, was to be devoted to the implementation of the right of settlement (residence). Building on the gains of free movement, the nationals of member states, issued with resident permits of their destination country within the Community have the right to reside in such country. The residence permit may or may not allow them to work. The final stage, expected to be attained by 1995, was the right of establishment for Community citizens in any member state other than their own, and to access to economic activities, to carry out these activities as well as to set up and manage enterprises, and in particular companies, under the same conditions as defined by the legislation of the host Member State for its own nationals.

Free movement and the abolition of visa for visits of less than 90 days was

attained in 1980 following the ratification of the Protocol by all member states. The right of residence was also achieved in 1986. However, the right of establishment has not been attained.

Given this scorecard, it would appear as though ECOWAS' progress has been more than negligible. However, there is a gap between policy and implementation, between good intentions and actual practice. What obtains in ECOWAS is a case of good intentions, but lousy practice. Visa free movement of community citizens had been achieved since 1980, yet land travel across borders in West Africa is not only fraught with delays and illegal tolls, it is also hazardous. Border posts and their approaches are militarized zones replete with gun-totting officials and Armored Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) to repel and contain smugglers who regularly engaged these state officials in gun battles.

Traveling from Lagos in Nigeria to Accra in Ghana, a distance of 284.9 miles would take between 12 and 14 hours depending on the travelers *border savvy*. Border crossing protocols, are deliberately designed by field officials to frustrate travelers. Some of these officials feign lack of knowledge of ECOWAS protocols just in a bid to extort money from travelers. At the border post between Nigeria and Benin in Ilarra, the immigration official at the ill-manned post, required from this researcher (who had presented an ECOWAS passport) his Beninese visa. The researcher responded that he does not require a visa to enter Benin being a Nigerian national. Border crossing formalities could drag on for hours, for those travelers who are unwilling to pay the ubiquitous illegal tolls.

West African integration cannot flourish in the midst of limitations to free

movement for Community nationals and their products. If integration is meant to foster the development of a customs union, free trade and market among the states in West Africa, the existence of a strong state presence (legitimate or otherwise) at the border crossings, is counterproductive. One of the most critical implications of such state presence at the borders is the development and sustenance of a parallel border economy, otherwise referred to as smuggling or clandestine trade. Smuggling deprives the state of customs receipts as traders elect to bypass official border crossing points due to undue harassment and extortion by border officials.

ECOWAS is struggling on many fronts. There is obviously a disconnection between policy and implementation. ECOWAS is awash with a plethora of legalese – conventions, protocols, agreements and a treaty – highlighting provisions for attaining the objectives of regional integration. However, actual practice portrays the absence of such provisions as state officials at the border carry on in apparent disregard of these provisions. The intriguing point is that member states are aware of these happenings at their border posts, yet, they appear to be unable to do anything about it.

Though ECOWAS is saddled with an uphill task, given the disposition of member states to its provisions, yet, integration is still achievable in the region. Presently, the integration initiatives are state-led as characterized in the manner of agreements amongst states and institutions designed to drive the process. However, in recent years, the integration project has received further fillip with the formation of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP), which has made cross-border cooperation one of its cardinal points. Cross-border cooperation

would include the incorporation of local actors at the borderlands including “local representatives of the State, locally elected leaders and civil society in the broader sense”, who are expected to lead the local initiative to deepen cross-border cooperation and integration (AU, 2007). To this initiative, this paper suggests the incorporation of *transborder* initiatives, which is a subnational initiative, depending on the transborder character of borderland communities and their traditional institutions of authority. This initiative, led by traditional chiefs, would exploit the perception of border-partitioned groups of the transborder character of their geopolitical space. Unlike the state led initiative, which considers borderlines as the juridical extent of state territoriality, border-partitioned groups see intra-group relations as transcending the imposition of the borderlines. As Phiri (1985) argues, ethnic affinity compels intragroup relations, whether or not the group is located wholly within a state or partitioned across state boundaries. The next section examines the significance of the Yoruba *oba* in transborder relations between Nigeria and Benin in the promotion of integration in the subregion.

THE RELEVANCE OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION: YORUBA OBAS AND TRANSBORDER RELATIONS

Traditional chieftaincy constitutes a major part of the history of the continent and are thus indispensable in the political transformation of the continent. Indeed, Basil Davidson (1992) submits that the failure of the state in Africa is contingent upon the neglect of this crucial part of its history, society and culture. Dore (n.d) supports this position by noting that when policy neglects history, culture, and social content, large

amount of effort and resources can be wasted on poorly conceived initiatives. African traditional institutions command the allegiance of large segments of African societies and are thus very critical in the administration of these societies. Galizzi and Abotsi (2011) argue that in most African countries, constitutionally established authorities exercise the power of government alongside traditional authorities. This is true of Nigeria and the Yoruba speaking part.

The significance of traditional chieftaincies in the administration of the state in Africa have been categorized into three distinct roles (UNECA, 2007): advisory to government; developmental and conflict resolution. Being the closest to the people, traditional chieftaincies possess the singular privilege of being able to transmit the needs and expectations of the people to government as well as being able to mobilize the people around state policies. Traditional chieftaincies could also promote the developmental agenda of states by acting as developmental agents in complementing government's efforts in mobilizing the people for the implementation of policies and projects. Finally, chieftaincies could aid conflict resolution by acting as in his traditional role as the custodian of the custom and tradition of the people. As *oba*, who must be obeyed, his role in conflict resolution cannot be overemphasized.

As the borderland usually constitute a neglected fringe of the nation-state, incorporating traditional chiefs into the integration project would provide for the state an effective eye on the ground, not only ensuring that policies are implemented, but also mobilizing support for government projects, where government would have otherwise been absent. It follows that government policies can only be effectively implemented at the borderlands only through the articulation of indigenous political values and practices.

Traditional institutions have been variously criticized (in relation to democratization and governance) as overly primordial and that people under traditional chieftaincies are subjects rather than citizens (Mamdani, 1996). However, these attributes could be exploited in the promotion of transborder cooperation and integration. Granted, chieftaincies heighten primordial loyalties as chiefs constitute the foci of ethnic identities, they could also be important mobilizers of support for government projects as noted above. Subjects would obey their lords without question; governments could exploit this factors in the agency of deepening transborder relations, especially where borders sunder the same ethnic group into different countries as is common in West Africa (Asiwaju, 1985).

The Yoruba geocultural space is partitioned into Nigeria, Benin and Togo. They have always contested their partition by undermining the border that divide them, especially between Nigeria and Benin. The principal Yoruba *oba* in Benin, the *Alaketu* of Ketu informed this researcher that the border was a division between the territory of the French and the British, and not between the Yoruba. The *Alaketu* exercises traditional authority over locations in Nigeria as the geopolitical space of the kingdom of Ketu extends across the border into Nigeria. In other words, here is a non-Nigerian traditional chief exercising control over Nigerian towns and cities. The peoples in these locations in present day Ogun State owe allegiance to the Beninese Yoruba *oba*. This significance of this should not be lost on integrationists who should see this kind of relationship as critical for building bridges across international boundaries and for promoting integration.

The Yoruba *obas* in Benin have constituted an association of chiefs with the

promotion of their shared interest as primary objectives. In this researcher's interaction with the *Onisakete* of Sakete, another Yoruba king in Benin, he was informed that plans were afoot to create a forum of interaction with brother *obas* across the boundary in Nigeria (Kehinde 2010). Furthermore, the researcher was informed by a leading Yoruba borderland scholar that a transborder (borderland) community development association has been established to cater to the needs of the border-partitioned Yoruba group of the Ketu Kingdom. The kingdom extends from Ketu in Benin Republic to the region of the Yewa speaking people of Ogun State in Nigeria.

The *Alaketu* superintends and approves the appointment of new kings in his domain, including the part in Nigeria. While a new king is appointed by the state governor, the appointment is made on the recommendation of a non-Nigerian *oba*. This indicates some level of transborder cooperation, between a "foreign" traditional chief and civic authority. Bridges and linkages have always been part of the partitioned Yoruba society between Nigeria and Benin.

Traditional chieftaincies at the borderland provide for the state and regional integration initiatives, a ready-made framework for driving integration. Just as the framing of Nigeria's foreign policy towards Benin in the early days of independence sought to take advantage of historical linkages, regional integration could be built on these ties that exist everywhere in West Africa, to promote regional integration in the sub-region.

CONCLUSION

Regional integration in West Africa has floundered and largely struggled to meet its expressed objectives. This is in spite of a wealth of legal instruments

provided to aid the attainment of these objectives. This disconnection between policy and implementation with regards to regional integration in West Africa is partly attributable to the overly statist approach to integration. The neglect of history, culture and context of integration, this paper contends, is partly responsible for this failure. The submission of Dore noted above holds true for regional integration initiative in West Africa. The neglect of the history and traditional authority system in the process of integration has been very costly. While the states are preoccupied with legalities and institutions, which have not led to any appreciable progress, there exists a critical transborder framework, with the potentials for deeper and effective integration.

The role of traditional chieftaincies in the lives of their societies cannot be overemphasized. These roles could be crucial for regional integration should this important part of the history, culture and society of the region be incorporated into the integration agenda. Examples abound of the crucial significance of this category of authority in building bridges across the fractured territoriality of the African continent. The Yoruba *obas* have proven, not only the resilience of traditional authority system, but also its utility as a bridge-building mechanism. The purpose of regional integration would be better served with the incorporation of this important category into the process of integration.

References

Anderson B 1983, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London and New York

Anderson J and L O'Dowd 1999, "Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meaning, Changing Significance", *Regional Studies*, vol. 33, No. 7: 593-604

African Union 2007, "Proceedings of the AUBP Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Borders", http://www.africaunion.org/root/au/Conferences/2007/june/PSC/7/summary_Note.doc, 01.08.2009

Asiwaju A 1985, *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries 1884-1984*, C. Hurst, London and St. Martin, New York

Curzon L 1909, *Frontiers* <http://www-ibru.dur.ac.uk/resources/docs/curzon1.html>

Flynn D 1997, "We Are the Border": Identity, Exchange, and the State along the Benin-Nigeria Border." *American Ethnologist* 24 (2): 311-330

Galizzi P and E Abotsi 2011, "Traditional Institutions and Governance in Modern African Democracies", in J Fenrich, P Galizzi and T Higgins (Eds.), *The Future of African Customary Law*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Kehinde M 2010, "Implications of Colonially Determined Boundaries in (West) Africa: The Yoruba of Nigeria and Benin in Perspective." PhD Thesis, Durham University, UK, 2010

Macdonald C 1914, "The Geographical Result of the Nigeria-Kamerun Boundary Demarcation Commission of 1912-13: Discussion", *Geographical Journal*, vol. 43, No. 6: 648-651

Mamdani M 2002 *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies, Ibadan

Phiri S 1985, "National Integration, Rural Development and Frontier Communities". In A Asiwaju (Ed.), *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations across African International Boundaries 1884-1984*, C. Hurst, London and St. Martin, New York

Reader J 1998, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, Penguin Books, London

Momoh C 1989, "A Critique of Borderland Theories", in A Asiwaju and P Adeniyi (Eds.). *Borderlands in Africa: a Multidisciplinary and Comparative Focus on Nigeria and West Africa*, Lagos University Press, Lagos

UNECA 2007, *Relevance of African Traditional Institution of Governance*, www.uneca.org/gpad/publications/relevance_africantradinstgov.pdf

Weber M [1922]1978, *Economy and Society* eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. *Ephraim Fischhof*, vol. 2, University of California Press, Berkeley

ABORNE Annual Conference 2012:

African Borderlands – Regional Integration from Above and Below

Chiefs and cross-border governance in Botswana and South Africa: Past and present

Christine Pörsel¹

Abstract

The remarkable resilience of chiefs and their role in the legal and institutional pluralism challenges the Southern African state in various contexts – reaching from the local up to the national level and even straddling existing borders in the region. This paper forms part of a PhD project about the historical and contemporary integration and role of chiefs in Botswana and South Africa who have experienced marginalisation and instrumentalisation while at the same time exerting influence both on the formal and informal level of governance and jurisdiction.

The project's focus on the situation of chiefs of a single Tswana chiefdom situated in the borderland of Botswana and South Africa enables to outline possible forms of cooperation and interchange concerning the legal framework for the role of chiefs and additionally to identify cooperation between chiefs and members of the chiefdom in both states as an approach of regional integration from below.

Since pre-colonial times, various forms of cross-border governance have evolved offering new potentials but also requiring continuing adaptation of chiefs in the region. Examples of cross-border governance with regard to the partitioned chiefdom of the Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafela as well as individual and trans-national initiatives of chiefs will be presented in this paper.

¹ Doctoral student at the University of Freiburg (Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Reinhart Kößler, Arnold Bergstraesser Institute).

Introduction

In most Southern African regions, chiefs still play a significant role in the daily life of traditional communities and at different levels of the post-colonial and democratic state. Their relevance and influence has strongly been affected by processes of (de-)colonisation and democratisation in the previous centuries and various patterns in the formal legal and institutional set-up have emerged. In most states in Southern Africa, chiefs and the respective traditional communities as well as customary law are constitutionally recognized.² Consequently, chiefs still exert influence both on the formal and informal level of governance and jurisdiction. Their remarkable resilience and even resurgence as well as their role in the legal and institutional pluralism challenges the Southern African state in various contexts – reaching from the local up to the national level and straddling existing borders in the region.³ As has been indicated, various historical, political and socio-economic factors have influenced the role of chiefs in their traditional communities and at the local level as well as their relationship to other traditional and state institutions.⁴

One of the consequences of the colonisation process and the scramble for Africa in the 19th century has been the drawing and shifting of borders and the partitioning of tribes and traditional communities.⁵ These new boundaries in connection with migration of traditional communities following conflict and resource scarcity have resulted in their spreading all over different states and across borders in the Southern African region. Consequently, members of the same ethnicity and traditional community might have been subjected to different external structures and systems.

The situation of chiefs and traditional communities in cross-border contexts has not been subject to extensive research so far. This paper will focus on the role of chiefs in Botswana and historical and contemporary forms of cross-border governance initiated by chiefs. Botswana shares borders with Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa and consequently, several tribes and chiefdoms are situated in a cross-border environment. The formal integration of chiefs in these states and their respective competences and duties differ

² See for example Constitution of Botswana of 1966, Chapter V, Part III; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No. 108 of 1996, Chapter 12; Constitution of the Republic of Zambia, 1991 (as amended to 1996), Articles 127 and 128; Constitution of Zimbabwe, No.16 of 20 April 2000, Article 111.

³ Cf. Englebort, Pierre 2003: Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa, in: Vaughan, Olufemi (Ed.): Tradition and Politics. Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa, Ibadan, Nigeria, pp. 33-60.

⁴ Cf. Van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, Emile Adriaan Benvenuto 1999: Chieftaincy in Africa. Three Facets of a Hybrid Role, in: van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, Emile Adriaan Benvenuto/van Dijk, Rijk (Eds.), African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-Political Landscape, Hamburg, pp. 21-48.

⁵ Cf. Griffiths, Ieuan 1986: The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries, in: The Geographical Journal 152, No. 2, pp. 204-216.

considerably.⁶ Taking into account the political development in these states, research on the role of chiefs in a national and transnational context becomes even more essential. The focus of this research will lie on the Tswana in Botswana and South Africa. Especially central will be the chieftom of the Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafela situated in Mochudi in Botswana and in Moruleng in South Africa.

First of all, the term “border” shall be defined. In this paper border will not be strictly reduced to the separation of individual states. Rather, the term should be understood in a broader sense as the demarcation line between chieftoms, local, regional and national territories. Accordingly, cross-border governance occurs between individual states but with reference to the (pre-)colonial state also within.

The paper will proceed as follows: Initially, the role of chiefs in the historical and contemporary legal and institutional framework in both states will be analysed. Secondly, there will be shown what forms of cross-border governance have evolved now and then in Botswana and South Africa at different levels. Finally the analysis will focus on the particular fields of action where cross-border governance by chiefs as a form of regionalisation from below takes place.

Chiefs and cross-border governance in pre-colonial times

The structure of the pre-colonial Southern African state has been based upon individual chieftoms varying in size and meaning with chiefs representing the administrative, legislative, executive and judicative power of the chieftom. Their role has largely been determined by internal rules and processes of the traditional community.⁷ Before the beginning of colonisation and the emergence of the formal state, jurisdiction and governance in Botswana and South Africa has been centered on chiefs.⁸ During this period, forms of cross-border governance did not involve state borders, but rather borders of single chieftoms, traditional communities and localities which have not been strictly defined. These early forms of cross-border governance could have been characterized as cooperative or confrontative.⁹

⁶ Cf. Keulder, Christiaan 1998: *Traditional leaders and local government in Africa: Lessons for South Africa*, Pretoria.

⁷ Cf. Comaroff, John L. 1978: *Rules and Rulers: Political Processes in a Tswana Chieftom*, in: *Man*, New Series 13, No. 1, March, pp. 1-6.

⁸ For an overview of the rights and duties of chiefs, see Schapera, Isaac 1963: *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies*, reprinted, London, pp. 67-93.

⁹ Cf. Schapera, Isaac 2004: *The ethnic composition of Tswana tribes*, Oxford/New York, pp. 19-22; Gulbrandsen, Ørnulf 1993: *The Rise of the North-Western Tswana Kingdoms: On the Dynamics of Interaction between Internal Relations and External Forces*, in: *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 63, No. 4, pp. 550-582.

Cooperation usually occurred in the follow-up to external threats, either presented by potential conquest, white settlement or resource scarcity.¹⁰ Conflict did occur on a regular basis upon power, tribal boundaries and succession to office.¹¹

The Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafela who will be addressed especially in this paper, were still settled in the Transvaal during this period. Shortly before the establishment of the South African Republic in 1851, the tribe of the Bakgatla has been divided and regrouped in north western Pilanesberg under the leadership of Pilane and later on under his successor Kgamanyane.¹² The context for the beginning of real cross-border governance for the Bakgatla has been created at the end of the 19th century when parts of them settled in Mochudi in the later Bechuanaland Protectorate. In 1869, Chief Kgamanyane of the Bakgatla had been flogged by Commandant-General Paul Kruger following the refusal of the Bakgatla to be subjected to forced labour any further. This incident exemplified the treatment of chiefs and the rivalry between the Bakgatla and the Boers in the Transvaal and initiated the flight of parts of the Bakgatla to Mochudi in 1871.¹³

Initially, the Bakgatla were subjected to the Bakwena under the leadership of Sechele who had given them permission to settle in his territory. Since their arrival, Chief Kgamanyane had secretly arranged the removal of cattle of the Bakwena which was transferred to his fellow Bakgatla in the Transvaal. Soon, conflict emerged between the two tribes over the stolen cattle, boundaries and independent rule which escalated into war.¹⁴ In the course of the enduring confrontation between the tribes, both chiefs started a strategic campaign and intended to manipulate the British and the South African Republic for their own cause. In 1882, the dispute had finally been settled and the boundaries of the Transvaal and the Bakgatla territory defined.¹⁵

¹⁰ Cf. Morton, R. F. 1985: Chiefs and Ethnic Unity in two Colonial Worlds. The Bakgatla Baga Kgafela of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Transvaal 1972-1966, in: Asiwaju, A.I. (Ed.): Partitioned Africans. Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries 1884-1994, London, pp. 127-154.

¹¹ Cf. Morton, Fred 2009: When Rustling Became An Art: Pilane's Kgatla And The Transvaal Frontier 1820 - 1902, Cape Town, pp. 1-27.

¹² Cf. Morton 1985: Chiefs and Ethnic Unity, pp. 128-130.

¹³ Cf. Mbenga, Bernard K. 1997: Forced Labour in the Pilanesberg: The Flogging of Chief Kgamanyane by Commandant Paul Kruger, Saulspoort, April 1870, in: Journal of Southern African Studies 23, No. 1, pp. 127-140; Morton, Fred 2009: When Rustling Became An Art: Pilane's Kgatla And The Transvaal Frontier 1820 - 1902, Cape Town, pp. 77-81.

¹⁴ Cf. Morton 2009, pp. 96-106.

¹⁵ Cf. Ibid., pp. 110-153.

Bechuanaland Protectorate and Union of South Africa

The role of chiefs and the forms of governance and jurisdiction changed significantly with the beginning of colonisation and the drawing of new borders in Southern Africa. These boundaries also partitioned existing chiefdoms in the region. Chiefs no longer were the only game in town, but rather integrated into the legal, institutional and administrative framework of the colonial state.¹⁶ The situation of chiefs and the degree of their involvement and interference in interior affairs differed in Botswana and South Africa.

The Northern Tswana were part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, while the Southern Tswana were integrated into British Bechuanaland.¹⁷ Whereas the role of chiefs in South Africa has been dominated by the British colonial model of indirect rule, their counterparts in the Protectorate Bechuanaland enjoyed much more freedom of action following a strategy of parallel rule.¹⁸ As Lord Hailey has named it the policy of the early Bechuanaland Protectorate's government towards chiefs has been the allowance of a "(...) maximum of internal independence (...)".¹⁹ An overview of the situation and the relationship between the colonial government and the chiefs of the single Tswana chiefdoms during the years of parallel rule is presented by Makgala.²⁰

The special cross-border context surrounding chiefs in Southern Africa since colonisation is not only exemplified by the close relations kept between the members of the individual chiefdoms, but also by the location of the former capital and administrative center of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Mafeking, south of the border in Southern Africa.²¹ For any administrative affairs, chiefs and the colonial government had to cross the Protectorate's border.

While the administration at first did not show much engagement in the Protectorate, a Proclamation in 1899 became the basis for the creation of tribal reserves in Bechuanaland

¹⁶ Cf. Asiwaju, A.I. (Ed.) 1985: *Partitioned Africans. Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries 1884-1994*, London.

¹⁷ Cf. Proclamation No.1 of 30th September 1885. See also Maylam, Paul 1980: *Rhodes, the Tswana, and the British. Colonialism, collaboration, and conflict in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1885-1899*, Westport., Conn., pp. 11-48; Shillington, Kevin 1985: *The colonisation of the Southern Tswana 1870 - 1900*, Braamfontein.

¹⁸ Cf. Keulder 1998, pp.100-102; Myers, J. C. 2008: *Indirect Rule in South Africa. Tradition, Modernity, and the Costuming of Political Power*, Rochester, pp. 1-22.

¹⁹ Lord Hailey 1953: *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part V. The High Commission Territories: Basutoland, The Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland*, London, p. 195.

²⁰ Cf. Makgala, Christian John 2006: *Elite Conflict in Botswana. A History*, Pretoria, pp. 20-27.

²¹ Cf. Best, Alan C. G. 1970: *Gaberone: Problems and Prospects of a New Capital*, in: *Geographical Review* 60, No. 1, pp. 1-14. Mafeking, later renamed Mafikeng, has been the capital of Bechuanaland Protectorate until independence was gained in 1966. Later on, Mafeking was sought to become the capital of Bophuthatswana. After lengthy debates, a town close to Mafeking was chosen instead. For further information about the debate, see Champion, Harvey 1977: *Bophuthatswana – where the Tswanas meet*, Sandton, pp. 112-117.

Protectorate.²² They encompassed the Ngwato, Kwena, Ngwaketse, Tawana and Bakgatla Reserves.²³ This also meant the end of flexible boundaries in the region and the final settlement of the Bakgatla.²⁴ The background for the sudden British engagement had been the threat of a transfer of Bechuanaland Protectorate to the British South Africa Company under the leadership of Cecil Rhodes. One active opponent against a potential transfer had been Chief Khama. Joined by Chief Bathoen and Chief Sebele, he travelled to London in 1895 to successfully persuade the Queen to resist Rhodes' ambitions and keep the Protectorate under British control.²⁵

This development also influenced the Bakgatla on both sides of the Protectorate's borders. After Kgamanyane's death, his successor Chief Linchwe was eager to restore and keep the relation and his authority over the remaining Bakgatla. This also meant pursuing a twofold strategy: satisfying the Boers in the Transvaal and fostering the relationship with the British administration of the Protectorate.²⁶ Fields of this cross-border governance have been on land and resettlement policy and succession disputes. As Morton has remarked, internal forms of cross-border governance concerning the leadership over Bakgatla on both sides of the border had been facilitated by the early colonial policy in the Protectorate and the Transvaal. During this period, Linchwe aimed primarily at securing his tribal boundaries and at protecting and caring for the Bakgatla in the Transvaal. This has been exemplified by his regular visits to the region and his engagement in land and cattle acquisition.²⁷ A further sign of Linchwe's strategic policy in this cross-border context had been the involvement of the Bakgatla in the South African War lasting from 1899 until 1902. They fought on the side of the British to protect their fellow Bakgatla subjected to the Boers. Additionally, Linchwe intended to gain economic and political control in the Transvaal.²⁸

Cross-border governance during apartheid

With the beginning of the 20th century and the emergence of segregation policy in South Africa, a new form of indirect rule has been developed. During the apartheid era, large parts of South Africa had been divided into homelands and self-governing Bantustans.

²² See Proclamation 9 of 29 March 1899.

²³ Cf. Lord Hailey 1953, pp. 197-201, 205-206.

²⁴ Cf. Morton 2009, pp. 237-238.

²⁵ See Maylam 1980, pp. 149-173.

²⁶ Cf. Morton 1985: Linchwe I and the Kgatla Campaign, pp. 171-172.

²⁷ Cf. Morton 1985: Chiefs and Ethnic Unity, pp. 132-137.

²⁸ For an overview of the motives and the role of the Kgatla in the South African War, see Morton 1985: Linchwe I and the Kgatla Campaign, pp. 169-191.

Bophuthatswana, designed for the ethnic group of the Tswana, became a self-governing homeland in 1972 and finally gained its independence in 1977.²⁹ Chiefs played a significant role in the administrative and executive structure of the homelands and Bantustans until 1994. Contrasting the colonial period, the internal system of checks and balances of the single chiefdoms had been completely eroded. Although there also had been opposition and boycott, most of the chiefs were transformed into so-called traditional authorities functioning as puppets of the apartheid regime.³⁰

A special form or at least an attempt of cross-border governance has been made by Lucas Mangope, leader of the Bahurutshe and Chief Minister of Bophuthatswana. Even though the scattered territory of Bophuthatswana has comprised different ethnic groups, Mangope's focus was laid on the Tswana. He pursued a coherent policy intended to strengthen and unite the Tswana and even considered a federation of Bophuthatswana and Botswana which was rejected by President Khama. Additionally, Botswana refused to recognize Bophuthatswana's independence in 1977.³¹

The apartheid era in South Africa also affected the Bakgatla in Mochudi. Linchwe II, Paramount Chief of the Bakgatla from 1963 until 2003 had been a strong opponent and critic of apartheid. His opposition manifested itself in two different lines of cross-border governance: his refugee policy and his engagement in the liberation struggle. He openly declared the Bakgatla territory in the Kgatleng district a safe haven for refugees fleeing the oppression of the apartheid regime. The Community Centre in Mochudi, though only to a limited extent, was used as a transit facility.³² On the other hand, Kgosi Linchwe II had been part of the African National Congress' underground machinery as former President Mbeki has revealed only recently. Linchwe kept and distributed weapons that enabled ANC military action in South Africa.³³

Opposition against apartheid also occurred within Bophuthatswana. On several occasions, the Bakgatla engaged themselves actively in strikes and boycotts. Furthermore, Chief Pilane

²⁹ Cf. Republic of Bophuthatswana Constitution Act 18 of 1977.

³⁰ Cf. Khunou, Freddie Samuelson 2009: Traditional Leadership and Independent Bantustans of South Africa: Some Milestones of Transformative Constitutionalism beyond Apartheid, in: PER 12, No. 4, pp. 87-92.

³¹ See Jones for an overview of Tswana and national identity in Bophuthatswana: Jones, Peris Sean 1999: 'To Come Together for Progress': Modernization and Nation-Building in South Africa's Bantustan Periphery – The Case of Bophuthatswana, in: Journal of Southern African Studies 25, No. 4, pp. 579-605; Campion, Harvey 1977, pp. 93-96.

³² Cf. Grant, Sandy 2002: Mochudi Around the Time of Independence, Mochudi, pp. 33-35; Morton 1985: Chiefs and Ethnic Unity, pp. 143-144.

³³ Cf. Gaotlhobogwe, Monkagedi 2012: Linchwe held ANC weapons, in: The Monitor 13, No. 18, 14 May 2012; Motseta, Sella 2012: Kgosi Linchwe was an anti-apartheid stalwart says Mbeki, in: The Tswana Times, 11 May 2012.

Tidimane, leader of the opposition party Seoposengwe (Unity) Party in the parliament of Bophuthatswana was a strong critic of the homeland policy and opposed the idea of Bophuthatswana gaining independence.³⁴

Legal framework and institutional set-up in Botswana and South Africa

The contemporary integration of chiefs in Botswana and South Africa reveals significant differences. Chiefs have been widely marginalised in Botswana during the decolonisation process in the 1960s and in the following decades.³⁵ The special role played by Seretse Khama, leader of the Botswana Democratic Party and first President, and the threat of a potential incorporation into South Africa has facilitated the change in Botswana.³⁶ Chiefs today work as institutions of traditional communities performing ceremonial, judicial and administrative tasks at the local level and additionally function as mediating and consultative bodies at local and national level without real decision-making powers.³⁷

In South Africa, a contrasting development has taken place with an obvious resilience and sometimes even resurgence of chiefs. Although their role in the homelands during apartheid should have threatened their relevance and legitimacy, they still exert influence both on the formal and informal level of governance and jurisdiction.³⁸ In 2003, the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act entered into force, regulating the duties and powers of chiefs in South Africa.³⁹ Several years of debate and compromises have preceded this final legislation on the role of chiefs which had been circumscribed only generally in the Constitution.⁴⁰

³⁴ Cf. Butler, Jeffrey/Rotberg, Robert I./Adams, John 1977: *The Black Homelands of South Africa. The Political and Economic Development of Bophuthatswana and KwaZulu*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, pp. 50-53; Jeffery, Anthea J. 1993: *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, Johannesburg, pp. 43-46.

³⁵ Cf. Jones, David S. 1983: *Traditional Authority and State Administration in Botswana*, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, No. 1, pp. 133-136.

³⁶ Cf. Lange, Matthew 2009: *Developmental Crises. A Comparative-Historical Analysis of State-Building in Colonial Botswana and Malaysia*, in: *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47, No. 1, pp. 9-15; Vaughan, Olufemi 2003: *Chiefs, Power, and Social Change. Chiefship and Modern Politics in Botswana, 1880s – 1990s*, Trenton, pp. 59-96.

³⁷ Cf. Chieftainship Act, Act 19 of 1987; Düsing, Sandra 2002: *Traditional Leadership and Democratisation in Southern Africa. A Comparative Study. Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa*, Hamburg, pp. 171-173, 177-186

³⁸ See Oomen, Barbara 2005: *Chiefs in South Africa: Law, Power and Culture in the Post-Apartheid Era*, Oxford/Pietermaritzburg, pp. 87-115; Williams, James Michael 2010: *Chieftaincy, the state, and democracy. Political legitimacy in post-apartheid South Africa*, Bloomington, pp. 84-97.

³⁹ See Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework, No. 41 of 2003.

⁴⁰ For further details, see Oliver who elaborates on the process of designing the constitutional and legal framework concerning chiefs in South Africa: Oliver, Nic 2006: *The South African constitutional policy and statutory framework for traditional leadership and institutions*, in: Hinz, Manfred O./Gatter, F. Thomas (Eds.), *Global responsibility - local agenda. The legitimacy of modern self-determination and African traditional authority*, Berlin. Also see Williams, James Michael 2009: *Legislating 'Tradition' in South Africa*, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, No. 1.

In both countries, national Houses of Traditional Leaders have been set up as advisory bodies dealing with affairs related to traditional leadership.⁴¹ In South Africa, there also exist Houses of Traditional Leaders at provincial and local level.⁴² As will be shown, these institutions play a crucial role in contemporary cross-border governance in Southern Africa. Even though individual chiefdoms are situated in Botswana as well as in South Africa, both countries do not regulate cross-border matters. Consequently, chiefs are subjected to different legal and institutional set-ups.

Contemporary forms of cross-border governance at national and trans-national level

In the closing years of apartheid and in the course of the process of drafting a new constitution for a democratic South Africa, the future role of chiefs had been a much debated and controversial issue. Consequently, part of the discussion on the details of the powers and duties of chiefs had been postponed. An indicator that the post-apartheid government had been aware of the relevance of the cross-border context concerning chiefs and traditional communities had been the Discussion Document towards a White Paper on traditional Leadership and Institutions⁴³ which has been published in 2000 by the Department of Provincial and Local Government. This document was part of the White Paper Programme on traditional Leadership and Institutions starting a consultation on the role of chiefs and requirements of future legislation on that matter. One of the issues of the Discussion Document was the handling of trans-national chiefdoms in the Southern African region. The questions listed in the document dealt with the relationship and forms of cooperation at local and national level between the respective states and chiefdoms as well as possible forms of institutionalisation. Furthermore, the potentials and challenges posed by these trans-national relationships were questioned.⁴⁴ The final White Paper published in 2003 interestingly does not contain any section dealing with cross-border issues concerning chiefs and traditional communities. The matters dealt with in the paper are solely reduced to the local, provincial and national level in South Africa.⁴⁵

⁴¹ See Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No. 108 of 1996, Article 212; National House of Traditional Leaders Act, No. 22 of 2009; Constitution of Botswana 1966, Chapter V, Part III, Articles 77-85.

⁴² See Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework, No. 41 of 2003, Articles 16-18.

⁴³ Cf. Department of Provincial and Local Government 2000: A Discussion Document towards a White Paper on traditional Leadership and Institutions, 11 April 2000.

⁴⁴ Cf. Department of Provincial and Local Government 2000: A Discussion Document towards a White Paper on traditional Leadership and Institutions, 11 April 2000, pp. 48-49.

⁴⁵ Cf. Department on Provincial and Local Government 2003: The White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance, July.

A form of institutionalisation of cross-border governance by chiefs has been established with the setting up of Houses of Traditional Leaders in the Southern African region. One of these institutions fostering regional integration by chiefs is the SADC Council of Traditional Leaders initiated in 2002 and comprising members of ten SADC countries. The council is chaired by Nkosi Sango Phathekile Holomisa and aims at exchange and cooperation on fields of common interest like HIV and AIDS as well as human rights and specially on strengthening the role of chiefs at local and national level. Exchange programs and visits of chiefs of the individual member countries function as instruments of cooperation and cross-border governance.⁴⁶ Another institution in the region is the SADC House of Traditional Leaders (SADC KHOTLA) recently set up by chiefs of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.⁴⁷ Further attempts to foster participation and cooperation of chiefs at trans-national level have been made with the Continental House of Traditional Leaders (COHTLA). The idea for the establishment of COHTLA – a House of Traditional Leaders of the African Union - has been developed in the course of a Panafest Conference in Ghana in 2003.⁴⁸

Exchange concerning matters related to traditional leadership also takes place individually between different national Houses of Traditional Leaders on a regular basis. In 2007, for example, a delegation of the Ntlo Ya Dikgosi (House of Chiefs in Botswana) has visited the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) in South Africa to discuss the functioning of the NHTL and its committees.⁴⁹ In the same year a NHTL delegation has travelled to Zambia to visit a SADC KHOTLA meeting.⁵⁰

Contemporary cross-border governance at local level

With regard to the Bakgatla, forms of cross-border governance have continued since the end of apartheid. In 1993, when Tidimane retired, he favoured the split-up of the Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafela into distinct chiefdoms in Mochudi and Moruleng. Kgosi Linchwe II, who had already chosen a representative in Moruleng, strongly opposed this idea. Tidimane even sued

⁴⁶ See Chanda, Amos 2004: Traditional Chiefs form Regional Council, in: SADC Today 7, No. 3, August, p. 13.

⁴⁷ See National House of Traditional Leaders, Annual Report 2006/07; National House of Traditional Leaders, Annual Report 2007/08.

⁴⁸ Cf. South African Government Information, National House of Traditional Leaders members to visit Zambia to lobby support for the establishment of a Continental House of Traditional Leaders, 12 May 2005 [<http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2005/05051614451001.htm>] 17 May 2012]; National House of Traditional Leaders, Annual Report 2007/08.

⁴⁹ See National House of Traditional Leaders, Annual Report 2007/08, p. 28.

⁵⁰ See National House of Traditional Leaders, Annual Report 2007/08, p. 27.

a trial at court which had not been successful. The Bakgatla remained together under the leadership of Nyalala Molefe John Pilane who was finally installed in Moruleng in 1996.⁵¹

The heated debate and struggle over the leadership in Moruleng has only recently been revived by the de-recognition of Kgafela II, the present chief of the Bakgatla.⁵² The controversy over his leadership has lasted for several years. The background for this development has been Kgafela's refusal to become a civil servant paid by the government and subjected to the authority of the Minister of Local Government in Botswana.⁵³ Financial independence for Kgafela has been guaranteed by contributions of the Bakgatla in South Africa. Two platinum mines located on their tribal territory in Moruleng have made the Bakgatla one of the richest tribes in the region and provide the economic basis of the chiefdom.⁵⁴ Defying the opposition in Moruleng and keeping close relations with Pilane, Kgafela finally has left Mochudi and Botswana in March 2012 to move to Moruleng and to stay with the Bakgatla in South Africa.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Chiefs and traditional communities have strongly been affected by colonial and post-colonial boundaries in the Southern African region. The precedent overview of incidents and contexts in which cross-border governance has evolved reveals some of the challenges and potentials for chiefs and states in Southern Africa. Although cross-border settlement of chiefdoms is a relevant issue in most states in Southern Africa, there are no official documents or legislative acts. New forms of cross-border governance at trans-national level like the SADC KHOTLA and COHTLA have been developed only recently so that the influence and potential of these institutions cannot be evaluated so far.

The limited scope of this paper does not allow a detailed and complete overview of the relevant contexts and initiatives in individual sectors. So instead, the paper and the historical

⁵¹ Cf. Gaotlhobogwe, Monkagedi 2008: Bakgatla in Court, in: The Monitor 25, No. 157, 27 October 2008.

⁵² Cf. Gaotlhobogwe, Monkagedi 2010: Thari Pilane wants Bakgatla throne, in: Mmegi Online 27, No. 167, 5 November 2010; Keoreng, Ephraim 2011: ‚Kgafela is an arrogant braggart’, in: Mmegi Online 28, No. 174, No. 174.

⁵³ Cf. Direng, Nelson 2011: Uneasy calm hangs over Kgatleng, in: Mmegi Online 28, No. 164, 2 November 2011; Mooketsi, Lekopanye 2009: Civil service trappings not for me – Kgafela, in: Mmegi Online 26, No. 187, 11 December 2009; Mooketsi, Lekopanye 2010: Botswana: Bakgatla Still Unrepresented in Ntlo Ya Dikgosi, in: The Monitor 1, No. 1, 18 January 2010.

⁵⁴ Cf. Gaotlhobogwe, Monkagedi 2008: Platinum Glitters At Kgafela II Coronation, in: The Monitor 25, No. 140, 22 September 2008.

⁵⁵ Cf. Maleke, Lerato 2012: Kgafela re-locating to South Africa, in: The Monitor 13, No. 11, 19 March 2012.

and contemporary examples presented therein can solely function as an introduction to the issue of cross-border governance by chiefs in Botswana and South Africa.

The special focus on the past and present situation of the Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafela in Botswana and South Africa has enabled us to follow the development of cross-border governance in different periods and with respect to various political and legal contexts in which the Bakgatla have managed to maintain their close relation to one another.

As has been shown, colonisation, apartheid and democratisation have not only influenced the role of chiefs but have also affected cross-border governance. While in pre-colonial times the primary motives for any form of cross-border governance have been centered on boundary disputes, protection and the splitting of tribes, the beginning of colonisation brought up real border issues. In the 20th century the different political development threatened the established forms of cooperation and governance in the region and affected the solidarity of members of chiefdoms situated in a cross-border context.

Still, further research is needed to analyse the situation of individual chiefdoms partitioned by state boundaries as well as forms of cross-border governance by chiefs at different levels of the state and in various contexts.

Bibliography

- Asiwaju, A.I. (Ed.) 1985: Partitioned Africans. Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries 1884-1994, London.
- Best, Alan C. G. 1970: Gaborone: Problems and Prospects of a New Capital, in: Geographical Review 60, No. 1, pp. 1-14.
- Butler, Jeffrey/Rotberg, Robert I./Adams, John 1977: The Black Homelands of South Africa. The Political and Economic Development of Bophuthatswana and KwaZulu, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London.
- Campion, Harvey 1977: Bophuthatswana – where the Tswanas meet, Sandton.
- Chanda, Amos 2004: Traditional Chiefs form Regional Council, in: SADC Today 7, No. 3, August, p. 13 [<http://www.sardc.net/Editorial/sadctoday/v7-3-8-04/SADCTODAYFAaug.pdf>] 16.05.2012].
- Comaroff, John L. 1978: Rules and Rulers: Political Processes in a Tswana Chiefdom, in: Man, New Series 13, No. 1, March, pp. 1-20.
- Direng, Nelson 2011: Uneasy calm hangs over Kgatleng, in: Mmegi Online 28, No. 164, 2 November 2011 [<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=1158&dir=2011/November/Wednesday2>] 29.12.2011].
- Düsing, Sandra 2002: Traditional Leadership and Democratisation in Southern Africa. A Comparative Study. Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa, Hamburg.
- Englebort, Pierre 2003: Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa, in: Vaughan, Olufemi (Ed.): Tradition and Politics. Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa, Ibadan, Nigeria, pp. 33-60.
- Gaotlhobogwe, Monkagedi 2008: Bakgatla in Court, in: The Monitor 25, No. 157, 27 October 2008 [<http://mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=31&aid=60&dir=2008/October/Monday27>] 17.05.2012].
- Gaotlhobogwe, Monkagedi 2008: Platinum Glitters At Kgafela II Coronation, in: The Monitor 25, No. 140, 22 September 2008 [<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=2&dir=2008/September/Monday22>] 29.12.2012]
- Gaotlhobogwe, Monkagedi 2010: Thari Pilane wants Bakgatla throne, in: Mmegi Online 27, No. 167, 5 November 2010 [<http://mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=6&aid=6241&dir=2010/November/Friday5>] 29.12.2011].

- Gaotlhobogwe, Monkagedi 2012: Linchwe held ANC weapons, in: *The Monitor* 13, No. 18, 14 May 2012
[<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=240&dir=2012/May/Monday14>> 18.05.2012].
- Grant, Sandy 2002: *Mochudi Around the Time of Independence*, Mochudi.
- Griffiths, Ieuan 1986: *The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries*, in: *The Geographical Journal* 152, No. 2, pp. 204-216.
- Gulbrandsen, Ørnulf 1993: *The Rise of the North-Western Tswana Kingdoms: On the Dynamics of Interaction between Internal Relations and External Forces*, in: *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 63, No. 4, pp. 550-582.
- Jeffery, Anthea J. 1993: *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, Johannesburg.
- Jones, David S. 1983: *Traditional Authority and State Administration in Botswana*, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, No. 1, pp. 133-139.
- Jones, Peris Sean 1999: 'To Come Together for Progress': *Modernization and Nation-Building in South Africa's Bantustan Periphery – The Case of Bophuthatswana*, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, No. 4, pp. 579-605.
- Keoreng, Ephraim 2011: 'Kgafela is an arrogant braggart', in: *Mmegi Online* 28, No. 174, 18 November 2011
[<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=31&sid2=1&aid=59&dir=2011/November/Friday18>> 29.12.2011]
- Keulder, Christiaan 1998: *Traditional leaders and local government in Africa: Lessons for South Africa*, Pretoria.
- Khunou, Freddie Samuelson 2009: *Traditional Leadership and Independent Bantustans of South Africa: Some Milestones of Transformative Constitutionalism beyond Apartheid*, in: *PER* 12, No. 4, pp. 81-125.
- Lange, Matthew 2009: *Developmental Crises. A Comparative-Historical Analysis of State-Building in Colonial Botswana and Malaysia*, in: *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47, No. 1, pp. 1-27.
- Lord Hailey 1953: *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part V. The High Commission Territories: Basutoland, The Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland*, London.
- Makgala, Christian John 2006: *Elite Conflict in Botswana. A History*, Pretoria.
- Maleke, Lerato 2012: *Kgafela re-locating to South Africa*, in: *The Monitor* 13, No. 11, 19 March 2012

- [<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=87&dir=2012/March/Monday19> 17.05.2012].
- Maylam, Paul 1980: Rhodes, the Tswana, and the British. Colonialism, collaboration, and conflict in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1885-1899, Westport., Conn.
 - Mooketsi, Lekopanye 2010: Botswana: Bakgatla Still Unrepresented in Ntlo Ya Dikgosi, in: The Monitor 1, No. 1, 18 January 2010 [<http://mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=44&dir=2010/January/Monday18>> 29.12.2011].
 - Mooketsi, Lekopanye 2009: Civil service trappings not for me – Kgafela, in: Mmegi Online 26, No. 187, 11 December 2009 [<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=29&dir=2009/December/Friday11>> 29.12.2011].
 - Morton, Fred 2009: When Rustling Became An Art: Pilane's Kgatla And The Transvaal Frontier 1820 -1902, Cape Town.
 - Morton, R. F. 1985: Chiefs and Ethnic Unity in two Colonial Worlds. The Bakgatla Baga Kgafela of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Transvaal 1972-1966, in: Asiwaju, A.I. (Ed.): Partitioned Africans. Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries 1884-1994, London, pp. 127-154.
 - Morton, R. F. 1985: Linchwe I and the Kgatla Campaign in the South African War, 1899-1902, in: The Journal of African History 26, No. 2, pp. 169-191.
 - Motseta, Sella 2012: Kgosi Linchwe was an anti-apartheid stalwart says Mbeki, in: The Tswana Times, 11 May 2012 [<http://www.thetswanatimes.co.bw/news/politics/180-kgosi-linchwe-was-an-anti-apartheid-stalwart-says-mbeki.html>> 18.05.2012].
 - Myers, J. C. 2008: Indirect Rule in South Africa. Tradition, Modernity, and the Costuming of Political Power, Rochester.
 - National House of Traditional Leaders, Annual Report 2006/07 [<http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=107431>> 11 Mai 2012].
 - National House of Traditional Leaders, Annual Report 2007/08 [<http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=123008>> 11 Mai 2012].
 - Oliver, Nic 2006: The South African constitutional policy and statutory framework for traditional leadership and institutions, in: Hinz, Manfred O./Gatter, F. Thomas (Eds.), Global responsibility - local agenda. The legitimacy of modern self-determination and African traditional authority, Berlin, pp. 213-238.
 - Oomen, Barbara 2005: Chiefs in South Africa: Law, Power and Culture in the Post-Apartheid Era, Oxford/Pietermaritzburg.

- Schapera, Isaac 1963: *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies*, reprinted, London.
- Schapera, Isaac 2004: *The ethnic composition of Tswana tribes*, Oxford/New York.
- Sharma, Keshav C. 2005: *Role of traditional structures in local governance for local government. The Case of Botswana*, Community Empowerment and Social Inclusion Program (CESI), World Bank Institute, Washington.
- Shillington, Kevin 1985: *The colonisation of the Southern Tswana 1870 - 1900*, Braamfontein.
- Van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, Emile Adriaan Benvenuto 1999: *Chieftaincy in Africa. Three Facets of a Hybrid Role*, in: van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, Emile Adriaan Benvenuto/van Dijk, Rijk (Eds.), *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-Political Landscape*, Hamburg, pp. 21-48.
- Vaughan, Olufemi 2003: *Chiefs, Power, and Social Change. Chiefship and Modern Politics in Botswana, 1880s – 1990s*, Trenton.
- Williams, James Michael 2009: *Legislating ‘Tradition’ in South Africa*, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, No. 1, pp. 191-209.
- Williams, James Michael 2010: *Chieftaincy, the state, and democracy. Political legitimacy in post-apartheid South Africa*, Bloomington.

Nigeria-Cameroon underground protection policy for the joint use of the Naira and the franc CFA on border markets

DJANABOU BAKARY
Department of History/University of Maroua, CAMEROON
Email: djanaboubakary@yahoo.fr
Tél.: +(237) 99 45 45 08
P.O. Box 55 Maroua, CAMEROON

Introduction

The Republic of Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Nigeria share a common border at a given point (see figure 1). Their geographical proximity also has been a point of political, economic and sociocultural mingling.

The current use of Naira and Franc CFA as legal tenders in Nigeria and Cameroon respectively, is a consequence of an ambitious colonial process. Some few centuries ago in the black continent as a whole, it was difficult to dissociate any commodity from its value of exchange, following the existence of trade by barter system. When in the 11th, century the Trans-Saharan trade brought together Central Sudan and Maghreb, business modalities were diversified and the use of exchange value called “primitive money”¹ gradually supplanted barter. In the Lake Chad Basin, monetary challenges were all the more that the foundation of kingdoms, trends and regulation of global policies were done within a specific context of the Trans-Saharan Trade. It was then that Sudan could extend her economic relations with other great kingdoms. This situation led to the interweaving of local and regional economic spheres, in such a harmonised social and economic presentation; federating many ethnic entities into a community. From there on, populations of the Lake Chad Basin were not predisposed to be separated like it was the case with colonialism; which the colonial frontier contrasted the existing social structure.

How then can the inking of traditional, socio-economic habits be consider as the fundamental alibi for the contestation of the new economic dawn, imputable to colonialism? Since money is an important parameter for this new economic dawn and trade a social fact,

¹ For more information on the notion of “primitive money”, see Josette Rivallain, 1988, « Sara : échanges et instruments monétaires », in Daniel Barreteau and Henri Tourneux, (éds.), *Le milieu et les hommes. Recherches comparatives et historiques dans le bassin du lac Tchad*, The Méga-Tchad 2nd Coloquium Acts, Paris ORSTOM, pp. 195-213 and Marion Johnson, 1970, “The cowrie currencies of west Africa”. Part I, <http://www.jstor.org>, Accessed in 18 June 2006.

border markets became popular free-zones and dictated on to the State the issues of sovereignty and local feature of integration. Could we understand the “double game” of States which tries to secure money as an element of national sovereignty and supports monetary indecisions in borderlands, simultaneously?

This study, realised in the market-towns of Banki, Kerawa and Gambaru between the northern Nigeria and the Northern Cameroon,² combines field investigations in the studied locale with diverse written documents. Presented in three parts, the study presents the social and economic commonalities between the populations living in these Cameroon and Nigeria borderlines in first. This shows the prolonged habit of a joint use of diverse currencies by the population. The second part presents how the States secure cross-border trade and reinforces the traditional model of trade-based-on-“no money’s land” at the same time. Part three highlights the ambivalent role of States in the monetary policies in borderlands.

Figure 1: Geographical proximity of Cameroon and Nigeria

² The Northern Cameroon and the Northern Nigeria before colonialism was not differentiated by clear-cut modern Nation-States boundaries, but by ethnic frontiers. The King of Kanem-Bornu and the Emir of Yola controlled the nowadays Cameroon and Nigeria territories. This colonial disposition changed after the First World War, when the Great Britain and France Shared Cameroon among them.

 Carte frontalière Nigeria-Cameroun

I-From Pre-colonial to Colonial Money: A Common Cameroon-Nigeria monetary Background

In the Sub-Saharan Africa, money became a fundamental tool for Market functioning and regulation of trade.³ With the new contact between the two rives of Saharan desert, money had to solve major constraints such as double coincidence of wants and absence of a harmonise evaluation of the value of articles claimed by Pierre Alary.⁴ In the trade by barter context, money

³ Jérôme Blanc, 2000, *Les monnaies parallèles : unité et diversité du fait monétaire*, Paris, L'Harmattan, p.19.

⁴ Pierre Alary, « Du troc à la monnaie, le troc a-t-il donné naissance à la monnaie ? », <http://www.jstor.org>, Accessed in 5 September 2008.

was consequently an important economic variable outstanding the end of the long period of complementary trade.

The appearance, regulation and propagation of exchange value announced the modern era of African trade. It even led to an awareness of the necessity to perpetuate commercial exchanges. That is why since the beginning of the use of money, traditional money was not perishable articles. Moreover, some ecological risk such as fall of the Lake Chad and the recurrent dryness in the Chad Basin led the population to be aware of the non-viability of a currency constituted in seasonal products. It is in this logic that different money used before European arrival was iron bar, bullion, copper coin, cowries, stuff, rock-salt, salt tablet and in some circumstances horses and slaves.⁵

These different values simultaneously used without any distinction of economic sphere of production, aimed at expanding trade networks by blurring local monetary frontiers. Indeed, money such as iron bar or stuff was, for example, the initiative of Sara and Mandara ethnic groups in the surroundings of the Lake Chad.⁶ Until the first half of the 19th century, according to Denham's travel reports, some other currencies like small glass-ware, pieces of amber and coral were current in Central Sudan. These moneys had some special value among the population where it was initially adopted.⁷ But because of the desire to keep and protect commercial interactions, the neighbouring people easily adopted them.

As far as gold money (bullion) is concerned, it was the main currency of Muslim kingdoms since the political and economic reforms of the Ummayyad Caliphate by Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan in the 7th century.⁸ Like in the Central Sudan, it was also the will to promote an interethnic and trans-regional trade by the Caliphate that led to a decentralisation of gold dinar

⁵ Djibril Tamsir Niane, 1975, *Le Soudan occidental au temps des grands Empires XI^e-XV^e siècles*, Paris, Présence Africaine, pp. 176-177.

⁶ See Joseph Rivellain, 1998, « Sara: échanges instruments monétaires », in Daniel Barreteau, et Henri Tourneux, (éds.), *Le milieu et les hommes. Recherches comparatives et historiques dans le bassin du lac-Tchad*, Acts of Méga-Tchad 2nd Colloquium, ORSTOM, Paris.

⁷ Iron bar used as money was for example a forge material. Iron can be transform into a farming and war tools. Stuff pieces were also serving in funeral rites in Baguirmi and mountain regions. In Sara society for example, and almost similarly in kotoko society, old iron used as money was also moulded in *kem*, *kul* or *Sakina*, a sort of small knives used in war.

⁸ Ibrahim Diop, 2003, « Echanges et réseaux d'échanges en Sénégambie (VIII^{ème}-XVI^{ème} Siècles) », in Alioune Ba et Paul Ndiaye, (éds.), *Mélanges. Annales de la faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines*, tome II, Dakar, Presse Universitaire de Dakar, p. 492.

coinage to adapt it to the African context.⁹ In so doing, each political polity had personalised her coining by stamping them from the crown seals.¹⁰ Cowries moreover, which were originated from the Maldivian Island and Indian Ocean were introduced in the Chad Basin during the Trans-Saharan trade. It finally became trans-community money in Africa because of its economic implications; that reinforced economic relations between Africa and the East.

Whatever, the first western money was introduced in Africa by European merchants and commercial companies, precursors of colonialism. In the southern area of the Lake Chad in the 18th century, one can mainly distinguish Maria-Theresa Dollars and Pound Sterling. The latter rapidly became wide-spread due to the economic power of the United Kingdom (UK) after the Industrial Revolution of 1780. To this effect, the financial greatness acquired by the UK raised its banks to an international power house. Most, if not all European imperialists finally adopted the UK pound in order to facilitate monetary transactions and reform of Africa. In fact, the monetary reform was aimed at facilitating colonial exploitation. The use of Pound-Sterling rapidly became uncontrolled and that led the Colonial Office and the British Treasury to create a specific pound for colonies. This specific Africa Pound was definitely adopted in the Northern Cameroun (yet a German possession) and in the Northern Chad (French territory), to the detriment of the Deutsch Mark and the French Franc. In fact, France tried, in vain, to institute her currency in her colonial possessions and Germany stayed for a long busy in the exploitation of the Cameroonian coastal zone so as to finally neglect the conquest of the hinterland. So, the general use of Maria-Theresa Dollars and Pounds, independently from a colonial boundary, led the local population of the Lake Chad Basin to contest the new zoning of their area. The contestation was made manifest by the maintenance of the joint use of the different monetary forms, as it was the case in traditional societies.

II-Borders, Colonial Money and Trade

The long period of undecided boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria led populations, who did not understand fully well their nationality changes, to reinforce their ethnic and religious identity feelings built over many centuries. France who inherited 4/5 of former German

⁹ *Dinar* was the dominant currency in the East and was also used in the West, precisely in the Cordou Caliphate.

¹⁰ Around the 11th century, Catalan and Almoravids were also coining.

Cameroon finally introduced the so-called Franc for the French Colonies of Africa (the Franc CFA), while Nigeria stayed in sterling zone. At their independence in 1960, both Cameroon and Nigeria kept the principle of intangibility of frontier, including monetary frontier. But in their dynamics, the national economy of Cameroon and Nigeria gradually grew away from one another became distant one to another. In fact, the Nigerian economy, at independence, was one of the best colonial legacies in Africa. This country had already possessed the opportunity to shelter some commercial companies such as the United Africa Company and the John Holtz Company in the 17th century,¹¹ favoured by the creation of a standard merchant class of Diula and Yoruba in Southern Nigeria. Thus, the territory did not only harboured oil refineries, but also aluminium and textile industries. The construction of the railway linking the North and the South of Nigeria after the independence boosted trade in the North.¹²

Juxtaposed to the Borno State in Nigeria, the Northern Cameroon geographically fit into Nigeria in the East and Chad in the West.¹³ Before her independence in January 1960, Cameroon was first a German protectorate and later a French and British mandated possession. But the economic development was mainly concentrated in the South, opened to the Atlantic Ocean. Consequently, the North tried “so-so” to keep the commercial link-set with the surrounding zone that became Chad, Nigeria and Niger. After independence, the North and the South of Cameroon hardly stayed close to each other because of the distance of the industrialised zones and the interrupted railway and road networks.¹⁴ So merchants from the North definitely decided to trade with those from the neighbouring Nigeria without any consideration of internationally recognised boundaries.

As a whole, Nigeria and Cameroon seemed to have a very separate economic potentiality. As far as commerce is concern, each of these nations has a specific internal trade dynamics, which consists in separation between their Northern and Southern regions. Yet, Northern regions of Cameroon and Nigeria have together been part of the same pre-colonial kingdoms like Kanem-Bornu and Adamawa. They also belonged to the same wide Trans-Saharan Trade network which was the major sphere of production in Central Sudan between the 8th and the 19th

¹¹ Some other Companies such as The *Royal Adventurers*, was established since 1660 to the benefit of Slave Trade. It has been replaced in 1672 by the *Royal African Company*.

¹² Trade in the North was shaken since the end of the Trans Saharan trade.

¹³ Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad share a lacustrian frontier in the Lake Chad.

¹⁴ The so-called “Transcameroonian” State railway project which was supposed to traverse the whole country in its original project finally was interrupted in Ngaoundere, at more than 500 kilometres from the provided terminus.

centuries as earlier highlighted. Therefore, the interdependence of Northern Cameroon and Northern Nigeria become evidence in some degree that it led the governments to have a specific policy to manage borderlands. That is why Nigeria and Cameroon had a cross-border cooperation workshop in 1992,¹⁵ the custom officers' seminars for the Central and West Africa¹⁶ and the meeting for the higher cooperating Cameroon-Nigeria joint commission in 2002. In this light, some resolutions were taken to encourage the creation of border markets in order to promote a proximity trade. It was concerning specific decision of how to manage the borderlands. Some treaties was then concluded such as the Trade Cooperation Agreement signed in 1963 and revised in 1982, 1994, 2002, 2008 and 2011.

These afore mentioned disposition explains why Gambaru, Banki and Kerawa border markets expanded after independence and why nowadays they have the specificity of double use of an unperturbed double use of the Naira and Franc cfa as legal tenders for transactions and even some currency business. Indeed, the proximity trade encouraged by Cameroun and Nigeria envisaged the development of State periphery; that is Centre-Periphery and Periphery-Centre dynamics. It encouraged a commercial continuity of the Trans-Saharan trade based on transnational merchants' networks, with main commodities being fuel, cotton, corn and cattle. Dealing with these merchandises in the border markets helps to accumulate either Naira or Franc cfa.

Finally, the encouragement of cross border trade just seems to be a Nigeria stratagem to "capture" Franc cfa.¹⁷ That was like a strategy for foreign exchange holding. In fact, naira is exclusively a national currency and that the rich traders from the country prefer accumulating Franc cfa than Naira in order to have a higher rate of change into Dollar, Euro or Riyal. They can easily make their transactions and other expenses during their different international business travels and the pilgrimages to Mecca. Hence Nigeria, which has 50 millions of Muslims,¹⁸ instrumentalises the cross-border trade for Franc cfa supply. More so, over 90 percent of the

¹⁵ Anthony I. Asiwaju, 2005, « Fragmentation ou intégration : quel avenir pour les frontières africaines ? », in ONU, *Des frontières en Afrique du XIIè au XXè siècle*, Unesco, Paris, p.80.

¹⁶ The 17th Seminar took place in March, 2012.

¹⁷ Jean Boutrais, Javier Herrera et Alain Bopda, 1992, « Bétail, naira et franc cfa : un flux transfrontalier entre Nigeria et Cameroun », IRD Documentary fond, cote : B.24622, p.17.

¹⁸ Karine Bennafla, 2005, « L'instrumentalisation du pèlerinage à La Mecque à des fins commerciales : l'exemple du Tchad », in Chiffolleau, S. et Madoeuf A., *Les pèlerinages au Maghreb et au Moyen-orient parcours et itinéraires*, Damas, IFPO, p.193.

Northerns Cameroun and Nigeria populations consume Nigerian products. During the transaction process, Chadians and Cameroonians traders export their currency in Banki, Kerawa and Gambaru. In the process, it follows a very lucrative money trade in border markets called “Black market”.¹⁹

The “Black market” is a major strategy of accumulation in the Lake Chad Basin borderlands. This is because of permanent proximity trade, and the distant of Official Banks for Changes.²⁰ In Cameroon for instance, changes from Franc cfa to Naira (and vice-versa) are not available in the closer branches of bank. Consequently, the informal scenario of trade and exchange develops and multiplies stakes of the joint use of Naira and Franc cfa becomes diversified.

III-Cross border monetary policies between Northern Cameroun and Northern Nigeria

At the end of the last century, many scholars among whom Paul de Grauwe were wondering about the place of money in the process of integration. He particularly wanted to know if there were some pertinent economic arguments which could encouraged some nations to keep different monetary unit? If any country can increase her national well-being by abandoning her money and adopting the currency of another? ²¹ In relation to these questions, one can argue that the joint use of two different moneys in such strategic markets of Kerawa, Gambaru and Banki is an appropriate case raising the issue of State sovereignty and integration.

Nowadays, frontier and money are two fundamentals variables of national sovereignty. Frontier nevertheless concerns two countries while money can just concerns one or rather several countries. But neither money nor frontier can be adapted to a specific locality to the detriment of State from every angle, whatever the historical background may be. So, if the development of the studied border region between Cameroon and Nigeria must inevitably pass through the interference of two different currency zones, it should require some specific cross border monetary policies.

¹⁹ Informal trade of currencies.

²⁰ In relation to Banki, Gambaru and Kerawa, the closer bank is located in the State Capital Maiduguri.

²¹ Paul de Grauwe, 1999, *Économie de l'intégration monétaire*, Bruxelles, De Boek Superieur, p. 7.

Franc cfa and Naira, like any money, are secure. The challenge is in such a way that Franc cfa has an advantage to be an old currency, with a regular parity with French franc and later with the Euro. These are two powerful currencies of contemporary world. In the other side, Naira is a recent money created within a Nigerian context of several policies review. In fact, it was in 1973 that Naira was created in order to take Nigeria out of global politic contortions in relations to the oil crisis of that period.

Javier Herrera comments on that when he claims that the 1970 and the early 1980 decades were lucky periods in Nigeria. Oil exportation reached 90 percent of national revenue. The management of external assets by the government enabled an expensive public expenditure and the maintenance of higher exchange rate. That period in Nigeria on the one hand helped to develop the so-called “reservoir” industries. On the other hand, the situation led to wasteful money expenditure through exportation of consumer goods to the detriment of agriculture (“Dutch Syndrome”). The drop of oil barrel price and the weight of foreign debt contracted during the oil boom involved a rapid loss of money reserve. So, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was not able to keep the previous higher exchange rate at the same time that it was trying to manage the need of money by exporters. Consequently, excess demand was carried over black economy, where it was possible to catch money, since the exchange rate was depending on the situation of supply and demand.²²

It was from then that Nigerian situation followed the underground border trade of money and also the reinforcement of subtle acceptance of double money use by Nigeria in her border territories. But Nigeria rapidly falls into a constraining geo-economic situation. On the one hand, the government was supposed to protect naira, the new national money created in order to help solving the painful oil crises.²³ On the other hand, this government became totally surrounded by the franc zone, the main importer, since the country came out from the sterling zone. So, the Nigerian commercial policy, which directly impacts on national monetary policy, seemed to be a cocktail both of liberalism and protectionism.²⁴ In 1986, while monetary reforms were the bases of the Structural Adjustment in Nigeria,²⁵ the government set a second exchange market, that is, Second Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM). In 1987, the Central Bank of Nigeria

²² Javier Herrera, février 1995, « Les échanges transfrontaliers entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria », Final Report of OCISCA, Work Document N^o 1995-02/T, p. 75.

²³ Nigeria is at the 6th place in OPEP.

²⁴ Bio Goura Soulé and Cyril Obi, 2001, *Les perspectives commerciales entre le Nigeria et ses voisins*, OCDE, p.27.

²⁵ Naira lost 50% of its value between 1980 and 1985.

reinforced this measure by establishing the Autonomous Market, which was an auction of naira by commercial banks in order to favour appreciation of naira. In 1995, while in the Cameroonian context was the devaluation of cfa franc, Nigeria set an Open Market Operation (OMO). The structure aimed at partly making up for the national deficit.

At the level of the frontiers, repercussions of this modern monetary dynamics are palpable. During the reign of Shehu Shagari (1979-1983), which endeavoured to boost Nigerian economy through agricultural sector and monetary discipline, boundary regimes and control services were alerted on a systematic inspection of Cameroonian populations entering Nigerian markets. Handling the Franc cfa was synonymous to expulsion from Kera and even of some menace to a cfa holder to “eat” the money. The situation continued during Muhammed Buhari’s regime, but got ameliorated in 1985 with Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida’s rise to power. At the end of the 1990s, this control became totally relaxed by the influence of Cameroonian merchants. In fact, the devaluation of the Franc cfa led to a decline of local products’ spending power in Cameroon. The survival strategy was the development of informal commercial sectors, notably with the Nigerian inexpensive articles.²⁶ That was possible because Nigerian productions were cheapest, due to the depreciation of naira. As Javier Herrera said, in 1984-1992 period, the effective exchange rate of naira was divided into ten.²⁷

It was at the end of 1994 that the official exchange rate of naira became stable at 22 naira for a dollar²⁸. In 1995, in the logic of “cfa franc pump” motivated by the OMO, currency trade stands became numerous in Banki. Exchange dealers clearly organised themselves into transnational networks, and kept in-touch with Lagos.²⁹ The rush of Cameroonian through the lucrative cross-border trade of the time led the Nigerian whole-seller to definitely accept, and encourage, the crude use of Franc cfa in the market. Cameroonian women were part of this rush to cross border trade. Since most of them were dealing with naira for the first time, they were feeling more comfortable to evaluate their purchases in cfa franc than in naira.³⁰ Consequently, Cameroon was in a very embarrassing situation. How in fact was it possible for the government

²⁶ See Djanabou Bakary, 2006, “Marchés, marchandises et marchands dans les abords sud du lac Tchad: XIXè-XXè siècles”, M.Phil Report in History, University of Ngaoundere.

²⁷ Javier Herrera, 1995, p.74.

²⁸ Bio Goura and Cyril Obi, 2001, p.28.

²⁹ Lagos was at that time the Nigerian capital, where the availability of economic structures were common.

³⁰ See Djanabou Bakary, 2006.

to protect the survival activity of her population (which was the border trade with Nigeria) in a difficult context of devaluation of cfa franc and at the same time to control the efflux of money?

Since the Franc cfa was not only a Cameroonian currency like naira in Nigeria, the government could not clearly elaborate monetary reforms like in Nigeria. But the fact was that since the early 1980s, the country was like many African countries, a victim of economic crises³¹ and in 1990s a victim of devaluation of cfa franc. It was then very important to ensure the population's security. In doing so, the priority was the security of the northern border population. It was very risky for the government to neglect these populations because of their historical attachment to Nigeria. As afore mentioned, the border population both northern Cameroon and northern Nigeria are each other feeling very closed, since they had the same historical background and had just been separated by the colonialism. So, neglecting them in such difficult context could encourage them to militate for their joining to northern Nigeria. In other hand, the Cameroonian government was expecting the Structural Adjustment to be a strategy to supply the State boxes. Finally, it was by using some confidential notes to the border officers that the government mostly encouraged border trade with a joint use of Naira and Franc cfa in border markets.³²

But globally speaking in this protection policy for the joint use of Franc cfa and Naira in border markets both by Cameroonian and Nigerian governments, there is no official letter available, clearly mentioning such agreement. That is why one can consider the situation like an underground "win-win" agreement.

Conclusion

Since 1990, the joint use of Naira and Franc cfa both in Cameroonian and Nigerian border markets became an actual fact; hardly hide from the repress of governments. Yet in normal situations, each country has the duty to ensure the exclusive movement of national currency in markets, even in the periphery zones. But the economic situation was scored by the recrudescence of border trade by the Cameroonians and the fluctuations of currencies between devaluation and depreciation, according to the international trade quotations. However, beyond

³¹ With the drop of raw material prices in global market, countries whose external revenues were based on agricultural products were affected. So, State boxes became empty and the government was obliged to reduce or even to block some population salaries.

³² In many archives documents, local authorities are invited either to be strict in the application of the right concerning the use of other money than cfa franc, or at the contrary to be relax about.

the suspicion that both Cameroon and Nigerian government are deliberately maintaining the double use of money through an underground reciprocal advantageous policy, it remains that the interference of these monetary zones is also a local population subtlety in contesting colonial boundaries. This border life situation is common to the general context of Cameroon-Nigeria frontiers which is about 1700 kilometres.³³ That is so remarkable that Cameroon and Nigeria frontier was a matter of conflict that have been taken to the International Court of Justice (Haye) in 2004. So the issue of global challenge and local impact of global decisions can also be raised once again.

Sources

Aghalino, S.O., 2002, "Trade Currencies in Pre-Colonial Nigeria" in Njoku, N., *Pre-colonial Economic History of Nigeria*, Benin -City: Ethiope Publishers.

Alary, P., « Du troc à la monnaie, le troc a-t-il donné naissance à la monnaie ? », in <http://www.jstor.org>, Accessed in September 5, 2008.

Asiwaju, A. I., 2005, « Fragmentation ou intégration : quel avenir pour les frontières africaines ? », in ONU, *Des frontières en Afrique du XIII^e au XX^e siècle*, Paris, Unesco.

Bakary, D., 2006, "Marchés, marchandises et marchands dans les abords sud du lac Tchad: XIX^e-XX^e siècles", M.Phil Report in History, University of Ngaoundere.

Banque de France, « La zone franc », note d'information N° 127.

Bennafla, K., 2005, « L'instrumentalisation du pèlerinage à La Mecque à des fins commerciales : l'exemple du Tchad », in Chiffolleau, S. et Madoeuf A., *Les pèlerinages au Maghreb et au Moyen-orient parcours et itinéraires*, Damas, IFPO

Bio Goura, S. and Obi, C., 2001, « Les perspectives commerciales entre le Nigeria et ses voisins », in http://www.hubrural.org/IMG/pdf/ecowap_etude_dynamiques_integrations_zone_emprise_nigeria.pdf, Accessed in January 5, 2012.

Biodun, A., 2004, "The Impact of Oil on Nigeria's Economic Policy Formulation", Text of a paper presented at the conference on Nigeria: Maximizing Pro-poor Growth: Regenerating the

³³ See Abdouraman Halirou, 2008, « Le conflit frontalier Cameroun-Nigeria dans le lac Tchad : les enjeux de l'île de Darak, disputée et partagée », in *Cultures & Conflits*, No72.

Socio-economic Database, organized by Overseas Development Institute in collaboration with the Nigerian Economic Summit Group.

Blanc, J., 2000, *Les monnaies parallèles : unité et diversité du fait monétaire*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

Boutrais, J., Herrera, J. and Bopda, A., 1992, « Bétail, naira et franc cfa : un flux transfrontalier entre Nigeria et Cameroun », IRD Documentary fond, cote : B.24622.

Chauveau, J.P., 1980, « Spécialisations écologiques, État et réalisation de la valeur par les échanges à longue distance », in *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol. 20, No 77/78.

De Grauwe, P., 1999, *Économie de l'intégration monétaire*, Bruxelles, De Boek Superieur.

Diop, I., 2003, « Echanges et réseaux d'échanges en Sénégambie (VIII^{ème}-XVI^{ème} Siècles) », in Alioune Ba et Paul Ndiaye, (éds.), *Mélanges. Annales de la faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines*, tome II, Dakar, Presse Universitaire de Dakar.

Edoumba, P., 2001, « Aperçu sur les monnaies d'Afrique », in: *Revue numismatique*, 6th série - Tome 157.

Halirou, A., 2008 « Le conflit frontalier Cameroun-Nigeria dans le lac Tchad : les enjeux de l'île de Darak, disputée et partagée », in *Cultures & Conflits*, No72.

Herrera, J., 1997, « Compétitivité du Cameroun par rapport au Nigeria. Un bilan depuis la dévaluation du franc CFA », OCISCA, Works Document No 09.

Herrera, J., février 1995, « Les échanges transfrontaliers entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria », Final Repport of OCISCA, Work Document N^o 1995-02/T.

Ihalainen, P. et al., (éds.), 2007, « Frontières au dix-huitième siècle », in *Revue internationale d'études du dix-huitième siècle (RIEDS)*, vol.1, Helsinki & Oxford.

Johnson, M., "The cowrie currencies of west Africa". Part I, in <http://www.jstor.org>, Accessed in June 18, 2006.

Omede, A. J., 2006, "Nigeria's Relations with Her Neighbours", in *Kamla-Raj Stud. Tribes Tribals*, No 4 vol.1.

Omolara, C. A., « Foreign Exchange Market and Monetary Management in Nigeria», in *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences (JETEMS)*, vol. 1, No 2.

Rivallain, J., 1988, « Sara : échanges et instruments monétaires », in Daniel Barreteau and Henri Tourneux, (éds.), *Le milieu et les hommes. Recherches comparatives et historiques dans le bassin du lac Tchad*, The Méga-Tchad 2nd Coloquium Acts, Paris, ORSTOM.

Tamsir Niane, D., 1975, *Le Soudan occidental au temps des grands Empires XI^e-XV^e siècles*, Paris, Présence Africaine.

Tunde, O., 1999, "Nigeria's economy at the crossroads. New government faces a legacy of mismanagement and decay", in *Africa recovery*, June 1999.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

Conundrums of Cash:

Wage Rhythms and Wealth Circulation on the Zimbabwean-South African border

Maxim Bolt

University of Birmingham

Abstract: *How does cash circulate in a remote border area? Based on 17 months of ethnographic fieldwork in a border-farm workforce, this paper moves beyond conventional ethnographic scale to address this systemic question. During Zimbabwe's recent hyperinflation, the white-settler estates of the Zimbabwean-South African border were important hubs of the border economy. Black Zimbabweans migrated, not only to earn South African Rand, but also acquire basic commodities not available at home. Understanding the circulation and use of cash on the border requires consideration of workers' reliance on monthly wages, how they remitted to kin in Zimbabwe, and their problems actually storing their money. The farms shaped the temporality – the rhythm – of circulation. Cash entered the area in huge quantities, as wages. But it left just as abruptly, returning to town with travelling traders. Some workers sought goods as stable, remittable forms of wealth. Meanwhile the risk of theft in shared accommodation pushed many to live on credit, until cash once again flew through the compound. This papers shows cash to be easy to steal and hard to remit. It thereby reveals the relationships between cash circulation and the trade and movement of other kinds of wealth, along and across the border.*

Introduction

This paper explores two, related sets of themes. The first: how does money circulate in a border area? What flows connect borders areas to other places in their own national territories, and to places across the national boundary? This, of course, depends on context. On the Zimbabwean-South African border, the context is a string of large commercial farms. Each white-owned estate has a large, resident, black workforce. And it is around these that border life revolves. Workforce arrangements on the farms shape the border's monetary circulation: from Musina, the closest South African town 60 km away; back to town; and across the border to Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, the flow of cash to, through and away from the farms is central to how the workforces are constituted as communities. This, then, is the second set of themes, crucial for understanding the first. How does life on the farms affect the circulation of money

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

around and through the border area? And how are the workforces themselves shaped by their members' concerns about using, storing and safeguarding money in a border setting?

This paper offers an ethnographic account of monetary circulation, in farm workforces along the Zimbabwean-South African border since 2006, the height of the Zimbabwean crisis. It places emphasis on the constraints and logistical challenges presented by the use and storage of earnings. What emerges is far more complex than a binary relationship between 'capital' and 'labour' – employers and employees – connected through the wage. Relationships *within* workforces are shaped by concerns about money. And in this border setting, characterised by transience and a conspicuously absent police force, money's *form* matters. Cash is a burden. Relationships of debt – *potential* cash – often form the basis of the monetary economy, and these both reflect and constitute existing social inequalities. Here, employers act as bankers for senior workers, and settled senior workers do the same for their seasonal counterparts. As everyone tries to remove their cash from a situation of everyday insecurity, money's use depends on highly personalised, hierarchical relationships, as well as on the *rhythms* of payment, debt and circulation.

The dynamics of the border intersect with others that are typical of resident labour across the region. As in the better-known case of the mines (see e.g. Gordon 1977; McNamara 1978, 1985; Moodie 1980, 1983, 1994; Donham 2011), the farms' resident black workforces live in a designated area – the compound – in a highly racially divided setting. Accommodation is planned, austere and barrack-like, and residence is officially contingent upon employment. For workers on border farms, spending their wages on remittances draws money away from what they might spend on living life in the compound itself. Labour compounds, in addition to being places of accommodation for workers, become homes and closely knit communities in their own right. As in mine compounds, workforces develop and uphold complex status hierarchies. Relationships forged in the workplace spill over into compound life more generally (for a similar farm case, in Zimbabwe, see Rutherford 2001). White farmers increasingly reject established ideals of paternalist responsibility (see Du Toit 1993). But personalised connections and forms of vertical dependence continue, because

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

senior black workers act as the protectors of their subordinates, in what I call mediated paternalism. These arrangements mitigate the uncertainty and transience of the border, including the difficulty of storing earnings in such a setting. What this paper argues is that workforce relationships both shape, and are constituted by, flows of cash.

This paper examines the circulation of money *as wages*. It traces money as it is brought to the farms by the white farmer-landowners, distributed in the workforce, and then stored, used and remitted in response to workers' concerns and priorities. Despite the large and growing literature on labour in anthropology, the ways wages shape relationships in workforces have received little attention. As in historical scholarship, this may be because 'we tend to link the use of currency primarily with trade' (Lucassen 2007: 222). Monetary circulation, in anthropology as in history, is often associated primarily with exchange. But exploring payment in workforces invites a broader view: one that encompasses distribution, the means and relationships through which earnings are stored, and how money is remitted to workers' homes. Doing so offers insight into how and why workers convert between cash, forms of debt and banked money. And it illuminates the *rhythms* of circulation. All of this, in turn, allows us to scale up, from the various priorities and concerns of workers, to plot larger circulation patterns. For, as Guyer (2004) demonstrates, money's circulation is inseparable from how and why people convert between forms of wealth.

Before turning to my own material, I shall briefly note two pieces of ethnographic research about money and labour. By drawing out points that the authors do not emphasise, I hope to refine what it is that I propose.

The first of these is by Andrew Walsh (2003), who writes about sapphire miners in Madagascar. Money is earned by selling illegally mined stones: this is a case of hard – albeit 'self-employed' – labour. The setting, a mining town, therefore represents a concentration of people earning their money by means of the same activities as one another. The argument is that, though miners 'risk' a lot to crawl underground in search of precious stones, they do not save their earnings. Instead, they consider the money to be 'hot' – it must be spent through 'daring' consumption, and can never be the basis of investment or saving for the long-term. Walsh's gloss on this is that miners

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

refuse to take their marginality in the world lying down. By being the virile, irresponsible men they are expected to be, they shape their own lives. This, despite being underpaid for sapphires, routinely hounded by the police and at constant risk of losing their houses to fire. The argument is one about how money is represented by miners: 'it is ... less a study of "hot money" than a study of the situated, subjective perspective from which money might be perceived as "hot"' (ibid: 291).

But somewhere between marginality and miners' responses to it is a local political economy in which money actually operates. Walsh writes, for example, of the fact that miners are temporary and insecure. Their earnings take the form of huge but irregular windfalls. And, crucially, they have nowhere to keep them. None of these points detract from his interpretation, but the article's data also suggest a monetary circulation pattern, shaped by rhythms of earning (and debt?), by logistical challenges, and by the consequent need to offload money quickly. Earnings are not wages here, but the Walsh's data suggest clear reasons for the fast circulation of money in insecure labour settings.

The second example is recent research conducted by Richard Wilk (see e.g. 2007), who is more explicitly interested in the political economy of *payments* for labour. He draws on the historical record to make a broad, comparative argument about how people who work in single-sex gangs in remote locations spend money after they are paid. Men working in such occupations as lumber workers, fishermen, pirates and cowboys, he contends, live in 'binge' economies. They come to population centres only occasionally, feel more kinship with the other men from their work gangs than with anyone they see or meet during these sojourns, and spend their money on celebration (sex, food and drink). Their binge spending inverts existing hierarchies, for the brief periods that they can sustain it: for a short time, they buy the same clothes and eat at the same establishments as the elite. Then they return to their remote gang labour.

There is a fascinating story to be told here about how the uses of cash shape relationships among workers, and how money moves versus how people move in this context of gang labour. Migrant gang labourers' money stays in town, earned on arrival and spent before departure. The distribution of cash here presents problems – where

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

to use it, and how – to which workers' responses constitute workforces as units. And, as in my own case below, patterns of circulation based on periodic wages must centrally be understood as *rhythmic* flows of cash. In Wilk's case, 'the social characteristics of a work life that precluded savings and allowed only episodic entry into a cash economy, besides evoking common forms of masculinity, fostered the sharing of a distinct sense of time' (2007b: 442).

I turn now to the Zimbabwean-South African border, to develop the themes explored in this opening section: the relationship between monetary circulation and people's priorities and motivations; the rhythms of monetary distribution and flow; and the spatial dimensions of monetary circulation, notably in relation to how people move. In particular, I turn to the farm I call Grootplaas, in whose compound I conducted resident fieldwork between 2006 and 2008. The entry point is a delayed payday at the end of the harvest.

Delay and dissatisfaction: introducing payday on the border

On the banks of the Limpopo River, a workforce grew increasingly impatient. Grootplaas, a 900-hectare, South African citrus farm, had completed the year's picking on the previous Friday, but payday was delayed. By Sunday, the food budgets of the 450 seasonal workers from Zimbabwe began to run out. The 140 permanent employees still had money. But many of their more transient counterparts lacked the personal connections to borrow. Indeed, lending to harvest-time workers was risky. Compelled to become migrant labourers by Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis, many were strangers in the farm's tight-knit, resident working population. Most would leave shortly after they had been paid. They looked forward to receiving their remuneration, celebrating and then heading south to seek further employment in cities such as Johannesburg. Now, however, an increasing number sat in groups in the labour compound, muttering complaints of hunger.

The delay had wider effects. At the end of each month, traders come up to the border farms from Musina, the border town 60km away, and from the former homeland of Venda, beyond. They set up markets in the border farms' labour compounds, waiting to capitalise on the huge influx of cash in the black agricultural

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

workforces all along the border. Moving between the farms, they make as much as R12,000 (£800 – well over ten times the monthly wage of most farm workers), beginning their sales early on the Friday afternoon, as soon as the first farms distribute wages. This weekend, however, those at Grootplaas simply waited as rumour after rumour of imminent pay passed through the compound: the money would come by the end of Friday; by midday on Saturday; by Monday. In the meantime, many sat and slept in the same spots outdoors, holding onto their prime locations within the market despite the harsh seasonal weather. In September – late winter – days are hot and dry, but nights cold enough to have ruined some of the neighbouring farmer's cotton crop. By Sunday, moreover, some traders had finished the *vhuswa*¹ they had brought with them and used money they had brought to buy bread in the compound. As sales slowed on the other farms, more traders arrived on the backs of pick-up trucks, their Filipino suitcases² full of merchandise, in anticipation of the moment of pay.

This dearth of cash made for a sharp contrast with the usual exuberance of payday weekend, and especially the end of the entire harvest. Many workers not only buy clothes, groceries and cosmetics from the market traders, but also engage in extended festivity. On this occasion, a concert at Grootplaas featuring two major local popstars had been scheduled for Friday night. This remote border farm was to be the site of a major 'double-header', featuring both the Venda region's biggest reggae star and its *tshingondo*³ equivalent. Grootplaas was a very unusual place for a line-up of such consequence, as the artists themselves commented. Indeed, reggae star Colbert Mukwevho, referring to the farm's large, transient population and the labour compound's squalid conditions, called it 'a refugee camp'.⁴ But such events still made sense, because of the expected abundance of cash. For musical performers, as for market traders, the border farms represent large, employed populations, in a region with high levels of unemployment.

¹ Maize-meal porridge.

² Huge, tartan, canvas bags.

³ Jive

⁴ Other performers similarly lack familiarity with remote settler farms and their characteristic layouts; a previous guest musician had lost his way by driving into the citrus orchards.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

Unlike other concerts in the past, however, the September double-header was massively underattended. In the compound's football ground, a plastic sheet strung between six-foot wooden posts marked the boundary of a makeshift arena. Only a small crowd gathered inside, around the tarpaulin laid out on the ground to mark the stage. The R10 (70p) entry was simply unaffordable for the majority of seasonal labourers. Some listened from under the trees outside the arena. Most who did enter declined to buy beer, ruining the usual atmosphere. Like those of the market traders and of the workers themselves, the plans of the concert organisers were thwarted by a delay in the arrival of cash to the farm. Because of the inconvenience and expense involved in reaching the remote border farms, traders and event organisers finely calibrate their travel to accord with the distribution of cash.

Finally, at midday on Monday, Benjamin, a worker responsible for administering pay, cycled through the compound. The money had been sent from Musina, he said, and was now being put into packets. Pay could be anytime after lunch. By mid-afternoon, a crowd was walking in the direction of the workshop. There, workers waited outside the perimeter fence for their names to be called: packshed workers first, then pickers. Some marked the occasion: a wide-brimmed straw hat; umbrellas as parasols; new or fresh T-, football and button-down shirts. Many of these items had been bought from the market traders on previous paydays.

Those called up to queue jostled eagerly, while those who had been paid hung around chatting, or checking their pay packets. Men and women who lived in the compound and who had sold loose cigarettes, *mbanje*,⁵ beer and groceries on credit during the harvest now identified their customers. Keen to secure repayment before the seasonal workforce began to leave the farm, they consulted their brown paper-covered A4 exercise books in which they had recorded accounts. That evening, the visiting market traders were well compensated for their wait. Business boomed, as departing seasonal employees bought everything from cooking oil, soap and skin cream, to clothes and shoes, to music cassettes, to chips for a snack while shopping.

⁵ Marijuana.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

Many bought Filipino suitcases of their own, in which to take home their copious purchases and their other possessions.

At Grootplaas, the evening after workers are paid involves a high level of spending, in a way that looks reminiscent of the cases described by Walsh and Wilk, and discussed above. Among the permanent population, male seasonal pickers are thought to be especially profligate. As one informal taxi driver⁶ put it, they are 'not serious about saving'. They spend their money on beer and women. A senior worker who had grown up on a mine in Zimbabwe corroborated this assertion. Underlining the similarities between Grootplaas and mine compounds, he claimed not only that seasonal pickers seek 'female entertainment', but that they have little sense of what to pay for it. They, he said, pay up to R300 (about £20, well over a third of a month's wages) for sex on the farm, whereas permanent workers, who are more guarded with their money, will only pay R20.⁷

Among the picking workforce's young men, there are indeed many who respond to their grim prospects by living for the moment. But by no means all do so. And overpayment – for sex or anything else – is more a sign of their lack of relationships in the border population than of extravagance. Moreover, their reputation as big spenders and lucrative customers is reinforced by the fact that, often lacking legal documentation (more on this below), they are unable to travel to town for groceries. This means that they must buy much of what they need from sellers in the compound. Their consumption is consequently more visible than that of permanent workers, who are able to make occasion trips to town to stock up.

Conversely, it is not true that liberal spending is confined to the male picking workforce. Month-end is a major event. For workers, anticipation is born of the distinct lack of cash in the week or two beforehand. Many residents of the labour compound survive the month on credit. But by the end of the pay cycle, even these avenues have been largely exhausted; traders in the compound are already owed

⁶ Men with pick-up trucks who run people up and down the border.

⁷ I present statements like this as rumour and accusation only. Investigating the accuracy of such claims about prices would not have been an appropriate line of inquiry. The statement here refers to women who accept cash payments for sex. It is important to note that they are not simply regarded as 'prostitutes', but rather are young farm workers or HIV/AIDS peer educators who are 'open to suggestion'.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

sizeable sums of money. Consumption of everything except necessary food and groceries is at an ebb. The compound is quiet and its residents turn in early. After all, in a place where *shebeens*⁸ are run by residents out of their rooms, sitting at one without a beer is just loitering. Meanwhile, plans are hatched for pay weekend. Which *shebeen* will be the site of a party? Will there be meat for a *braai*,⁹ perhaps provided by a senior worker to celebrate the football team he manages? Perhaps the black manager of the nearby game farm will slaughter one of his goats. Will there be a visiting musician to Grootplaas or a nearby farm? Such anticipation breeds rumour, and often results in travel up and down the border between the farms, trying to find events that never materialise, or never existed in the first place.

Is this a 'binge economy'? Or is the money earned 'hot'? What this paper shows is that spikes in spending have more to do with the nature of monetary storage and circulation than the meanings associated with money. Much of the spending is in fact a conversion of money into necessary goods, either for life in the compound or to remit home to Zimbabwe. And the exuberance of payday itself cannot be understood without appreciating the austerity of the period immediately preceding it, and the anticipation this causes. This austerity, in turn, is not just the product of bad planning. Cash is hard to safeguard in this setting. This means that it makes sense to spend fast, and then rely on credit, even if this means living frugally for half of every month. This cycle of cash and credit is the result of compound residents' particular predicaments, and in turn produces a distinctive monetary circulation pattern on the border's farms, as I will show later.

This short vignette offers a way into considering how money circulates in a waged workforce, and more widely on a stretch of border dominated by capitalist production. The last payday of 2007 was unusual because the delay in payment was particularly extreme, and the disruption it caused particularly severe. But the end of the harvest is always unpredictable. In other months, employees are dismissed from work on Friday morning, in time for wages to be calculated. By contrast, the end of the last day of picking for the year is not determined by a concern for timely pay. Rather,

⁸ Informal beersellers.

⁹ Barbecue.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

the year's harvest work must be fully completed, after which cash must be brought to the farm. The delay discussed here reveals important characteristics of the cash economy in hubs of migrant labour like the plantations of the Zimbabwean-South African border. It underlines not only the far-reaching importance of a predictable rhythm of cash supply, but also the problems of distributing money in such a setting. What follows expands aspects of this vignette, to trace monetary circulation in the Grootplaas workforce.

Distribution

Grootplaas' white farmers live in a world of banked money. This banked money, moreover, routinely moves between countries and continents. South African border farmers were once cotton farmers for a domestic market, but were unable to compete with cheaper imports from China. Export crops like Grootplaas' oranges, paid for in foreign currencies, offered higher profits in an era of market liberalisation in South Africa. Seeking out lucrative markets for each year's export-grade citrus crop, farmers now respond to demand from different world regions through fruit agents. They travel to countries as far away as China to speak to potential new buyers, and to Belgium to speak to middlemen. In all of this, they routinely juggle and convert between different currencies, which exist for them primarily as numbers on screens.

Actually paying their workforce is a different matter. Here, money is material. Wages at Grootplaas, as on the other border farms, take the form largely of cash in individual pay packets. For the white farmers, month-end is a time of logistics and risk. Pay has to be calculated and sufficient cash brought to the farms. There are small-scale schemes offering seasonal employees bags of maize-meal on credit, deductible from wages, since newcomers otherwise lack access to food. But, apart from these, virtually all pay was until recently¹⁰ paid directly in banknotes and coins. Organising wage payments on the farms is a considerable operation. A total of approximately 1,000

¹⁰ The farmers at Grootplaas have now begun to pay their permanent workers through bank accounts. Reportedly, Zimbabweans with farm employment, travel papers, visas and work permits have long been eligible for bank accounts. Actually securing one appears to have become easier, however. Since Zimbabwe's economic improvement, migrants have been able to acquire passports, and permanent farm workers are now eligible for 4-year South African visas. I was also informed that refugee papers have offered a route to bank accounts.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

permanently employed core workers on the border farms are joined during the harvest by a further 2,000 pickers and packers. And, though farmers find ways to keep the pay of many seasonal workers under the South African monthly minimum wage,¹¹ this scale of remuneration involves very large amounts of cash. To complicate matters further, seasonal pickers are paid on piece rates. This means that workers are paid different and irregular amounts, and so the farmers require denominations covering the range of South African currency: from R100 banknotes to coins of R1 and lower.

Wage payment, seen in terms of circulation, is the centralised distribution of money. Farmers collect the cash themselves from Musina, a town 60km away, in their pick-up trucks or cars. Doing so comes with obvious hazards. One month, Jacques, the twenty-something son of the Grootplaas farmer, was delegated the role of bringing the money back to the farm. After his trip to the bank, he stopped at the agricultural co-op, leaving his vehicle outside. When he returned, the cash was gone. Farmers speak of criminals' carefully co-ordinated efforts to monitor their movements when they go to town around the end of the month. Prospective thieves reportedly lie in wait to target the unwary or inexperienced.

Picking up the money at another point in the month would be no better, however. For, while it may outmanoeuvre thieves in town, keeping large amounts of cash on the farm comes with its own risks. If farmers are known to pick up money just before they distribute it to workers, they are less likely to be targeted for what they keep on-site. It was this unwillingness to keep a supply of cash in preparation for payday that caused the delay in September 2007. Workers must first finish the month's tasks; then pay is calculated for each category and gang of workers; only then will one of the farmers drive to town to collect the necessary cash.¹² Although the Grootplaas farmers have not been robbed, stories from other farms underline the risk. One of Grootplaas' labourers formerly worked on a tomato estate two hours away at

¹¹ R989 in 2007.

¹² The white farmers run shops for black workers, resembling those of resident workforces elsewhere. However, it is worth noting that they make little effort to attract business, and they allow workers and other labour-compound residents to establish their own informal stores. One reason for this diffident attitude may be that they seek to avoid keeping large amounts of cash on the farms.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

which, as the workforce queued for pay, men arrived with AK47 automatic weapons, and made off with the money.

The actual distribution of wages is a highly ritualised event, marking its central place in the monthly cycle. As described above, many workers, having washed after the morning's labour, recognise the occasion with clean, often new, clothes. That way, they are ready to embark on the evening's shopping and festivities as soon as they return to the compound. They are called into the yard in groups, by employment type – pickers, graders, packers, permanent workers. Seasonal workers are policed by members of the core labour force, and form two queues. At the front, a work supervisor beckons each seasonal worker to an inkpad on a table. Sometimes, he asks which thumb the worker prefers; in other cases, he simply grabs a thumb, presses it on the ink and 'signs' for pay. The implications of this treatment are not lost on the mostly literate Zimbabwean migrants, some of whom have extensive formal schooling and middle-class self-understandings.

Directed to a window in the wall behind the table, each worker receives a white, paper packet containing several banknotes and a handful of coins. Antiquated, Dot Matrix type from the farm office's printer adorns the envelopes, specifying the worker and the amount paid. These amounts vary significantly between workers. Piece rates for seasonal pickers are calculated by gang (trailers of fruit filled, divided by the number of gang members). Theoretically, the rate is calibrated so that, by working at a decent pace, pickers earn the basic minimum wage. However, the South African government lack any means to check average work pace in different kinds of farming. Employers consequently use this mechanism to underpay dramatically: members of the fastest picking teams earn R850, while members of women's teams (two of the twelve teams) earn as little as R350. Packshed workers, meanwhile, are paid on the same basic monthly minimum wage as most permanent employees (R989 in 2007), but accumulate significant overtime, as they work the conveyor belts late into the night to grade and pack fruit that has been picked each day. They regularly come away with up to R1200.

In any case, workers open their envelopes, count their notes and coins and check the amount against the information typed onto the outside. This ensures against

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

miscounting, which sometimes occurs, but it is very difficult for workers to ascertain that their pay matches the work they have done. It is virtually impossible to keep precise track of the numbers of trailers filled across a month, at the same time as engaging in hard, fast-paced labour. Even hours of overtime in the packshed are difficult to record, because it is sometimes unclear when work has actually finished and 'clearing up' has begun. A pay packet therefore primarily signals its owner's working group: a slow or fast picking gang, or a conveyor-belt worker from the packshed. Among pickers, pay confirms what they already know about the broad differences in pace between gangs – supervisors have been driving the work pace for months by means of taunting comparisons. But the collection of coins and banknotes each worker receives appears remote from any discernable units of labour. Of greater concern for each worker, as he or she leaves the workshop with a paypacket, is what to do with it.

To remit, or not to remit?

Most workers come to the farms to earn money to send back home to Zimbabwe. Some remit a portion of their earnings immediately. If it is far, they travel home via the border post by a series of taxis; if nearby, they cross the border on foot and cycle or walk on the other side. But by no means everyone does so. Once on the farms, spending money on life in the compound competes with diverting earnings for remittance. Appreciating this tension is key to understanding how money circulates on the border.

There are important differences between core and seasonal workforces here, which a specific example will illustrate. One mid-harvest payday in 2007, 33 of 53 randomly selected seasonal workers at Grootplaas went home. A further two sent earnings with their wife or neighbour. Returning home may appear unsurprising in this migrant labour setting. Seasonal workers are often new to the farms and feel little commitment to their lives there. Indeed, since Zimbabwe's economic decline, many have no experience of agricultural labour and find it hard, demeaning and anachronistic – such recruits tend to stay for only a short time.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

However, making the journey home is no simple matter. Seasonal workers find it hard to travel. Many during the period of the Zimbabwean crisis were undocumented (see below) and, until the hyperinflationary Zimbabwean Dollar was abandoned in 2009, taking money home presented problems. Converting South African Rand in Beitbridge, the Zimbabwean border town, was risky, and each black-market deal was brokered with the worry that the police or Central Intelligence Organisation were watching. Many would instead stock up on basic supplies that were scarce in Zimbabwe, and take these home at the end of the season (see Bolt 2012).

The legal situation has improved and, since the South African Rand was made legal tender in Zimbabwe in 2009, remitting money has become easier. But many seasonal workers are insufficiently well remunerated to afford regular visits home or to send anything. For many, wages are simply not enough to cover life in the compound, remittance and the journey. And those hoping to find further employment in cities to the south must factor in the costs of getting there. Transport problems within Zimbabwe are a further challenge. And while leaving South Africa is easy enough, re-entering through the border fence puts one at risk of robbery and rape at the hands of *makumakuma*, gangs that operate along the Limpopo River. Meanwhile, relying on home networks to remit requires that one actually has such close, trusted connections, and a brief stint on the border farms leaves little opportunity to make arrangements. All of this means that the final payday is a particularly important moment for remittance.

Fewer permanent workers from Grootplaas travelled home in the same mid-harvest month in 2007 – only 20 of a sample of 49 – although a further three sent someone else home with remittances. This, despite the fact that they are better paid, and have long enjoyed the everyday security that comes from full legal documentation. There are a number of reasons for this difference. Over the long term, many permanent workers remit more – often over R500 in a month – and more steadily than their seasonal counterparts. But as long-term employees, they are able to take leave. Many wait for a longer trip home and accumulate considerable amounts before they return to Zimbabwe, especially during the harvest when there is a lot of work to do. For some permanent workers, it must be said, such visits home are rare, because they invest a

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

large proportion of their earnings in life in the compound. Spending on housing, girlfriends and beer, all of which root them on the border farms, divert considerable resources from other projects elsewhere.

To promote accumulation, some permanent workers are involved in small rotating credit groups, which emerge and disappear depending on their members' reliability. Each month, a member of the group receives the lion's share of everyone's earnings – a lump sum to spend or remit – leaving the others with enough to live on. As they accumulate, permanent workers rely on better personal security than the more transient harvest-time workforce. Recently, access to bank accounts has made saving easier, but also makes it more likely that wages will remain in South Africa, rather than being sent to kin in Zimbabwe.

For both permanent and seasonal workers, the most important moment of the harvest for remittance is immediately after the season finishes. But this is for different reasons. Permanent workers are able to accumulate wealth first, before they go. Many seasonal workers, by contrast, are able to save relatively little, and few can afford to travel home regularly. As the next section shows, they have an even harder time storing what they have saved. Material accumulation, the original goal of most seasonal workers, quickly appears to many to be unattainable.

Storing value: the problem with cash

In standard definitions, a key feature of money is that it is a store of value. But storing money itself on the border farms is no simple matter. While farmers bring cash to their farms with difficulty, their workers would prefer not to leave it there. At the core of each farm's workforce is a group of permanent employees – around 140 at Grootplaas. These permanent workers are settled and often connected to one another by ties of kinship, friendship, sexual relationships and origin (many hail from villages just across the border). But the compounds in which they live, immediately adjacent to the border fence, are surrounded by transience. Although the busiest part of the border is the area around the official crossing point at Beitbridge, there is constant movement through the farms as Zimbabweans cross the Limpopo River, climb through the fence, and work their way southwards into South Africa. When the farm is recruiting for the

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

harvest, many stay as pickers or packshed workers. And while some work the full 5-month period, others move on quickly, deterred by conditions on the farms or lured by hopes of better employment in South Africa's cities. There are always, therefore, strangers around the compounds. And the police presence is overwhelmingly focused on maintaining the integrity of the border, rather than protecting its resident workforces. Money commonly offers its owners dual possibilities: public display, or covert, hidden potential (see Graeber 2001). But on the Zimbabwean-South African border, the lack of everyday security encourages workers to keep their money out of sight as far as possible.

Unlike along the Limpopo riverbed, where gangs known as *Makumakuma* operate, open robbery is virtually unknown in the compounds. This is doubtless because of the risk of immediate, violent reprisals. Vigilante justice is rare, but demonstrates to everyone in the area what could happen. On one occasion, two workers, who had fled after drunkenly assaulting another with a length of electrical cable, returned for their wages. Entering the compound, they stole clothes from one of the rooms, but were tracked down in the bush by a security guard and around thirty male workers, who took them to the football field, beat them and then marched them to the white farmer. The farmer recommended a further beating, and then handing the culprits to the local army garrison. Fearing serious injury to the young men, Marula, the black foreman, interceded and took them directly to the soldiers. Identified criminals are labelled *makumakuma* (the gangsters of the border), justifying levels of violence that would never be visited upon those considered residents. This, needless to say, is a powerful deterrent.

However, if a thief is not caught red-handed, the risks are far lower. As mentioned above, the police are rarely present in this remote part of the border. The foreman, Marula, holds court at his house in the manner of a headman, and hears disputes about theft. But the process inevitably takes too long and begins to appear pointless; victims quickly realise that they will not get their money back, and simply concede. At this point, it makes more sense to visit a *ng'anga*.¹³ *Ng'angas* offer the

¹³ Diviner-healer.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

possibility of detecting culprits, not to recover the money, but to wreak revenge, such as by causing insanity. I heard of no cases where this had happened in response to theft specifically.¹⁴ But the fact that detection and retaliation are possible discourages wrongdoing. One informant drew my attention to a mentally ill man in the compound, who stands as a warning of what could happen to criminals.

Despite all of this, opportunistic theft is a constant risk. I came to realise this soon after arriving on the border. I began residence in the Grootplaas compound during the off-season, the period when only the permanent core workforce is resident at the farm. The tightly connected, embedded population I found appeared one in which possessions were secure. But my host, a senior worker, was keen to impress on me how misleading this impression was. He was fastidious about locking the door to his accommodation when out of sight of it, even when very close by. And indeed, within a few weeks, a friend of his – an established, respected pump operator – had been burgled. He had left the door to his room open on Christmas day, while he visited friends around the compound. After a few beers, he returned to find that all of his savings and clothes had disappeared. Known for his sartorial elegance, his open room was doubtless a particularly lucky find. Of course, his possessions were never recovered. This tension, between apparent security and the risk of theft, is one that simultaneously produces constant concern and momentary carelessness. As one long-term resident put it, 'if you knew [theft] would happen on such and such a day, you would lock your door on that day, but as you do not [know], you might just leave it open.'

For the many businesspeople resident in the farm compounds, the risks are yet greater because they are known to keep money and goods. During the period of fieldwork, one shop on a neighbouring farm was emptied of its goods and television. It was later said that the owner had left soon afterwards, unable to sustain business after such a loss. Informal taxi drivers, who ply the route along the fence to the border post with their pick-up trucks, face similar risks. Taxi drivers at Grootplaas must park in a designated area on the edge of the compound, and if they leave anything in their

¹⁴ Although there were cases of invisible attack with different motivations.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

vehicles overnight they are sure to find smashed windows in the morning. In this setting, cash is far from a neutral form of wealth – its form has consequences. It is easily concealed, and is entirely generic in appearance. Once it has been stolen, it is virtually impossible to distinguish one's own money from someone else's.

At least permanent workers' material insecurity is limited by the fact that they are able to lock their rooms. The compound is an austere, barrack-like place, with its rows of brick blocks and metal doors. But permanent workers are allocated their own accommodation, and are able both to personalise it and accumulate possessions and earnings behind their padlocked doors.

Seasonal workers lack this basic security. Around twenty women who do seasonal work occupy a 'semi-permanent' status, living at the farm throughout the year, doing odd-jobs, and belonging to the settled population. Some other seasonal women are relatives or sexual partners of permanent employees, and are able to reside with them. But the majority of the seasonal workforce lives a less rooted existence. When they arrive, they are allocated spaces on the concrete floor of overcrowded rooms. Living with strangers in cramped housing makes it hard to store earnings safely. Some are able to swap rooms, so that they reside with others from their home area. But to do so, new arrivals must be lucky enough to find swapping partners. And, of course, they must have friends from home in the first place – something much more common among those who hail from the south of Zimbabwe, near the border. To make matters worse, the doors can also only be secured with a padlock. With so many residents, doors remain unlocked. And this, in a distinct area of the compound that is full of people, many unknown to one another because of high labour turnover. The area, associated primarily with the transience of the seasonal workforce, is illuminated by a huge floodlight and is known for its *shebeens* and rowdy behaviour. Overcrowded accommodation with strangers, unlocked doors and a busy free-for-all make the safe storage of any goods, but especially cash, very difficult.

The fact that many seasonal workers remain undocumented for long periods of time – sometimes the whole harvest, due to backlogs processing documentation at the local Department of Home Affairs – further deepens their insecurity. During the mass deportations that characterised the period of the Zimbabwean crisis, it was not

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

uncommon for new arrivals to avoid their rooms altogether, for fear of detection by the police or army.¹⁵ Despite the fact that the harvest was the middle of winter, and bitterly cold, many would sleep in hiding, in the bush some distance from the compound. Along with their living conditions, seasonal workers' fugitive existence and the possibility of sudden and immediate deportation all mean that it makes little sense for them to store their earnings in their accommodation. Many keep cash in their pockets. But this is hardly a satisfactory solution, given the risk of extortion during deportation, or robbery afterwards while crossing back into South Africa.

The hierarchy of the cash economy

Cash, therefore, presents particular problems for the harvest-time workforce. One common solution is to develop relationships with permanent workers, who safeguard each month's remuneration until it is needed. Permanent workers' areas of the compound are better kept and have been adapted into homes. Away from the *shebeens*, they are quieter and the people who frequent them are well known. Most importantly, permanent workers are able to lock their doors. In an environment with a high degree of mobility and a large numbers of strangers, having access to a secure room in which to keep cash and other possessions is of clear importance.

Becoming well acquainted with permanent residents is therefore to seasonal workers' advantage. Although most are integrated in senior figures' social networks to only a limited extent, there are several ways to develop relationships with them. Some seasonal workers are fortunate, in that they hail from the same home areas as senior figures. Others cultivate connections through work itself: the ability to banter can become a resource in finding a patron. But senior permanent workers are also key figures in the life of the compound. One manages his own football team. His players keep their cash either with him or with the team's coach, both of whom safeguard considerable amounts. Another work supervisor is the prophet who runs the branch of the African Apostolic Church. The farm's foreman acts as a chief-like figure within the farm's working population, and he is known to take people under his wing if they

¹⁵ In recent years, this has improved, as the South African Police Service (SAPS) is no longer pushed to deport Zimbabwean migrants on the border.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

present their problems to him. These forms of connection are often hard to distinguish in practice. One picking supervisor has a history of recruiting people from Gundu, his home area in Zimbabwe, to his picking team. When employment lists revealed that over 90% of his pickers were from one place, he was told to stop. But such practices are common. Permanent workers are local notables on the farms, their authority general and their connection to seasonal workers broad-based.

Looking after seasonal workers' money – and sometimes their supply of mealie¹⁶ meal or items they have purchased such as spades – cements permanent workers' positions in the farm's hierarchy. Doing so can establish one man as the senior figure amongst his relatives on the border farms. More generally, looking after cash enables permanent workers to gain influence and status by accumulating dependents from among the workforce. Other permanent workers seek pecuniary gain: they act as banks, lending the money on at interest. For seasonal recruits, entrusting senior figures with earnings comes with its risks. Sometimes, money lent on to third parties is not repaid. In such cases, permanent workers have been known simply to abrogate responsibilities to their depositors. They may even simply spend the money they are supposed to safeguard, and later claim that it was stolen. In general, however, permanent workers are not known for betraying trust, because their positions as central figures in the farm hierarchy are too important to them. In cases where money was actually stolen from them, or lost to fire, upstanding permanent workers have reportedly even repaid the amount in instalments, to diffuse any rumours of wrongdoing. But ultimately, in such an unequal situation, honesty and generosity are permanent workers' prerogatives. Seasonal workers may take their cases to Marula's court, but the elders that preside there are a tight-knit cadre of picking supervisors. Permanent workers largely make the rules.

The better known of the seasonal workforce – the semi-permanent, the regular faces, and the kin and sexual partners of senior figures – have another option. Although pickers are considered too transient, many of the women who work in the packshed are sufficiently embedded to draw on relationships with people with bank

¹⁶ Maize.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

accounts. One informal taxi driver for example – a South African – deposits the earnings of packshed workers in his own account, and returns them at the end of the harvest, or when requested. From one woman he took R1500 (well over a month's wage), and she gave him R200 'in thanks' at the end of the season. This, of course, implies a great deal of trust. Taxi drivers, however, claim that their reliability is key to their business: they must remain on good terms with farm residents to ensure their livelihoods.

Giving money to taxi drivers, in fact, most approximates the responses of permanent workers themselves to everyday insecurity. Whereas the majority of seasonal workers are limited to removing cash from their accommodation or their person, but leaving it in the compound, their more settled counterparts seek ways to remove cash from the workforce altogether. Some money is, of course, kept in the compound, hidden in mattresses or, in the case of one *spaza*¹⁷/*shebeen* owner, in an empty lunchbox. But finding a way to get money out of the compound is a priority. Residents give cash to others to look after, in bank accounts, or just elsewhere. For example, one *spaza* owner is a relative of the wife of a game-farm manager down the road. Her income is far safer on the game farm, away from the bustle and prying eyes of the compound.

Better yet is opening one's own bank account, something rendered far simpler by the new four-year visas that many permanent workers have received.¹⁸ An increasing number of permanent workers now have accounts, and deposit money in their Musina branch after pay. In such cases, bank accounts are seen primarily as safe places for cash. Transactions, even in town, are not made using plastic cards, and farm workers do not take out loans. Some workers hold cards for bank accounts that have been opened by a friend, so that they, too, have a safe place off the farm for earnings. And one *spaza* owner used the address of a relative in town to meet a bank's requirements. Once again, taxi drivers are central to these arrangements. When they drive to town, they go with stacks of ATM cards and their PIN numbers, and deposit or withdraw

¹⁷ Informal general store.

¹⁸ A mobile unit from the South African Department of Home Affairs came to the farm in 2011, and registered permanent workers. Those who were absent on that day, however, lack this more secure documentation, and remain with their six-month work permits.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

cash (for a small contribution of R20 for a cold drink). In effect, the drivers represent money's route out of the compound.

Another strategy open to permanent workers is through the white farmers, who offer to look after some of their wages each month. Intended as a mechanism for saving, this also removes cash from the farm altogether. Like the strategies discussed above, it depends on personal connections. Members of the small, core workforce, known to the farmers, are able to approach them to request that some of the month's pay is held back. Doing so also requires steady employment and residence, and withheld wages are not simply available on-demand – at least not if many workers request them at the same time, such as before holidays. As we saw earlier, farmers do not keep large amounts of cash on the farm. Safeguarded wages remain, unpaid, in the farmers' bank accounts, and exist as wages only in the workforce records. In effect, when workers leave their earnings with farmers, they underline their open-ended residence at the farm.

Both seasonal and permanent workers' experiences reveal that the form money takes matters. Cash has consequences. The particular challenges of a cash economy in a transient, border, migrant-labour setting, are visible in workers' own strategies and social relations. Seasonal labourers seek to cultivate relations with their work supervisors, who in turn entrust earnings to white employers, to friends and relatives off the farm or to banks in town. In all cases, cash, lacking personalised features, is easily stolen and tracked down with difficulty. And so the primary concern is moving money up the farm's hierarchy (in the process reinforcing this hierarchy of dependence), and away from compound life. Despite the considerable lengths to which farmers go to bring cash *onto* their estates, the concern of many workers is how to take their money *back off* the farm.

Having examined the storage of cash, and the social arrangements in which this occurs, we are now in a position to return to the spikes in spending that follow each payday, and the consequent cycles of credit and debt. This, in turn, will at last enable us to reconstruct a model of the circulation of money on the border farms.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

Money in time: rhythms of payment and debt

The delayed payday of 2007 underlines the central importance of a monthly rhythm in the money supply. Most obviously, the effects of late pay show how finely people at Grootplaas calibrate their actions to the timing of monthly remuneration. A three-day delay saw workers and market traders run out of food, complaints about slavery that painted farmers as colonial relics, and two celebrated bands fail to draw an audience.

More generally, the border farms' economies are built around a monthly cycle between the abundance and scarcity of cash. The range of people whose plans were confounded highlights the diverse enterprises that take advantage of the workforce's earnings after pay. Businesspeople, both visiting and resident, sell goods to the Grootplaas workforce, which represents a large concentration of regular incomes. Moreover, the large-scale debt collection in evidence – the businesspeople with their brown-paper account books – points to the centrality of credit. With workers paid once each month, a complex web of debt relationships ties them to businesspeople in the labour compound.

After payday, traders wait around the workshop yard, locating their customers, checking their accounts and attempting to apprehend debtors, especially those in the seasonal workforce who, unlike core employees, may disappear as soon as they are paid. But most chasing must be done later in the evening, in the compound. Stopping every debtor as he or she leaves the workshop is impossible, especially for businesspeople who also earn a wage at the farm, and must therefore queue for pay like everyone else. Permanent workers, meanwhile, will not abscond, but may refuse to pay, relying on their influence in the compound for leverage. Despite these problems, credit brings business, and to advance it is to demonstrate membership of compound society. Business depends on the goodwill of the workforce, especially those at the top of the hierarchy who control residence in the compound, and traders' precariousness ensures extremely generous terms of credit.

There are rare cases in which traders become reluctant to advance further credit, but even here there is a great deal of flexibility. This flexibility is itself revealing of how credit works at Grootplaas, and the differences between permanent and seasonal workers in demanding it. A senior permanent worker, Smooth, so called because of his

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

sartorial elegance – a faux-leather cowboy hat and jacket, leather shoes, sharp shirts – is known for his unreliability. Smooth acquires his smart clothes during periodic visits to Musina town. And while these purchases are an indicator of how he spends his money, Smooth sometimes disappears after he is paid. On one occasion, a hasty goodbye was followed by a quiet border crossing. He re-emerged several days later, having attended a relative's wedding in Zimbabwe. He had used his wages to buy large quantities of beer, sustaining his reputation at home as a successful man. Around the same time, it became clear that he was claiming he had no money, while using cash to buy beer. Businesspeople refused to advance him credit; this was possible because he was also in debt to his rather more influential friends in the permanent workforce. Nevertheless, he soon received more lenient treatment. By indicating that he intended to pay off *some* of his debt – but by no means all – he was able once again to buy on credit. For established permanent workers, demonstrating willingness in principle to pay what one owes is enough. Outstanding credit is an affirmation of the relationship between businessperson and customer – by settling the account, this relationship's open indeterminacy is cut short. For permanent workers, the ultimate settlement of debts lies at a distant, indeterminate point in the future. Cash feeds the credit economy in an ad-hoc, long-term manner. By contrast, seasonal workers have to settle their debts after payday because of their potential transience and their lack of clout in the compound. Credit enables their subsistence at the farm without cash, but most debts are settled after each payday, on a tight, short-term, monthly rhythm.

This debt economy both responds to and produces sharp fluctuations in cash. Workers spend cash quickly, rely on debt, pay what is necessary after payday (almost everything if one is seasonal; substantially less if one is permanent), and then ask for further credit. During the cash-scarce periods, settled compound residents supplement their purchases on credit with resources that do not require money. For example, they cultivate gardens around the edges of the compound. They broker access to the Limpopo River through border guards, so that they can fish. They pick *morogo*¹⁹ that grows wild under the citrus trees, fed by the farm's irrigation system. And they keep

¹⁹ Green leaf vegetables, known in English generically as spinach.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

chickens, which they cross-breed with wild guinea fowl to boost numbers. By these means, residents are guaranteed some kind of relish, to accompany the maize meal that they buy to prepare *vhuswa*.²⁰ In addition, they use forklift pallets and scrap metal to construct beds, chairs and stools.

But the cash scarcity that pertains for much of the month is not simply because the money runs out. The monthly rhythm is itself partly *driven* by the strategies of cash storage and use already discussed, in which farm residents attempt to remove their earnings from the farm. In the case of many permanent employees, money is simply out of reach. Others convert their wages to other kinds of wealth immediately after pay. The compound traders themselves are part of this pattern of periodic cash flight, through the orders for stock that they place with informal taxi drivers. Much of the money that reaches them when debts are repaid goes straight to the wholesale shops along Musina's high street and, via payments to taxi drivers, to petrol stations.

Money in space: border circuits

This paper has examined the social relations through which members of a migrant workforce accommodate themselves to the monthly supply, storage and use of cash in a transient border setting. Placed in its proper context, money appears here not as the faceless means of exchange between strangers, but as a form of value whose use depends on its form, on particular temporal rhythms and on particular arrangements for exchange and storage. By way of conclusion, I draw the strands together to suggest a pattern of cash circulation in the border farming area.

One might have assumed that the flow would simply be from farmers' banks to workers to workers' families in Zimbabwe. Instead, an important circuit is between Musina – banks and shops (and so probably again banks) and the farms. Indeed, the circulation of money and goods is a peculiar one here. Both cash and the goods that cash buys are brought to the farms from Musina or further afield. Farmers bring cash, and traders bring the goods that enable life on the farm itself. So a key use of money, for those who earn it, is exchange among acquaintances in the compound. In fact,

²⁰ Porridge.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

however, matters are more peculiar still: much of compound exchange is on credit. Farmers bring cash, which flies through the compound for a short time, before much of it returns to town. A lot immediately goes to traders, who take it back to town to buy stock – often the same weekend. What is key here, therefore, is the *temporality* – the rhythm – of circulation, as farm residents respond to the insecure conditions of the border.

Alongside this rapid, monthly circuit between town and the border area are connections to places in Zimbabwe. Flows of wealth across the border are crucial, but they are less frequent, despite the border's porosity. For seasonal workers, saving and remitting both present challenges; for permanent employees, accumulation is easier, but there are reasons to wait before visiting home or remitting. In both cases, as workers attempt to protect what they have earned, cash wages are more likely to end up returning to town each month than crossing into Zimbabwe.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

References

- Bolt, M. 2012. 'Waged entrepreneurs, policed informality: work, the regulation of space and the economy of the Zimbabwean-South African border', *Africa* 82(1): 111-130.
- Donham, D. 2011. *Violence in a Time of Liberation: murder and ethnicity at a South African gold mine, 1994*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- du Toit, A. 1993. 'The micro-politics of paternalism: the discourses of management and resistance on South African fruit and wine farms', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19(2): 314-336.
- Gordon, R. J. 1977. *Mines, Masters and Migrants: life in a Namibian compound*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Graeber, D. 2001. *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: the false coin of our own dreams*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Guyer, J. 2004. *Marginal Gains: monetary transactions in Atlantic Africa*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Lucassen, J. 2007. 'Wage payments and currency circulation in the Netherlands from 1200 to 2000, in J. Lucassen (ed.), *Wages and Currency: global comparisons from antiquity to the twentieth century*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- McNamara, J. K. 1978. 'Social life, ethnicity and conflict in a gold mine hostel'. Unpublished MA dissertation, Witwatersrand University.
- _____. 1985. 'Black worker conflicts on South African gold mines: 1973-1982'. Unpublished PhD thesis, Witwatersrand University.
- Moodie, T.D. 1980. 'The formal and informal structure of a South African gold mine', *Human Relations* 33 (8): 555-574.
- _____. 1983. 'Mine culture and miners' identity on the South African gold mines' in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Town and Country in the Transvaal: capitalist penetration and popular response*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press
- _____. with V. Ndatshhe. 1994. *Going For Gold: mines, men and migration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rutherford, B. 2001. *Working on the Margins: black workers, white farmers in postcolonial Zimbabwe*. London: Zed Books.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

- Walsh, A. 2003. "Hot money" and daring consumption in a northern Malagasy sapphire-mining town', *American Ethnologist* 30(2): 290-305.
- Wilk, R. 2007. 'Loggers, miners, cowboys and crab fishermen: masculine work cultures and binge consumption', Yale Agrarian Studies Colloquium Series paper, 30/11. <http://www.yale.edu/agrarianstudies/colloqpapers/12wilk.pdf>. Accessed 20/5/12 at 19:20.
- _____ 2007b. 'It's about time: a commentary on Guyer', *American Ethnologist* 34(3): 440-443.

Money, Banking and Sovereignty in West Africa: British Currency and Financial Institutions in Liberia, 1870-1943

Leigh A Gardner

London School of Economics and Political Science

Preliminary draft – please do not quote or cite without author’s permission

Comments welcome: l.a.gardner@lse.ac.uk

Abstract: Colonial boundaries established the foundation not only for the national boundaries of the former colonies after independence, but also for the national currencies. Then, as now, the boundaries of optimum currency areas did not necessarily follow political borders. This paper provides one example of such a disjuncture, examining the adoption of British and British West African currency by independent Liberia. The financial struggles of the Liberian government during the inter-war period made British currency and institutions seem appealingly stable, and by the inter-war period British colonial currency could legally circulate in Liberia and the Bank of British West Africa served as state bank both to British colonial administrations and the Liberian government. This paper uses the debates surrounding these changes to explore the link between economic and political sovereignty in colonial West Africa.

1. Introduction

Africa's national currencies, like its national boundaries, are largely a product of colonial rule. Prior to the colonial period, and indeed in its first decades, a variety of currencies – whether commodity currencies like cowrie shells or international trading currencies like the Maria Theresa dollar – circulated across nascent colonial borders according to consumer preferences and the patterns of trade. With the consolidation of colonial rule, however, new currencies were introduced, specific to the territories of individual Empires, like for example British West Africa or the CFA franc zone (Helleiner 2003: 163-85). After independence the monetary regime fragmented as many individual countries introduced their own currencies.

Economic theories of optimum currency areas have long recognized that they are rarely defined by national boundaries (Mundell 1961: 659-60). Alesina and Barro (2002: 409) observe that the expansion in the number of countries since 1947 – from 76 to 193 – and the resulting proliferation of different currencies have renewed debates about ‘the sanctity of “one country one money”’. On the other hand, currencies have considerable political value as symbols of national sovereignty, which may provide a disincentive to forming a currency union with another country (Alesina and Barro 2002: 435).

The juxtaposition between colonial boundaries and optimum currency areas in West Africa is the subject of this paper. It focuses on one of the few African territories to remain at least nominally independent through the first half of the twentieth century: Liberia. Like Sierra Leone, Liberia was initially established as a territory for freed slaves in the early nineteenth century. It became an independent republic in 1847 (Dorward 1986: 454). Through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the new republic suffered through a series of economic crises and increasing indebtedness. The latter led to progressive erosions of Liberian sovereignty, as lenders demanded in return for financial assistance that Liberia cede authority over its financial management and military forces. From the 1930s, the American Firestone Rubber Company, which had been granted a large concession in 1926, was exerting increasing control over Liberia's governance.

Liberia's own currency, the Liberian dollar, had depreciated by the late nineteenth century owing to the financial instability of the young republic. From the late nineteenth century British sterling and British West African currency circulated widely and ultimately became the sole circulating medium and the basis of Liberia's monetary system. The use of British and British

West African currency in Liberia often occurred over the objections of Liberian politicians, who saw the use of British currency, and particularly British West African currency, as part of a broader pattern of British infringement on Liberian sovereignty. Despite these objections, British currency circulated for nearly half a century until displaced by the dollar in 1943.

This paper will examine why Liberia largely abandoned its own currency to use British currency, and why its use was continued through the 1930s, despite the rising dominance of American interests. The next section will briefly summarize the debates about optimum currency areas and why some countries find it advantageous to adopt an alternative currency. It will also provide historical background on the development of currency areas in West Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The third section will examine Liberia's adoption of British sterling as its medium of exchange, placing it in the context of Liberia's economic and financial relationships during the twentieth century. The fourth section will examine the growing dominance of U.S. interests through, and the transition from sterling to the dollar in 1943. The fifth concludes, using questions from the case of Liberia to call for further research on the monetary consequences of decolonization in Africa.

2. Currency unions in theory and history

The 1960s represented a turning point, both in the creation of new currencies around the world and in the theory of currency unions. The transfer of power from the crumbling European empires to newly independent states in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean represented in most cases the break-up of the large and complicated currency areas established by metropolitan governments in the formative years of colonial rule. In Africa, former British colonies largely chose to establish their own national currencies shortly after independence. By contrast, French Africa retained the CFA franc. There is evidence to suggest that this choice mattered for the development prospects of the former colonies, with members of the CFA franc zone benefitting from a more stable currency less vulnerable to political interference, at least through the 1960s and 1970s (Stasavage 2003: 4-5). These differences have made Africa a natural area for the study of currency unions (Fielding 2005).

The debate about optimum currency areas emerged during the same period from a wider discussion about the adoption of a system of flexible exchange rates and the ability of appreciation and depreciation to take the place of inflation and unemployment, respectively. Mundell (1961: 664) showed that 'the

validity of the argument for flexible exchange rates therefore hinges on the closeness with which nations correspond to regions', in that flexible exchange rates could not mitigate the effects of shocks which affected one region and not another within the same currency area, particularly in a context where the ability of labour and capital to move between regions is limited. In his analysis, Mundell (1961: 663-4) notes that 'a region is an economic unit while a currency domain is partly an expression of national sovereignty'. One would not expect currencies to be re-organized unless a country was giving up its national sovereignty.

Other studies, however, emphasize that in some cases it may be worthwhile for some countries to give up some degree of national sovereignty in return for monetary stability. McKinnon (1963: 722) concludes that small countries with a high ratio of tradeable to non-tradeable goods will benefit from pegging to a larger currency, as a common currency will facilitate capital movement and specialization. Similarly, Alesina and Barro (2002: 435) find that 'the type of country with the strongest incentive to give up its own currency is one that has a history of high inflation and is close in a variety of ways to a large and monetarily stable country'.

Theoretically, joining a currency union should lead to large gains in trade owing to the reduction in transaction costs. Rose (2000) finds that using a common currency has a large positive effect on trade. However, measuring the gains from joining currency unions remains difficult, largely because of endogeneity problems. Frankel and Rose (1998) point out that the same factors which make countries suitable for a common currency – including high levels of trade and a relatively synchronous business cycle (Alesina and Barro 2002) – might also be affected by the adoption of a common currency, which could increase trade by reducing transaction costs. Studies of the currency blocs which emerged in the inter-war period illustrate that higher levels of existing trade and economic integration make the formation of currency unions more likely (Eichengreen and Irwin 1995). Ritschl and Wolf (2003) find that a large proportion of trade between members of inter-war currency blocs already existed before the establishment of the currency bloc. In other words, they find that 'not only do currency areas create trade, but that trade also creates currency areas' (ibid: 23).

The creation of the European empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries provides another historical example of the creation of currency areas, albeit one in which most of the major players lacked national sovereignty. The construction of imperial monetary systems was one of the central challenges

of Empire-building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and represents one of the largest experiments in the design and implementation of currency unions in history. As Chalmers (1893: v) notes in his history of the monetary system of the British Empire, ‘the three centuries of the history of colonial currency have exhibited the phenomena, singly or in combination, of barter, monometallism (gold, silver, and even copper), bimetallism, and paper currency of all grades of imperfection; there are few experiments in currency which that history does not record, and no blunders of which it does not indicate the punishment.’ Hopkins (1973: 207) describes the establishment of colonial currency systems in Africa as ‘the largely unplanned infiltration of an underdeveloped region by an advanced monetary system’. By the inter-war period, colonies in Asia and Africa had their own currencies, fixed to metropolitan currencies on the gold-exchange standard. Through this system the European empires in effect formed extensive, and complex, currency areas.

Helleiner (2003: 163) gives four principal motivations for the establishment of specific colonial currencies: the desire to reduce transaction costs in colonial trade, an effort to share seigniorage revenue with colonial administrations, efforts to influence macroeconomic conditions, and the creation and consolidation of political identities. The first issue, transaction costs, was particularly important for colonies attempting to both become financially self-sufficient and encourage the expansion of the export trade. Early administrators commented on the difficulties of keeping public accounts when tax payments were made either in kind (Newbury 2004: 260) or in commodity currencies with fluctuating values like cowries (Helleiner 2003: 170). The need for a standard currency became more important as the accounting needs of both the public and private sector expanded along with colonial economies (Sian 2010: 223-4; Uche 2010: 78-80). Further, fluctuating exchange rates were also a burden for private traders; fixed exchange rates with metropolitan currencies ensured that ‘international trade would not be unsettled by changes in rates of exchange’ (Hopkins 1973: 208). Mackinnon (1963: 722) argues that contractual arrangement for capital flows between small countries are greatly facilitated by a common currency.

This framework provides a convincing explanation with regard to why imperial governments made efforts to standardize currencies across their territories. However, it is less convincing with regard to why metropolitan currencies were not used throughout the European empires. On the surface, a single currency for the whole of an Empire would seem the simplest solution to the

problem of transaction costs, and as Helleiner (2003: 167) notes, this was the solution preferred by metropolitan business interests.

As the scale of empires grew, the extension of metropolitan currencies made the management of those currencies more difficult. West Africa is a case in point. Through the late nineteenth century, demand for British silver coin grew rapidly in West Africa, to the point where issues to West Africa dwarfed those to other territories and nearly equaled issues within the United Kingdom. The report of the Emmott Committee, appointed in 1912 to investigate the question of currency in British West Africa, observed that the statistics on issues of silver coins to West Africa ‘raise grave doubts whether the continued issue of the silver coins of the United Kingdom to the West African colonies in compatible with the successful control of its token coinage by the home government’ (Great Britain 1912: 6).

The value of silver coinage, which functioned as a token coinage in Britain, had been maintained through careful management of supply and demand, which would be come more difficult if substantial quantities of silver coin were returned from circulation in the colonies (ibid: 7). The very great differences between metropolitan economies specializing in the production of manufactured goods, and primary-producing colonial economies, made them in many ways bad candidates for the establishment of a currency union (Frankel and Rose 1998: 1009; Mundell 1961). The lack of correlation between the shocks affecting metropolitan and colonial economies may have made a pure currency union more difficult. Contemporaries observed that it was at times difficult for the supply of British silver coin to keep up with demand in West Africa if demand in the metropole increased at the same time. Sir Roy Wilson wrote in 1914 that during this period, ‘when trade was good, it was sometimes difficult to get enough coin’. On the other hand, during downturns, ‘it was not easy for the Bank to dispose of the large sums which flowed back into its vaults, the Bank of England being under no obligation to accept more than legal tender limit’.¹

To address these difficulties, the Emmott Committee recommended the establishment of a separate silver coinage for the four British colonies West Africa (Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia). Similar arrangements were eventually adopted both in other parts of the British Empire as well as by other metropolitan states (Helleiner 2003: 166). In the British Empire, colonial currencies were managed by currency boards, which issued

¹ ‘Bank of West Africa Limited: The Growth of a Great Enterprise’, in LMA CLC/B/207/MS28816/001

colonial currencies at fixed rates with sterling and backed them with 100 per cent sterling reserves. Determination of monetary policy rested with the Bank of England in London – Alesina and Barro (2002: 411) describe currency boards as ‘somewhere in between a fixed-rate arrangement and a currency union’.

The West African Currency Board was established in 1912 as a result of the Emmott Committee’s recommendations (Hopkins 1970). The Board consisted of three members and a secretary, based in London. They left the local management of currency issue primarily to their agents, the Bank of British West Africa (BBWA). The BBWA had been the sole bank of issue from its foundation in 1894 until the establishment of the WACB (Hopkins 1973: 207), and the agency agreement simply continued previous practice. From 1912 until 1917 the BBWA was the only international bank operating in British West Africa. In 1917 the Colonial Bank (originally chartered to operate in the West Indies) opened branches in British West African colonies (Fry 1976: 91-3). In 1925 the Colonial Bank was acquired by Barclays Bank, during a period of rapid overseas expansion by Barclays (Ackrill and Hannah 2001: 79-84; Fry 1976: 101-2). Austin and Uche (2007) have shown that there was a substantial degree of collusion between the two banks, and the BBWA was not threatened in its position as the dominant bank in the region.

Colonial currency reforms were slow to take root and reality on the ground was often substantially messier than the description of legal currency areas would suggest. Multiple currencies, including both token coins and commodity currencies, had circulated before the introduction of colonial currencies (Great Britain 1912: 2-3) and continued to circulate (Cox-George 1961: 94-110). Currencies that were not officially legal tender still followed trade flows unregulated by the skeletal colonial state. French currency, for example, continued to be used in the Gambia, surrounded by French territory, for decades after the introduction of British West African currency.² The monetary systems of West Africa were in this period shaped as much by market forces as by government fiat, and the boundaries of currency areas did not always follow the political borders fixed during the Scramble.

3. Liberia and British sterling

The same fluidity also existed in Liberia’s monetary system through the early twentieth century. Northwestern University economist George Dalton

² See TNA CAOG 9/170.

(1965: 584) observed that ‘in Liberia, political form differs radically from political substance, and official pronouncement differs radically from actual practice’. The currency system of Liberia developed amongst the shifting developments in West Africa during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1847, Liberia issued its own coinage, the Liberian dollar. Further issues were made through the remainder of the nineteenth century. This was primarily a token currency, and larger payments were made in US dollars or British sterling. Barter was still widely used for trade in the interior (Brown 1936: 337-8). While the dollar remained the unit of account, British silver coins and British West African currency eventually became the medium of exchange in Liberia until the adoption of the US dollar in 1943. The use of British coinage persisted despite the growing dominance of the U.S., which described itself as Liberia’s ‘next friend’, through the inter-war period.

Liberia’s position became increasingly tenuous during the ‘Scramble for Africa’ of the nineteenth century, and it struggled to assert its sovereignty in the face of claims by the British and French governments, which were making claims to surrounding territory. It was in response to British territorial claims along the Sierra Leone border and British challenges to the right of Liberia to tax its traders that Americo-Liberians declared Liberia a republic in 1847 (Dalton 1965: 583). The British and French governments began to insist that Liberia establish ‘effective administration’ of its hinterland in order to maintain its claims under the terms of the Berlin Act (Dorward 1986: 455). Reforms were undertaken to consolidate the Liberian administration of the hinterland (ibid: 456).³

Financing this expansion of the Liberian administration was to be no simple task. The Americo-Liberians had struggled to develop profitable exports, and as Hopkins (1973: 212) notes the Liberian economy ‘limped along from crisis to crisis... accumulating a number of external debts’. By 1871 Liberia had raised its first loan in London, borrowing \$500,000 at seven per cent interest and payable in fifteen years. The loan was secured with future customs receipts (Brown 1936: 333-4). The terms of the loan caused outrage in Monrovia, and by 1874 the Liberian government declined to pay interest charges on the loan and started to negotiate a readjustment of the terms (ibid).

Liberia’s increasing debts led to the progressive erosion of its sovereignty, as lenders demanded commitments to better financial management in return for financial assistance. In return for a loan of \$500,000 in 1906, the Liberian

³ Akpan (1973) that the methods they used to administrate the hinterland were similar to those used by colonial administrations elsewhere in West Africa. See also Bayart (2009: 144-5).

government agreed to place British officials in charge of collecting customs tariffs, which were again offered as security for the loan (Dorward 1986: 456). With the renegotiation of the loan in 1908, British official extended their control over customs administration and sent British officers to establish the Liberian Frontier force (*ibid.*). Just three years later, in 1911, yet another loan was issued (half in London, and the other half issued in Amsterdam and Hamburg) by a combination of international interests, including the U.S., the U.K., France and Germany. This loan repaid Liberia's previous obligations, and had a first call on customs receipts, which from 1912 were managed by a Customs Receivership comprised of representatives of the creditor nations. The General Receiver was appointed by the U.S. President, and three receivers by the British, French, and German governments, respectively.⁴ As a result of these concessions, Young (1994: 89) describes Liberia as 'a precarious polity subsisting by American patronage and Franco-British sufferance'.

This financial instability took a toll on the Liberian dollar, and the 1880s saw several efforts to maintain its value (Brown 1936: 335). Domestic bonds were issued in 1880 to replace Liberian paper currency, which had depreciated. In 1883 legislation was passed requiring half the paper money paid into the Treasury to be retained, along with one tenth of the gold coins, which would be used to meet foreign claims. A year later further legislation mandated the payment of domestic creditors in two-thirds gold, one-third paper money – Brown (1936: 335) estimates that this represented about 75 per cent of their nominal claims. By the 1890s, however, these efforts were undermined by a further issue of paper money to fund military expenditure, and the Liberian dollar was devalued still further (*ibid.*).

It is in this context that the increasing use of British coinage should be understood. Mackinnon (1963: 722) notes that in small areas with currencies that are not pegged to currencies of larger areas, the liquidity value of the small area's currency will be less and 'domestic nationals will attempt to accumulate foreign bank balances'. Schenk (2010: 2) observes that 'the international role of sterling comprised its use as a reserve asset for other countries and its use commercially both as a unit of account and a settlement currency for international trade and investment'. It was thus the result of 'the portfolio choices of both state and private market actors'. The adoption of sterling in Liberia resulted from the initiative of private actors, who fled to sterling as the Liberian dollar depreciated in value. In today's terms, this might be described as 'de facto dollarization', where demand for an international currency in-

⁴ Memorandum from Couper, BBWA, to Harcourt, 26 January 1915, in TNA T 1/12212.

creases in the context of inflation risk and exchange rate depreciation (Ghatak and Sánchez-Fung 2007: 192).

There are few reliable figures on the quantity of British and British West African coinage circulating in Liberia. Currency came into the country not through official channels but through cross-border trade or through traders doing business in both Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone. In 1932 a report by a British intelligence officer, Captain Dyer, observed that ‘the only money in circulation is silver shillings. Prices are officially fixed and expressed in dollars, but are paid after conversion in shillings and pence’.⁵ When the dollar was adopted in 1943, American authorities estimated that the equivalent of around \$2,000,000 (£500,000) would need to be collected and redeemed (U.S. Government 1963: 431). This represented a relatively small proportion of total West African currency in circulation, estimated by the Currency Board to be approximately £17.7 million (West African Currency Board 1943: 5).

The attitude of the Liberian government to this adoption was one of resigned, rather than enthusiastic, acceptance. However, its attempts to change the situation were largely unsuccessful. In the years prior to the outbreak of World War I the Liberian cabinet began discussing a proposal for the demonetization of British and British West African coin, along with a new issue of Liberian coinage. A bill which would have put this proposal into effect was laid before the Liberian legislature and passed in 1914. The Liberian administration particularly objected to the circulation of British West African currency after the establishment of the West African Currency Board. The 1914 bill also imposed heavy penalties on anyone accepting or issuing British West African currency in Liberia.⁶ They expressed limited confidence in the value of WACB currencies. Helleiner (2003: 184-5) notes that lack of confidence in colonial currencies was common across West Africa. The British Consul-General reported to London that the Liberian president had been concerned about the acceptance in England of British West African currency, asking ‘what good a pocketful of this new money would be to anybody landing in Liverpool or London’. Further, the President referred to rumours that banks would only receive British West African currency at a substantial discount. At the President’s request, the consul produced a letter from the manager of the BBWA’s Monrovia branch, stating that the currency could be changed into British sterling in London or Liverpool, and that the Bank would receive it at par value.⁷

⁵ Dyer, ‘The situation in Liberia’, 1932, in TNA CO 267/637/3.

⁶ British Consul-General, Monrovia, to Foreign Office, 9 February 1914, in TNA T1/11612.

⁷ British Consul-General, Monrovia, to Foreign Office, 9 February 1914, in TNA T1/11612.

Secondly, they objected to the symbolism of currency bearing the label of 'British West Africa' circulating in Liberia. The manager of the BBWA's Monrovia branch reported to the London head office that he had met with the President of Liberia, who had told them 'that the people did not want any coins bearing the description "British West Africa" in Liberia. They do not mind the Imperial coins so much, but they strongly objected to the Colonial coins, and fancy that an attempt is being made to gradually "British-ise" Liberia'.⁸

Ultimately, the Bill was suspended following intense pressure by both the British and American governments. The U.S. State Department instructed its representative in Monrovia to 'leave no doubt in the mind of the Liberian government as to the adverse views of the United States government in the matter'.⁹ Leslie Couper, general manager of the BBWA, also reported to the Foreign Office that the U.S. government was opposed to the minting of any more Liberian silver.¹⁰ In Britain, both the Board of Trade and the Treasury observed that such a policy would be disruptive to British interests in Liberia and potentially also to neighbouring territories. However, the Treasury questioned the extent to which the British government was able to influence the situation, given 'the accepted principle that the regulation of its currency is, in the case of an independent state, a matter of purely domestic concern'. Mitigating against this principle, they argued, was the existing financial relationship between Britain and Liberia.¹¹ Further, the British government conveyed to the Liberian government that 'any discrimination between United Kingdom and West African silver would be regarded by His Majesty's Government as incompatible with the friendly relations and close intercourse between Liberia and His Majesty's possessions in West Africa'.¹²

Despite these protestations, the British government was also somewhat ambivalent towards the use of British and British West African currency in Liberia. On the one hand, trade between Liberia and the British sphere was relatively unimportant throughout the period – by 1960 the exports of Liberia and Portuguese Guinea combined represented just three per cent of the total exports from West Africa as a whole, whereas British West Africa supplied 72 per cent of the total (Hopkins 1973: 178). Trade between Sierra Leone and Liberia was also minimal. On the other hand, maintenance of British influ-

⁸ Monrovia Branch to Head Office, 19 January 1914, in TNA T1/11612.

⁹ British Embassy, Washington D.C. to Foreign Office, 13 January 1914, in TNA T1/11612.

¹⁰ Couper to Sir Walter Langley, Foreign Office, 22 January 1914, in TNA T1/11612.

¹¹ Board of Trade to Foreign Office, 29 January 1914; Treasury to Foreign Office, 31 January 1914, both in TNA T1/11612

¹² Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 24 January 1914, in TNA T1/11612.

ence in Liberia was seen as an important bulwark against the spread of German influence. British officials believed the idea to be of German origin - the new coinage was to be minted in Germany – and therefore the issue became linked to the struggle between the great powers for influence in Liberia.¹³

4. Bank of British West Africa in Monrovia, 1910-1930

The spread of British currency seemed all the more likely with the entry into Liberia of the Bank of British West Africa. In 1905 the Bank had hired W.D. Woodin & Co. as their agents at Monrovia. The Bank frequently used agents to extend its business into new regions – agents agreed to provide financial services for the bank in exchange for a flat annual fee as well as commissions.¹⁴ The BBWA opened its first branch in Liberia in Monrovia in 1910. This was a period of expansion for the Bank – when it opened the Monrovia branch was one of 18 branches scattered through West Africa. By 1920 that number had increased to 48, and included branches outside West Africa in Morocco and Egypt.¹⁵

The arrival of the BBWA had significant implications for Liberia's financial development. As noted above, the BBWA acted as the agent of the WACB in British Africa, and had been responsible for the import of British currency before 1912. It was also the state bank for the colonial administrations of the British West African territories. Its manager in London served as a member of the West African Currency Board. In short, the BBWA was closely linked to official British colonial institutions in Africa. It saw itself as, in effect, the central bank of colonial West Africa – a biographer of BBWA founder Sir Alfred Lewis Jones noted that 'just as the Bank of England is deputed to control the silver currency in Great Britain, so the control of the silver currency in British West Africa from 1894 to 1912 was very wisely left by the Royal Mint and the Colonial Office solely in the hands of the Bank of British West Africa'.¹⁶ An internal history of the Bank's early years written by man-

¹³ British Consul to Foreign Office, 24 November 1913, in TNA T1/11612.

¹⁴ An agency agreement of 1923 between the BBWA and the Nieuwe Afrikaansche Handels-Venootschap committed the company to 'collect bills sent for collection by the Bank either on behalf of the Bank or of any customer', to 'take into safe custody and duly care for ... all goods relating to Bills sent for collection' and to 'sell drafts on certain offices of the Principal'. In return, the company would receive an annual fee of £150, half of the commissions collected on drafts issued and ½ percent on the amount of bills collected. For copy of agreement see LMA CLC/B/207/MS28536.

¹⁵ Number and distribution of branches from LMA CLC/B/207/MS28816/001. See also Fry (1976: 90).

¹⁶ Extract from Milne (1914), quoted in LMA CLC/B/207/MS28816/001

ager Sir Roy Wilson claimed than in importing approximately £2 million in British silver coins from 1894 to 1902, ‘there can be no doubt that the Bank in those years had been the most powerful civilizing agency in the West African possessions of the crown’.¹⁷

As in the British colonies, the Bank’s major customer in Liberia was the Liberian government itself – Uche (1999) observes that the BBWA offered little in the way of financial services to Africans. A licence issued to the Bank in 1926 lists the BBWA as ‘Bankers to the Government and General Public’.¹⁸ In 1917 Leslie Couper, the Bank’s manager and member of the WACB, visited Liberia and concluded an agreement with the Government to expand the Bank’s role in the development of Liberian infrastructure (Fry 1976: 89). While limited progress was made on development projects, further agreement, first reached in 1916, established a relationship between the Liberian government and the BBWA similar to that maintained between the BBWA and British colonial administrations in West Africa. The agreement established the BBWA as the official state bank of the Liberian republic, mandating that ‘all moneys collected by and/or paid to the Government, including taxes, fines, licences, surtax on import duties, residue of revenue received from the Customs Receivership, and, in fact, all revenue of whatsoever nature’ should be paid into the BBWA to the credit of the Liberian government’s account. The Bank committed to rendering a quarterly account to the Secretary of the Treasury. In exchange for its services, the Bank charged a one per cent commission on all money paid into the Bank. The agreement was exclusive – clause 7 stated that ‘it is distinctly understood and agreed that the Liberian Government during the term of this Agreement will confine the whole of the banking business of the Government, except that of the postal service, to the Bank of British West Africa’.¹⁹

The BBWA’s position as both sole banker to the Liberian government and the institution responsible for issuing the dominant means of payment in Liberia gave it something approaching the status of a central bank. During the War, it also became the lender of last resort to the Liberian government. When Liberia joined the allied cause and severed its relations with Germany, its trade and finances suffered greatly.²⁰ It looked to the BBWA for help in meeting its current expenditure. The Bank was asked to lend the Liberian govern-

¹⁷ LMA CLC/B/207/MS28816/001.

¹⁸ LMA CLC/B/207/MS28537.

¹⁹ Memorandum of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and the Bank of British West Africa, 4 February 1916, in TNA T 1/12212.

²⁰ R. Sperling (Foreign Office) to McFadyean (Treasury), 26 January 1919, in TNA T 1/12212.

ment \$9,000 on the first day of each month. All government revenue was to be collected by the Bank in repayment, but given the depressed state of Liberia's revenue the Bank anticipated a monthly deficit of \$5,000.²¹ Citing the unlimited nature of the obligations which could be incurred under such an agreement, the BBWA asked for a British government guarantee. The British government refused to grant the guarantee, but set out (in the end, unsuccessfully) to negotiate a new loan to be issued with Liberia, jointly with the French and U.S. governments.²² This proposal was pre-empted by a proposal for a unilateral loan by the U.S. government. Neither was ultimately successful, and the rescue of Liberia was left to the Firestone Rubber Company (discussed in the section

Despite the degree of these interventions, the Bank's career in Liberia was to be relatively short-lived. In January 1930, the Bank notified the Colonial Office that it would be closing its branches in Liberia.²³ The official reason given by bank officials was that sanitation conditions in Monrovia put BBWA staff at risk. However, speculation within the British Government suggested that the Bank's motivations were financial – a Foreign Office memorandum noted that the last death of a Bank official had taken place in 1927, and that in the view of British *charge d'affaires* in Monrovia the closure of the Liberian branches was due to the fact that they had been operating at a loss.²⁴

4. The Firestone Concession and the adoption of the dollar

Historically, Liberia is perhaps best known for being the only West African economy 'totally dominated by a corporate plantation system', namely the rubber plantation established following a concession made to the Firestone Rubber Company in 1926 (Austen 1987: 172). A million acres were leased to Firestone for 99 years for the establishment of a rubber plantation (Hopkins 1973: 212). Like past concessions made by the Liberian government, the Firestone concession was also the outcome of a financial rescue package (Austen 1987: 172). After the collapse of the multinational loan proposed by the British government and the proposed unilateral loan by the U.S. government, Li-

²¹ Leslie Couper, BBWA, to Sir Walter Langley, Foreign Office, 13 December 1916, in TNA T 1/12212.

²² See correspondence in TNA T 1/12212.

²³ P.W. Paterson, BBWA, to Foreign Office, 22 January 1930, in TNA CO 267/630/8.

²⁴ Foreign Office memorandum, 14 June 1930, in TNA CO 267/630/8. The BBWA papers related to Liberia do not provide any reason for the closure beyond discussion of sanitary conditions. Papers from the Liberian branches were transferred to Sierra Leone after 1930; a search of papers from the Sierra Leone may yield further insights.

beria's finances were still in chaos. It was the Firestone concession that came to the rescue.

It is difficult to exaggerate the extent of Firestone's influence on Liberia's economic history. By 1965 the Firestone plantation still employed almost a quarter of Liberia's wage-earning workforce (Dalton 1965: 572). Austen (1987: 172) argues that the concession, and Firestone's extensive influence, set Liberia apart from other African economies and more closely resembled 'a classic Central American/Caribbean situation'. Chalk (1967: 13) argues that the 1927 loan which followed the 1926 concession 'opened a new phase in Liberian history'.

From a monetary and financial perspective, the closure of the BBWA's operations in Liberia opened the door for further influence by Firestone. In February 1930, a Colonial Office minute observed that 'in the end America will be forced to provide banking facilities for its ward'.²⁵ By November 1930, the British legation in Liberia reported to the Foreign Office that a new bank had opened in Monrovia by the United States Trading Company, a subsidiary of Firestone. Firestone had been given authority to establish a trading company with the power to conduct banking operations in its original agreement with the Liberian government. Like its predecessor, the new bank focused on Government business – indeed, it initially provided fewer services to the private sector than the BBWA.²⁶

If the adoption of sterling had seemed a natural development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, its continued use through the inter-war period was less so. The instability in the value of sterling in the 1930s and 1940s provided an added incentive to switch. With Liberian debts and interest payments fixed in dollars, devaluations of sterling created financial difficulties for both the Liberian government and the purchasing power of Liberians. There were early hints of this problem when Britain went off the gold standard in 1931, with detrimental effects on Liberia's finances.²⁷ A Foreign Office report on Liberia's finances from 1939 noted that 'the advisability of adopting some other currency than sterling became clear upon the sudden weakening of the exchange position of the pound at the outbreak of the European war'.²⁸

In an annual message to the Legislature delivered in November 1940, President Barclay stated that depreciation of the pound was one of the reasons for Liberia's declining trade. 'The depreciation of the pound sterling to which our

²⁵ Minute by J.A. Calder, 4 February 1930, in TNA CO 267/630/8.

²⁶ British Legation, Monrovia, to Foreign Office, 11 November 1930, in TNA CO 267/630/8.

²⁷ Memo from Graham to Simon, 30 November 1932, in TNA CO 267/637.

²⁸ TNA FO 371/24444.

money is linked, has increased the financial burdens both of the people and the government. It has increased the cost of imported goods, without any corresponding favourable influence on the prices of exported commodities, and has cost the government on an average a 35% increase in payments on the bonded debt.²⁹ This instability provided an added incentive to switch to the dollar, the currency in which Liberian debt had been issued and in which it paid its debt service.

Until 1943, British and British West African currency continued to be the only circulating medium. Path dependence played an important role in the persistence of sterling in Liberia. Currency changes are costly – which is one reason why the adoption of external currencies provides a credible commitment to particular policies (Alesina and Barro 2002: 424; Ghatak and Sanchez-Fung 2007: 192-4). Earlier proposals to replace sterling with the dollar had been abandoned on cost considerations. Shipping U.S. dollars to Liberia, and British silver coinage back to Britain would cost more than the perpetually cash-strapped Liberian government could afford. For its part, the British government refused to buy back currency shipped from Liberia, which provided an added disincentive (U.S. Government 1963: 431).

The situation changed after the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939. Trade with the US assumed a new importance as shipping routes to Europe were disrupted. Exports to the US increased from \$976,199 in 1937 to \$2,136,959 in 1939, while exports to the UK declined from \$226,336 to \$125,591.³⁰ The stationing of U.S. troops in Liberia generated additional demand for dollars and provided the opportunity to overcome the cost considerations. In 1942 the Acting U.S. Secretary of State informed the U.S. Charge d’Affaires in Liberia that ‘the War Department has expressed a desire to introduce, if possible, American currency for local expenditures and salary payments’ (U.S. Government 1963: 430). War Department transfers brought U.S. dollars into Liberia, and the U.S. government agreed to purchase British coin brought in exchange (ibid: 436).

The story of Liberia’s monetary system through the nineteenth and twentieth century illustrates, on a small scale, the development of the international monetary system over the same period. The early adoption of sterling was in part the result of the unprecedented monetary stability provided by the gold standard system before World War I (Eichengreen 2008: 24-36). During this

²⁹ Annual Message delivered before the Second Session of the 39th Legislature, 5 November 1940, in TNA FO 371/24444.

³⁰ Trade data taken from a report on the financial operations of the Republic of Liberia from 1939, in TNA FO 371/24444.

period, British sterling was far more attractive than the rapidly depreciating Liberian dollar. The collapse of the gold standard system and resulting instability in sterling during the interwar period (ibid: 43-90). With hindsight, the demonetization of sterling in favour of the dollar could be seen as an early omen of sterling's post-war decline from an international to a national currency (Schenk 2010).

5. Conclusion: national currencies and optimum currency areas in Africa

In choosing between monetary regimes, Liberia faced a choice between monetary independence and monetary stability. Liberia's difficulties with financial management in the late nineteenth century and the resulting instability of the Liberian dollar, it seems likely that Liberia may have gained from the adoption of sterling, though given the limited data available, counterfactual speculation can never be more than purely speculative. Arguably, an earlier switch to the dollar may have been beneficial in that Liberia could have avoided some of the consequences of inter-war instability. In arguing that the colonial currency board regime was beneficial for British West Africa, Schwartz concedes that British colonies 'might have been better off had sterling both before and after World War II been a more stable currency' (Schwartz 1993: 172)

There remains the question of how much choice the Liberian government really had in its currency arrangements. The adoption of sterling was initially the result of decisions made by private actors, and only grudgingly accepted by the state in the face of international pressure. This, combined with concessions over key areas of governance made by Liberia in exchange for loans, suggests that treating the Liberian government as independent in this regard may not be accurate. However, it may also be that limited monetary independence is a common feature of developing economies. Research by Frankel et al. (2004) on the relationship between exchange rate regimes and local interest rates shows that, with the exception of a small number of large industrialized countries, local interest rates tend to follow international interest rates regardless of the exchange regime adopted. In other words, even if Liberia had continued to use the Liberian dollar, its level of autonomy may have been limited.

Beyond the question of the economic impacts of Liberia's currency system, the story of Liberia adoption of external currencies over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries illustrates that the colonial borders which provided the building blocks for national boundaries and national currencies in

Africa did not always correspond to optimum currency areas. The general consensus of private actors in Liberia, if not always the Liberian government, was that the stability of sterling was preferable to the risks posed by Liberian currency, despite Liberia's status as an independent republic. The persistence of French currency in the Gambia, or pre-colonial commodity currencies in remote areas, support the notion that British or French colonial currencies were not necessarily the most advantageous within the borders of their respective territories.

This conclusion has implications for the post-independence development of former colonies in Africa. Contemporaries debated whether the establishment of national currencies was appropriate for many independent countries. Those supporting the establishment of new currencies argued that having greater macroeconomic influence would provide new countries with a powerful tool for economic development. On the other hand, opponents argued that central banks in newly independent countries were likely to be subject to political interference, and that monetary instability would be a hindrance to badly needed development efforts. Further research is needed on the monetary and financial consequences of decolonization, and the question of whether the national boundaries they inherited match with optimum currency areas.

References:

Archival records:

Bank of British West Africa papers, London Metropolitan Archives (LMA)
CLC/B/207/MS28536
CLC/B/207/MS28816/001

U.K. National Archives (TNA)

CAOG 9/170
CO 267/637
CO 267/630/8
FO 371/24444
T 1/12212
T 1/11612

Published sources:

- Ackrill, M. and Hannah, L. (2001) *Barclays: The Business of Banking 1690-1996*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Akpan, M. B. (1973) 'Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841-1964', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 7: 217-36.
- Alesina, A. and Barro, R. J. (2002) 'Currency Unions', *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117: 409-436.
- Austen, R. A. (1987) *African Economic History: Internal Development and External Dependency*, Oxford: James Currey.
- Austin, G. M. and Uche, C. U. (2007) 'Collusion and competition in colonial economies: banking in British West Africa, 1916-1960', *Business History Review* 81: 1-26.
- Bayart, J.-F. (2009) *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Boerner, L. and Volckart, O. (2011) 'The utility of a common coinage: currency unions and the integration of money markets in late medieval Central Europe' *Explorations in Economic History* 48: 53-65.

- Brown, G.W. (1936) 'Economic History of Liberia', Unpublished PhD Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Chalk, F. (1967) 'The Anatomy of an Investment: Firestone's 1927 Loan to Liberia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 1: 12-32.
- Chalmers, R (1893) *A History of Currency in the British Colonies*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode.
- Cox-George, N.A. (1961) *Finance and Development in West Africa: The Sierra Leone Experience*, London: Dennis Dobson.
- Dalton, G. (1965) 'History, Politics and Economic Development in Liberia', *Journal of Economic History*, 25: 569-91.
- Dorward, D. C. (1986) 'British West Africa and Liberia', in A. D. Roberts, *The Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 7: From 1905 to 1940*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Eichengreen, B. (2008) *Globalizing Capital: A History of the International Monetary System*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Eichengreen, B. and Irwin, D.A. (1995) 'Trade blocs, currency blocs and the reorientation of world trade in the 1930s', *Journal of International Economics* 38: 1-24.
- Fielding, D. (2005) 'What can the European Central Bank learn from Africa?', World Institute for Development Economic Research Working Paper PB4/2005.
- Frankel, J. A. and Rose, A. K. (1998) 'The endogeneity of the optimum currency area criteria', *Economic Journal* 108: 1009-1025.
- Frankel, J., Schmukler, S.L. and Servén, L. (2004) 'Global transmission of interest rates: monetary independence and currency regime', *Journal of International Money and Finance*, 23: 701-33.
- Fry, R. (1976) *Bankers in West Africa: The Story of the Bank of British West Africa Limited*, London: Hutchinson Benham.
- Ghatak, S. and Sanchez-Fung, J.R. (2007) *Monetary Economics in Developing Countries*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Great Britain (1912) *Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed to Inquire into Matters Affecting the Currency of the British west African Colonies and Protectorates*, London: HM Stationery Office.
- Helleiner, E. (2003) *The Making of National Money: Territorial Currencies in Historical Perspective*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hopkins, A. G. (1970) 'The Creation of a Colonial Monetary System: The Origins of the West African Currency Board', *African Historical Studies* 3: 101-32.

- Hopkins, A. G. (1973) *An Economic History of West Africa*, London: Longman Group Ltd.
- McKinnon, R. I. (1963) 'Optimum currency areas', *American Economic Review* 53: 717-725.
- Milne, A.H. (1914) *Sir Alfred Lewis Jones, K.C.M.G.: a story of energy and success*, Liverpool: H. Young & Sons, Limited.
- Mundell, R.A. (1961) 'A theory of optimum currency areas', *American Economic Review* 51: 657-665.
- Newbury, C. (2004) 'Accounting for power in Northern Nigeria', *Journal of African History* 45: 257-77.
- Ritschl, A. and Wolf, N. (2003) 'Endogeneity of currency areas and trade blocs: evidence from the inter-war period', Centre for Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper 4112.
- Rose, A. (2000) 'One money, one market: the effect of common currencies on trade', *Economic Policy* 15: 7-45.
- Schenk, C.R. (2010) *The Decline of Sterling: Managing the Retreat of an International Currency*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schwartz, A.J. (1993) 'Currency boards: their past, present and possible future role', *Carnegie-Rochester Conference Series on Public Policy*, 39: 147-97.
- Sian, S. (2010) 'Between the Lines: The Professionalization of Accountancy in Kenya', in C. Poullaos and S. Sian, *Accountancy and Empire: The British Legacy of Professional Organization*, London: Routledge.
- Stasavage, D. (2003) *The political economy of a common currency: the CFA Franc Zone since 1975*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Uche, C. U. (1999) 'Foreign Banks, Africans and Credit in Colonial Nigeria, c. 1890-1912', *Economic History Review* 52: 669-91.
- Uche, C. U. (2010) 'Colonial Heritage and the Accounting Profession in Nigeria', in C. Poullaos and S. Sian, *Accountancy and Empire: The British Legacy of Professional Organization*, London: Routledge.
- U.S. Government (1963) *Foreign Relations of the United States 1942*, Volume IV: The Near East and Africa, Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printer.
- West African Currency Board (1943) *Report for the year ended 30th June, 1943*, London: Waterlow & Sons Limited.
- Young, C. (1994) *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

MUSICAL BORDERLANDS:

A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

J.F. Mbaye¹

1. INTRODUCTION

Deeply inscribed in the daily lives of people, cultural productions, such as music, appear to display in their aesthetics and practices, a distinctive and novel articulation of regional integration in Africa. Both symbolically and materially, African musical borderlands emerge and develop on the margins of national institutions responsible for the different cultural sectors. Indeed, participants in a music field inscribed across and beyond (social, imaginary and physical) borders, provide another meaning, knowledge and practice of culture and its productions. From below, and on the ground, symbolic and material dynamics arise and play themselves out as musical borderlands constituted through historical trajectories and organisational affinities. As such, this contribution suggests a practical intervention to read processes of African regional integration through some political and economic articulations of contemporary African music.

As a distinctive cultural product, music and its symbolic as well as material routes can surely hold a grounded and empirical resonance for policy-making practices as far as regional integration and cultural policy in Africa are concerned. As such, this paper inquires into the emergence and deployment of musical practices across and beyond borders, while offering images and illustrations of regional processes engaged in the music field. More specifically, drawing on an academic form of investigation, this contribution stresses a specific geography of African musical borderlands, Hip Hop in Francophone (West and Central) Africa. As such, it suggests political and economic counter-measures to re/address the balkanisation of the continent and its impacts on cultural fields, initiated and developed at the scales of ordinary African citizens and their urban communities.

2. ON THE LANDS AND BORDERS OF AFRICAN MUSIC

The concept of musical borderlands emerges from the premise that African music as a sector can be theoretically and symbolically relevant when exploring the contours of regional integration on the continent. This concept thus implies that, as a distinctive cultural product in Africa, music can significantly frame and inform processes of regional integration, through its unique economic and cultural perspective. Indeed, music has always occupied a privileged position, being a locomotive of popular culture in African societies and, it can be valued not only as a potentially lucrative commercial enterprise but also an elementary form of artistic expression (Throsby 2002, 2). In other words, the duality of this cultural product is to be analysed not only from an economic point of view but also from socio-cultural and ideologico-political perspectives, which resonate with a regionally integrative project.

¹ Jenny Fatou Mbaye is a post-doctoral research fellow at the African Centre for Cities (ACC) of the University of Cape Town (UCT). Emails : j.f.mbaye@gmail.com or jenny.mbaye@uct.ac.za

2.1. On economic and cultural lands

African music displays shared trajectories and linked destinies across its various borders, with some musical genres originating in a country, while then being consumed, reproduced and sometimes translated in others. Kinois music such as *Soukous* and *Ndombolo* for instance thus spread through cross-border routes extending from Central Africa to East and West Africa, where they became very popular among other African citizens. In this sense, music in Africa has been creating a common heritage both across and beyond national borders, with a potential capacity of building and sometimes, as Joe Rapido's contribution may illustrate, challenging cross-border solidarities. Considering these multiple forms of solidarity, Léon Tsambu recognises the emergence and deployment of a 'cultural cement' that feeds, what I refer to as, musical borderlands.

Therefore, and from a cultural perspective, African music, as an identity-loaded commodity, may offer pragmatic illustrations of regional integration in Africa. This latter is then expressed through specific political as well as economic processes that are involved in the circulation of imaginaries, sounds, goods and people, for the structuring of music markets. In this regard, encouraging these kinds of productive exchanges still requires developing more systematic dynamics as well as greater knowledge of African musical diversity by African themselves. Indeed, while the partitioning of the continent in 1884 created more countries per square kilometre than anywhere else in the world, and each country has four neighbours on average (Turok 2010, 15), the dissemination and consequent consumption of neighbouring musical production has not yet been encouraged in a systematised way.

“Ask any random Senegalese to name just two Mauritanian artists and he won't be able to. [...] This person won't know a single Mauritanian nor Guinean Bissau artist; he will know a Malian one but simply because this Malian artist is known in Paris.” **(Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Such cultural sharing and affinities could however hold serious promises for a project of regional integration, with the creation of cultural “commonness” and collective referent, but also as far as the commercial dimension of African music is concerned. Indeed, the hypothesis that African countries can use and benefit from their creative assets and cultural resources, such as music, as a source of economic growth, is not new and has already been formulated by policy-makers (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright 2007; UNCTAD and UNDP 2008, 5–6). As such, as early as 2000, the SADC countries recognised the role and place of culture in the regional integration agenda of the Southern African Development Community². An appeal was even made to funding agencies and other development partners to assist and make culture an integral component of regional integration. To be sure, the argument is that least advanced economies, such as those of most African countries “are conceivably better positioned to compete in cultural industries than in many traditional industries[...] because the basic raw material, such as the talent to create musical sounds, is readily available and entry costs, at least in the case of music are not as prohibitive as in

²For further details, see <http://www.sardc.net/editorial/sanf/2000/Iss23/Nf2.html>

many industries”(Kozul-Wright 2001, 11–2). Such a conclusion is especially relevant considering how small national African markets still are.

“Nowadays, Africa suffers too much from its divisions inherited from the colonisation: each little state, with its small territory and its little flag! This implies that there are only tiny markets; and a quality product, which is released in Senegal, will be released in very few other African countries; you can count them on the fingers of one hand. If one wants to get the last album of a famous artist in a neighbouring country, it is often easier to get it from Paris than in the country!”
(Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Therefore, music as an economy could represent an “important new trading opportunity that provides one of the fastest means of penetrating global markets” (Kozul-Wright 2001, 20), but also regional markets. As far as integration is concerned in Africa, there is still an imperative of producing goods for wider markets (tradables) as it is vital for stringer, sustained growth. While the latter “depends on the fundamentals of efficient production and distribution, unlike the saturated markets elsewhere, where marketing is critical” (Turok 2010, 22), music may appear as one of these tradable goods capable of enhancing regional integration in Africa, both economically and politically, while creating common cultural referents that encourage cross-border solidarities. But, while both an economic and political regional integration may make sense as far as the music field is concerned, this latter, as most of the cultural sectors, has been administered as an essentially national object by officials policy makers.

2.2. On national and official borders

In general terms, it has been argued that in Africa “efforts should be made to reduce obstacles to cross-border trade and flows of capital and other resources between countries in order to open up markets and foster accelerated economic growth”(Turok 2010, 15). As far as the music field is concerned this is especially relevant considering how poor transport infrastructures impede regional economic and cultural flows. For instance, in Francophone West Africa, while numerous roads are regularly impracticable during rainy seasons, internal regional flights remain extremely expensive compared to the local buying power. Knowing the historical origins of this powerful entity nowadays globally known and recognised as such, that is Europe, urgent steps should be collectively taken inside the ‘West African ensemble’ in order to boost the necessary infrastructural adjustments in terms of its transport systems.

Besides, while high transport costs and border delays complicate the process of exporting and importing from and to national markets (Turok 2010, 15), despite the well-known economic gains and the important social benefits of this economy, music has, “up to now, not been seen or supported as an export sector (nor has it enjoyed the benefits associated with traditional export sectors)”(Kozul-Wright 2001, 24). Indeed, although the music economy could become more valuable than the traditional low value-added, commodity-based industries of these countries, it is rare to find ones that have given the field the same level of attention in terms of supportive or promotional policies that exist in most developed countries (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright

2007, 20). The immediate consequence of this state of affair is that African countries' economies are often found to operate in isolation, while "border controls and tariffs impede the movement of goods and people and hold back the emergence of larger regional markets across the continent"(Turok 2010, 15). At a continental level especially, the government bureaucracy impedes a facilitative framework for the circulation of goods and people – through high taxation and tariffs and complex visas procedures.

In Francophone West Africa a coherent policy for popular music has never developed, contrary to Western countries, such as the U.K. for instance, where since the 1990s, the government began to fund popular music, while helping the market itself, and as such, promoting this cultural production as a business³(Cloonan 2007, 38–9). As such, while "the continent has to promote higher densities, shorten distances and lower divisions between nations to stimulate economic growth" (Turok 2010, 15), government bureaucracy still creates major barriers to trade and resources flows, which also holds back an development of a regional music market. More particularly, the estate management of copyrights, without any harmonisation in the 'West African ensemble' despite the existence of ECOWAS, perfectly illustrates the constraints created by a national approach.

"Each bureau works in its country without enough harmonisation. [...] In countries that have initiated the hologram system in order to identify the licit products, there is no harmonisation: people can buy some licit products in a country with the required hologram but once they bring these products in another country, they are asked to buy a second time local holograms. This is a non-sense as we are in a specific economic space, ECOWAS, so one should pay the hologram only once!" **(Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Therefore, as the whole contemporary musical production has never been recognised by public officials as a key economic force, the African music sector has been largely dominated by an informal economy that operates without any regulation capable of helping the sector to raise finance, improve labour condition and upgrade generally its economy (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright 2007, 19). As such, musical borderlands in Africa have emerged and been deployed, from below and on the ground, by individual participants and urban communities, on the margin of state constraining practices. In this sense, these ordinary citizens offer original articulations and illustrations of cross-border linkages, as pragmatic responses to the balkanisation of the continent and its consequences for their music field. Therefore, while this paper recognises a potentially strong and viable music market in Africa and its regional integration, it calls for reading and rendering the latter visible, through already active dynamics at play across borders and initiated by ordinary citizens. In this regard, African musical borderlands are to be recognised in practice.

³ To illustrate this point, both in Dakar and Ouagadougou, the only regular music programming of African artists are those organised by foreign cultural centres such as the ex-French Cultural Centres (CCF) now known as French Institutes - with their coordinated programming policy, stand as a unique regional network of musical diffusion throughout Francophone West Africa - or the Goethe Institutes (Arnaud 2007)

3. MUSICAL BORDERLANDS IN PRACTICE

While the exploration of its economic and cultural lands as well as national and official borders reveals a symbolic and theoretical relevance of the music sector for regional integration in Africa, this section suggests a practical inquiry of African musical borderlands. It thus focuses on the pragmatic and material significance of their processes as they unfold in time and space, and emphasises the productive deployment of these politics and economies at play. As such, while linking situated identities with distinctively located practices, it reveals alternative and sometimes peripheral spaces of musical participation and expression, in which regional networks perform. Indeed, as will be argued, focusing on productive networks, which have emerged as the lifeblood of cultural production in Africa and beyond, offers core and useful insights into African musical borderlands.

Drawing on the managerial concept of “community of practice” (Wenger 1998; Wenger and Snyder 2000), this section stresses a cultural perspective of regional integration in Africa, deployed through the lens of distinctive working practices of participants in the music field. Indeed, while their practice does not transcend nor transform institutional conditions, it nonetheless responds to the call of these changing conditions for a constant reinvention of practice. As such, translating musical borderlands in practice, multiple communities in Africa have developed “in larger contexts – historical, social, cultural, institutional – with specific resources and constraints [...] [and their] day-to-day reality is produced by participants within the resources and constraints of their situations” (Wenger 1998, 79).

Moreover, insights from entrepreneurship studies provide interesting articulations of the practical dynamics of these communities. In this respect, some researchers (Steyaert and Katz 2004; Steyaert and Landstrom 2011; Ekinsmyth 2011; Johannisson 2011) have recognised the existence of an “organising context”, which deeply rooted in everyday local, becomes the focal arena for interaction, learning and control in “entrepreneurship” (Steyaert 2007). Acting “as a refuge for reproduced local values and behavioural patterns and also as a translator of external influences into refined local knowledge and practices” (Johannisson 2011, 143), this organising context thus recalls the importance of situating participants and locating their practice in a relational fashion.

3.1. Entrepreneurship in musical borderlands

African musical borderlands involve complex networks and relationships, through which African music participants actively create and produce organisational and entrepreneurial spaces in their own image. In this sense, it is useful to refer to a conceptualisation firmly grounded in the ‘relational turn’ in economic geography, namely “transnationalising entrepreneurship” (Yeung 2009). This has been defined as “a particular form of entrepreneurship embodied in specific actors who transcend multiple spaces, territories, and scales” (Yeung 2009, 211). “Transnationalising entrepreneurship” challenges the “conventional wisdom in most existing studies that entrepreneurship is a home-based and locally specific phenomenon”, “a natural product of local endowments and advantages” (Yeung 2009, 229). As such, it

recognises that territoriality in entrepreneurial spaces is highly ‘stretchable’ (Yeung 2009, 214–5), and that the “local is never just local, but always intersected through flows of other levels” (Steyaert and Katz 2004, 192).

Furthermore, rather than focusing on ‘faceless’ entrepreneurial firms, the conditions and the environments of their performances, “transnationalising entrepreneurship” provides great insights into “the origins and processes through which a transnational organisation of entrepreneurial activity comes about and, in turn, is transformed through these processes of producing new spaces of entrepreneurship”(Yeung 2009, 227). As such, it both conceptualises “the entrepreneur as the driving force in the formation and transformation of the networks in which s/he is embedded”, and entrepreneurship as a “complex sociospatial economic phenomenon” (Yeung 2009, 230). In other words, it permits “observing creative processes at the level of the individual as key actors in the creative economy [...] [something that] is more powerful and relevant than observing organisation and places, precisely because it gets to the essence of creative enterprise as a process” (Granger and Hamilton 2010, 51).

Emphasising the situated nature of their organisational process, this literature, once applied to our research context, recognises that African musical borderlands reveal a social practice that needs to be contextualised, localised and situated by drawing upon and empirically grounding such concepts as networks and local communities (Steyaert and Landstrom 2011, 124). Inviting us to rethink the boundaries of entrepreneurial spaces, it considers the spatial production of entrepreneurship through socio-cultural processes and a geography of entrepreneurship that is always geopolitical (Steyaert and Katz 2004, 180). Put differently, musical borderlands become visible through the practices of its participants that are always politically and identity-loaded. Indeed, there are social and aesthetic dimensions in practicing in musical borderlands that are irreducible to economic innovation and that often constitute the very reasons for participating in this cultural field in the first place. In this sense, innovative possibilities are not just economised but involve “a much more complex view, where the cultural, the economic, spatial, relational and institutional become understood in their integrative effect”(Steyaert and Katz 2004, 189). As such, an appropriate contextualisation of the form and practice relative to African musical borderlands is necessary in order to recognise the inclusion of non-economic rationale in the discourse of music workers and participants.

3.2. Practicing in musical communities

The principal productive space, through which musical participants take hold are “interlocking and flexible networks of production and service systems spanning the entire supply chain”(UNCTAD and UNDP 2008, 69). Therefore, as far as African musical borderlands are concerned, there is a significant relationship between its participants and the context of their entrepreneurial and organisational practices. Indeed, “the process of creating new products in the creative industries is often embedded in networks and clusters [...] [and] knowledge-sharing is an important feature, as is the cumulateness if the process of creativity” (Hölzl 2005, 12). Such a system of relations between workers and networks implies that participants “operate within less formal frameworks, have less stringent norms of behaviour, operate under the principle of open access, and are not attributed to any one location. As such, they

operate in multiple places or at multiple times”(Granger and Hamilton 2010, 54).

Such a “relational” perspective of musical practices has been adopted early on by researchers who demonstrate its heuristic efficacy in thinking of these cultural fields as a form of *analysis situs* (Bourdieu 1993, 29–30). Indeed, such an approach recognises the pertinence of linking cultural products and practices with the social conditions of production of both the producers and consumers as a productive community, a “community of practice”(Wenger 1998). Productive practices in African musical borderlands thus can be read as constituting a complex social landscape of shared practices, boundaries, peripheries, overlaps, connections and encounters, as its communities differentiate themselves and also interlock with each other from their localised situations(Wenger 1998, 118).

In this sense, the everyday reality of participants acting through African musical borderlands can be approached as a “transnational localism” (Smith 2003). Indeed, “focusing on the level of communities of practice is not to glorify the local but to see these processes – negotiation of meaning, learning, the development of practices and the formation of identities and social configurations – as involving complex interactions between the local and the global” (Wenger 1998, 133)and, as far as our borderlands are concerned, between the local and the regional. As such, participants in African musical borderlands share historical roots, have related enterprises, and face similar conditions (though with different respective resources to respond to them). They have members in common, share artefacts, and geographical relations of proximity and interaction.

Besides, and as previously suggested, “communities of practice should not be reduced to purely instrumental purposes. They are about knowing, but also about being together, living meaningfully, developing a satisfying identity, and altogether being human” (Wenger 1998, 134). In other words, communities of African musical borderlands support participants in fulfilling their materialistic as well as existential concerns as they develop their enterprise (Steyaert and Landstrom 2011, 128). Again, such an approach liberates “entrepreneurship” (Steyaert 2007)from a narrow-minded association with economic activity alone, while inquiring into this practice as a means of creating a new way of life, an “existential venturing aiming at crafting one’s own identity”(Steyaert and Landstrom 2011, 139).

Participants in the communities of African musical borderlands thus stand as “intermediaries” (UNCTAD and UNDP 2008), ‘mediators’ or as Wenger calls them, “brokers” who use their multimembership to transfer some elements of one practice into another. In doing so, they “are able to make new connections across communities of practice, enable coordination and [...] open new possibilities of meaning” (Wenger 1998, 109). In this sense, musical products can be identified in Wenger’s lexicon as “boundary objects” that connect the practices of various participants with others in these musical borderlands. As previously highlighted, such a “boundary object” both economically and politically resonates with a culturally informed regional integration. Put differently, through their “boundary objects” and networks unfolding in a transurban, transborder, and translocal fashion, these participants give rise to a distinctive and promising materiality of African musical borderlands. As an illustration of the latter, I shall now turn to one of its specific geography, namely Francophone African Hip Hop.

4. SYMBOLIC AND MATERIAL BORDERLANDS OF FRANCOPHONE (WEST AND CENTRAL) AFRICAN HIP HOP

The previous sections stressed how African musical borderlands reveal peripheral and alternative spaces of material and symbolic production in the cultural sector, which can interestingly inform processes of regional integration (as a concept and as a practice). To illustrate this proposition, this section focuses on how Hip Hop affirms itself as a Francophone African musical borderland, while it has been redefining, both aesthetically and practically, national borders in the region. As such, it highlights how the constitutive performances in the aesthetic expression of hip hop music stand as political actions that displace the borders of common singularities, while redefining what it means to live in relation to the borders, to be at the borders. Moreover, it stresses how such a 'liminal' perspective empirically informs the economic practices of hip hop participants.

Contrary to official approaches of cultural production established from a domestic stance, Francophone African hip hop participants have developed a translocal materiality of their music economy, and deployed coordinated mechanisms across and beyond national borders. In this regard, I have argued elsewhere how the hip hop ethical economy informs both a distinctive peer musical production and a communal form of governance for this productive community⁴. Here however, I want to highlight how Francophone African hip hop music as a cultural production, dually articulates transcultural politics and its translocal materiality. Such a perspective represents a significant weaving together of cultural and economic dimensions in the practices of specifically situated participants in African musical borderlands, while it captures the tension between transcultural politics and transnational economic flows of music production.

4.1. On symbolic hip hop borderlands: organic aesthetics and transcultural politics

Reading the symbolic dimension of hip hop borderlands stems from the premised invitation to go beyond binary thinking, namely the centre/border thinking and to adopt a "liminal approach" (Nouss 2005, 51–2) that not only disregards the centre, but also critically questions the borders. A "liminal thinking" defines identity not in relation to a centre, but in its relations with the borders that separate it from the other, in this way preventing any essentialisation of identity or difference. Displacing the border, in other words, allows for a shift from a territorial logic to a transterritorial dynamic. A "liminal thinking" redefines what it means, "to be at the border" and responds to the postmodern critical movement that denies any centrality and affirms the periphery against the centre, rendering by the same token, centrality to the periphery. Rather, a "liminal thinking" suggests an ontology of the border that is the exact contrary of an ontological border: an "ensemble of specificities" that becomes differential, in perpetual movement, and not an ensemble of fixed differences (Nouss 2005, 58).

⁴See MBaye, J.F. (in press) "Géographies de l'économie de la musique hip hop au Sénégal", *Arts et territoires : Vers une nouvelle économie culturelle?* Roy-Valex, M., G. Bellavance et M. Azam (dir.), Presses de l'Université Laval, Coll. Questions de culture, Québec

Border and its 'lands' are then a *seuil, limen* ("threshold") rather than a barrier, a tangent rather than a line of separation, a "third space" (Bhabha 2004) that is not really an "in-between": a ternary thinking does not stand on the configuration of three elements. Indeed, the 'third' is plural, diverse, alive and multiple and allows for another sensibility than the reigning binary that still blocks the development of new being and thinking emergences. A "liminal thinking" that confronts any essentialisation with a *pluri-essentialism* (Nouss 2005, 44) similar to Morin's *unitas multiplex* who addresses the challenge of thinking of Europe, that lies in the difficulty of thinking of the multiple in the singular and the singular in the multiple (Morin 1990, 24; quoted in Nouss 2002, 111). Such an approach thus calls for a ternary logic, a third space of thinking and apprehending and permits a conception of Hip Hop as an 'ensemble of specificities', of singularities. Applying Nouss's "liminal thinking" to the comprehension of Hip Hop, I situate it as a 'transculture'.

From this perspective, Hip Hop is a 'transculture' insofar that it stands, each time and place, as a singular translation of a commonality. The latter, I argue, is inscribed in the diverse and multiple receptacles of social marginalisation, of "borderline condition" (Bhabha 2004). Indeed, my argument is that hip hop emergences disrupt a situation of borders, of margins whose relationships situating social and economic practices are especially manifest in the city. A borderline sociality can then be recognised in the sense of spatially-organised power relations that recall the situated nature and layering of peripherality (Pilkington and Johnson 2003, 261). As such, Hip Hop constitutes a phenomenon localised on the borders, on the margins of an assumed sociality and often urbanity. Hip Hop is thus a 'path of passage for a borderline sociality': in other words, this 'transculture' of social marginalisation is a collective phenomenon. However, for each emergence, the borderline position in the society is distinctively situated.

Understanding Hip Hop as a 'transculture' allows for the recognition of this movement as an 'ensemble of singularities', a mediation allowing a collective phenomenon. Hip Hop is this 'transcultural mediation', which is not an 'in-between' but a "third space" (Bhabha 2004; Nouss 2005), a "path of passage" (Nouss 2005), a constitutive location permitting singular action. Such a productive action is expressly salient in hip hop musical expression, where the performative process of constitution that is at play in this aesthetics underlines how hip hop music speaks to and through the body. Indeed, the hip hop musical genre can be classified among what may be considered as the oldest form of music, i.e. vocal music. The primacy of the human voice here is particularly relevant, as "the voice, because of its physiological basis and its communicative functions, is a primary instrument for emotional expression" (Scherer 1995, 246). Opened onto an exterior towards which it aspires, through its very agency, the voice appears as a "wish-to-speak (*vouloir-dire*) and a desire for existence" (Zumthor 1984, 25).

Therefore, the voice becomes the metaphor of the subject, symbol of its "most interior originality" (Meschonnic 1982, 294). The performances of the MC thus stand as a "writing of the voice" (*écriture de la voix*) (Rubin 2004) that gives way to a semantic phenomenon, an emotional translation. As such, the voice is an "internal plural", a "simultaneity" (Meschonnic 1982, 292), an "infinite diversity" (Rubin 2004, 9) in which bodies and emotions, the actual 'real', in other words, pierces through the symbolic (Rubin 2004, 15). Rather than a reference to the reality of the artist, in the

discursive performance of the MC, it is the actual individual that is given. This “gesture of language”, this “performativity” rises as an indexed meaning where the semantic precedes the semiotic: it is “organic” (Kristeva 1969). This common singularity of mind and body in hip hop discursive practices is illustrated by the extract below, from the track, *Toute une vie* of the Cameroonian group, Negrissim’, (from their album *La Vallée des Rois*) where the MCs mix French and English, with traditional African references to the ‘elders’ (*les Anciens*).

“I know where I’m going, and where I’m coming from / Young African with a microphone in hand / You want to know why I rap all day long / Young African with a microphone in hand / I have the science of lyrics that comes from the elders / Young African with a microphone in hand / [...] It’s life that remains hard to stomach for me / [...] It’s in my blood, [...] Spilled blood that spreads on each verse⁵” (Negrissim’ 2009)

‘Writing his voice’, organically performing his discourse, his “truth of desire” uncover the “form- subject⁶” (Meschonnic 1995) of “a young African with a microphone in hand”. Indeed, as this quote points out, there is a hip hop ‘transcultural myth’, inspired by the multiple borderline situations, where the hero has to struggle in order to survive. However, this common myth and its poetics are revealed through the positioned, historicised singular discourse of an individual’s body and voice whose “life remains hard to stomach”. The action of talking then, this “science of the lyrics”, is situated “in his blood”: in other words, the MC lives “from” the language and “in” the language. In this regard, Francophone African hip hop political productions alert us to an alternative political *praxis* that participates in the inclusion of ‘borderline generations’. Indeed, “[...] Hip Hop is a mean for individuals to elaborate their own route” (Bazin 2000, 7) and its musical expression has become this aesthetic emergence where everybody can project him/herself while having the opportunity to develop a critical judgement on his/her borderline conditions.

Through the “writing of the voice”, hip hop music allows hip hop participants to become acting social and political subjects. In other words, hip hop music stands as a political action enacted by borderline socialities whose discursive performances challenge the fixed mappings of spatial structure and social order of the city. However, these discursive practices also stand as a commitment, a responsibility (Benga 2002, 301) taken by hip hop participants when they ‘write their voice’. As such, hip hop music stands as a two-fold political action, as a singular “writing of the voice” that is at the same time multiple. Indeed, although hip hop artists are not into politics (i.e. they won’t support any political party), they are eminently political: they have a commitment towards what I call their ‘emotional site’. Their ‘emotional site’ refers to their *posses*, their *crew*, and more largely to their neighbourhood or their community, whether defined as ‘hip hop transculture’, urban youth, Francophone

⁵This is my translation of the original text: “Je sais où je vais, et d’où je viens/ Jeune Africain, microphone dans la main / Tu veux savoir pourquoi je rappe du soir au matin / Jeune Africain, microphone dans la main / J’ai la science des lyrics qui me vient des Anciens / Jeune Africain, microphone dans la main / [...] C’est la vie qui me reste au travers de la gorge [...] J’ai ça dans le sang, [...] Du sang versé qui se répand sur chaque verset” Negrissim’. *Toute une vie*

⁶ Considering hip hop music as belonging to the field of orality that can be defined as the integration of the discourse in the body and in the voice, and of the body and the voice in the discourse, Meschonnic invites us to think a “form- subject” specifically through poetics: to think of a “form-subject” is to think of language as a form of life, to think of the political and social subject (Meschonnic 1995)

African youth, or general borderline socialities. In other words, their ‘emotional site’ refers to the ‘multiple in the singular’.

Therefore, hip hop artists singularly talk about a common sociality: their individual narratives erected as political actions hold as a constant referent the ‘emotional site’ they represent. When developing musical performances, hip hop participants create this specific link between their singular lives and their ‘emotional site’ from and for which they speak. They ‘represent’. Here, I want to refer to Foucault’s notion of “biopolitics” where resistance is rooted in what is precisely at stake in power relationships, i.e. life itself (Foucault 1976). I therefore suggest that the life of hip hop artists, as representatives of that of their ‘emotional site’, becomes the place of emergence of new political actions. In other words, how, as Foucault himself stated in *La Volonté de Savoir*, “life somehow makes itself heard, and thus voices out its resistance against the system which aimed at controlling it”⁷(Foucault 1976, 191).

They talk for those who cannot speak for themselves and give them by the same token the possibility of knowing and understanding (Benga 2002, 302). Political on the terrain of politics, they offer an alternative practice initiated on the ‘borders’ of the institutional paths of democratic discourses⁸, and thus fill in a considerable gap between the public officials of the republic, and a great part of its population. The realisation of the documentary film “*Le point de vue du Lion*”⁹ by Didier Awadi perfectly illustrates this point. Announced in the EPK¹⁰ of “*Présidents d’Afrique*” as a form of extension of this musical project, this film values and contributes to another African history. Indeed, with this cinematographic project, the objective was to allow the population to understand and perceive an alternative viewpoint, an African one – withreferential cultural (and political) expertisefrom the continent¹¹ – on the phenomenon of illegal immigration to Europe.

In this sense, such a practice is not only limited to a simple denunciation but also encourages people to stand up for themselves, talk for themselves and express their own opinions. This alternative practice of political discourse recalls the primal role youth can play in contemporary politics as citizens. Making their private domain of a borderline condition constantly in dialogue with the public space of politics, hip hop artists participate in the construction of another citizen consciousness(Diouf 2002, 285), one that reinvents and reinvests in the borders through a liminal being and thinking. *Métissage* singular and multiple “writing of the voice”, subjective and objective political discourses, hip hop music offers a perspective on Africa as a cultural and economic entity that has been not voiced, becoming by the same token, an impulse of change for social and political history (Howes 1949, 169).

⁷This is my translation of the original text: “[I]a vie est en quelque sorte prise au mot et retournée contre le système qui entreprenait de la contrôler” M. Foucault. *Histoire de la sexualité I - La volonté de savoir* p.191

⁸Political expression in vocal music is of course not new, expressing either pro-establishment (national anthems) or anti-establishment (protest songs) messages

⁹ See for detailed information and teaser : <http://film.awadi.net/cinema/#/home>

¹⁰EPK (Electronic Press Kit) available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIldCqjtexw> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihVoQacPq0k>

¹¹The film thus features high cultural personalities such as Abdou Diouf (2nd president of Senegal and General Secretary of the International Organisation of Francophonie), Aminata Dramane Traore(Malian politician and writer), Djibril Tamsir Niane (Guinean writer and historian), Manu Dibango (Cameroonian musician), Alphadi (Nigerien designer)

4.2. On material hip hop borderlands: translocal networks of communal promotion and organisation

The Francophone (West and Central) African Hip Hop reveals a specific transurban and translocal productive community that performs in and through its distinctive musical borderlands. In this regard, I have argued elsewhere¹² that its economy is based on a network of distributed autonomous producers, self-regulating themselves, whose “natural priority is to increase the sphere of free cooperation within their existing society, in the context of access to the necessary material goods” (Bauwens 2009, 135). Indeed, dually allying their textual and material practices, hip hop participants have created an alternative economy of musical production relying on networks pertaining to their own community of practice. In doing so, they directly organise a distinctive hip hop interface with the market (Bauwens 2007, 246). As such, their community – this ‘emotional site’ that is, at the same time, localised, translocal and virtual¹³ –, has reaffirmed its ever-expanding translocality. Indeed, participants in the Francophone African hip hop music economy link and interact, whether physically or virtually¹⁴ – depending on their respective and accumulated skills – recalling that the “idea of regional integration involves collaboration between neighbouring countries in different parts of the continent and stronger cross-border flows of goods, services, labour, capital and information” (Turok 2010, 22).

“Nowadays, [the hip hop movement] gets stabilised and people want to work together without consideration for the geographic zone each lives in or the style of hip hop one does. Today, the actors have the desire to work together as they know that it is the only way out to survive.” (Hip hop music maker and worker, Dakar)

In this regard, hip hop participants offer practical examples of informal cross-boundary cooperation, especially through the development of distinctive hip hop promotional networks. Indeed, their strategic promotion emphasises the social sources of flexibility only enabled by the digital reproduction and its correlative technologies, where hip hop participants have created new social spaces of interaction. Thanks to a technological dexterity linked to the hip hop music-making process, these participants have often developed enterprises that are specialised in graphic design and video production, proposing professional provisions in a field until recently dominated by amateurism. More generally, they have boosted and levelled up the practice of video clips production, as well as regularly appropriated and developed new promotional tools, such as EPK¹⁵ and teasers. Such forms of communication and information devices are essential in promoting musical products on an extended market; indeed,

¹²See MBaye, J.F. (in press) “Géographies de l’économie de la musique hip hop au Sénégal”, *Arts et territoires: Vers une nouvelle économie culturelle?* Roy-Valex, M., G. Bellavance et M. Azam (dir.), Presses de l’Université Laval, Coll. Questions de culture, Québec

¹³Here I shall confront and deconstruct Bennett and Peterson’s trichotomic approach of the ‘music scene’ - See for an introduction (Bennett 2004)

¹⁴I remember being at a hip hop show in Dakar and talking with a hip hop promoter/fan who, once he knew that I was back from Ouagadougou asked me if I had met this other promoter/fan, very active and who happened to be one of my colleagues there. What I am getting at is that the Senegalese participant referred and even recommended me to the Burkinabe participant although, when I inquired, they had never met! These hip hop participants, in other words, who do not have the facility to travel, do exchange and transmit information on their respective hip hop scenes through their mastering of ICT’s.

¹⁵EPK: Electronic Press Kit

promotional investment is especially relevant in a context marked by the absence of reliable distribution networks and proper distributors, locally as well as regionally.

Moreover, hip hop media participate in the construction of both a community and a market (Théberge 1991), while they are a link not only between economic practices and their relative market, but also between different cultural practices. As such, apart from their appropriation of traditional media for promotion (radio, magazines), hip hop participants have extensively conquered the Internet by initiating websites and webzines dedicated to their community and the promotion of its members' activities. Mostly initiated by promoters or fans, these media promote local productions, while extending well beyond their initial locale. For instance, webzines and websites such as Kingsize¹⁶, BoyJump¹⁷, Hip Hop Senegal¹⁸, or Rapwolof¹⁹ mix Senegalese news and updates of hip hop participants and community with those of hip hop communities from other parts of the region, the continent and even the world. These virtual spheres thus offer a promotional tool both for the local hip hop community, its trans-local affiliations as well as for individual hip hop artists and their productions, with not only a magazine, but a community page as well as a forum.

Besides, artists themselves have also adopted these new media as ideal promotional sites for both their individual productions as well as for the services they offer in terms of music-making. This trend is especially visible among the proliferation of social networking platforms such as 'MySpace' or 'Facebook', as well as promotion and distribution dedicated websites, such as 'Bandcamp' or 'ReverbNation' that have been increasingly adopted by artists and musicians to promote their productions. Interestingly, in these virtual spheres, any hip hop participant, whether artists, promoters or fans, can contribute to the consolidation of a translocal hip hop community, in which often geographically remote consumers and producers, fans, promoters and artists, intermingle. In this sense, these promotional spheres express, reflect and promote the translocal materiality of the hip hop community and its participants, of this distinctively situated African musical borderland.

Moreover, while the hip hop translocal networks of promotion support the growth and development of the practices of this community and its participants, the latter instigate other forms of collaboration through joint-decision making at a regional scale. In this respect, it has been argued that as far as African integration is concerned, "a collaborative approach might make industrial diversification easier and more sustainable through shared learning and development of clusters of related products" (Turok 2010, 23). As such, hip hop musical borderlands uncover an interesting collaborative approach based on cost-recovery mechanisms, which reveals translocal networks of communal organisation: those of their dedicated festivals in Francophone (West and Central) Africa. Indeed, a networking dynamic has emerged amongst the festivals dedicated to Hip Hop, which are active in the Francophone (West and Central) African ensemble²⁰ and that thus share a common thematic in terms of their

¹⁶ www.kingsize.sn

¹⁷ <http://www.boyjump.tv/>

¹⁸ <http://www.hiphopsenegal.net/>

¹⁹ www.rapwolof.com

²⁰ Gabao Hip Hop Festival (Gabon); Waga Hip Hop Festival (Burkina Faso); Hip Hop Kankpe Festival (Benin); Assallamalekoum Festival (Mauritania); Hip Hop Awards (Senegal); Festival Festa'2H

productions. These festivals are not especially lucrative as they rely extensively on external funding, with their organisers multiplying parallel activities in order to make a living. In this sense, the monetary dimension involved in the organisation of such spheres of live exhibition certainly calls for some systematic cost-recovery mechanisms that are set up by these specific hip hop participants responding to managerial imperatives whereby their investment needs to be recovered. Some hip hop participants have identified these collaborative mechanisms as constraining limits, relative to their regional network, mostly in terms of an inclusion/exclusion and power structure dilemma.

“These organisers create networks: one cannot go in a specific country unless it has been recommended by the Senegalese organiser. These organisers agree on conditions such as they won't accept an artist who has not been recommended; or they won't pay excessive artists fees – maximum 300 000 Fcfa” (Hip hop music maker and worker, Dakar)

However, such a kind of collaboration goes a step further with for instance the desire and initiative of coordinating not only artistic but also technical/training dimensions of their festivals. As such, as soon as October 2009, a first seminar of African hip hop festivals was held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) during its Waga Hip Hop Festival in order to establish a bridge for artistic and technical exchanges between the different African hip hop festivals, beyond linguistic and geographic borders. This seminar taking place in the framework of the one of the eldest hip hop festivals in the West African region was attended by representatives of twelve African hip hop festivals, who were invited to participate in this reflexion. Ultimately, this gathering aimed at creating and elaborating a network of African urban culture professionals²¹, while inquiring about the possibilities of common projects between these festivals, at both an artistic and technical level, and while sharing the experience and wealth of each. Similarly, in June 2011, this initiative of the Waga Hip Hop Festival – that despite of claiming to be African in its scale was in fact more West African in its focus – was replicated during another very popular and well established hip hop festival in Francophone Africa, the Gabao Festival (Gabon). Indeed, in a similar fashion, this Libreville's festival organised during its edition a Forum of Central African Hip Hop festivals in order to further support Hip Hop in Central Africa. This event gathered representatives from eight hip hop festivals in the region²², with the objective of networking these organisations so they could share knowledge, contacts and strategies to ensure their respective sustainable development.

(Senegal); Togo Hip Hop Awards (Togo); Guinean Africa Rap Festival (Guinea-Conakry); Hip Hop Wassa Festival (Niger); Mali Hip Hop Awards (Mali); but also in non-Francophone countries: Big Up GB - Movimento Hip Hop Festival (Guinea-Bissao); Hi-Life Festival (Ghana); as well as in Francophone Central African countries: Ndjiam Hip Hop (Tchad); Bangui Hip Hop (Central African Republic); Couleurs Urbaines (Cameroon); Woïla Hip Hop (Cameroon), 5 Jours de Hip Hop (Congo-Brazzaville), Air d'Ici (Democratic Republic of Congo), Lubum Hip Hop (Democratic Republic of Congo); Malabo Hip Hop (Equatorial Guinea)

²¹ For detailed information, see

http://www.wagahiphop.com/waga_hip_hop_9/rencontres_professionnelles?PHPSESSID=7ee09f6cfda77e537db42f93120c5948

²² Ndjiam Hip Hop (Tchad), Bangui Hip Hop (RCA), Couleurs urbaines (Yaoundé Cameroun), Woïla Hip Hop (Garoua, Cameroun), 5 jours de Hip Hop (Brazzaville, Congo), Air d'Ici (Kinshasa, RDC), Lubum Hip Hop (Lubumbashi, RDC), Malabo Hip Hop (Guinée Équatoriale)

The organisation of these seminars stems from the recognition that hip hop festivals are a privileged location for one of the main dimension of the development of African Hip Hop: training and formation. Indeed, these festivals both allow African urban artists to perform in professional conditions, and are a focal point for exchange and learning about professions in performing arts. In fact, these events, which systematically host initiatives dedicated to the promotion and development of Hip Hop in their countries and regions, illustrate how “a range of shared regional services and pooling of infrastructure should also be possible, including training” (Turok 2010, 23). As such, I can refer to the latest edition of the Beninese Hip Hop Kankpe festival²³, which took place in Cotonou (Benin) in April 2012. Alike other hip hop festivals in the region, this festival offers workshops of creation in dance and graffiti, as well as specific trainings furthering the professionalisation of hip hop participants in sound (PA) and light system and design, in video clips production and realisation, and in art critic and cultural journalism. Such trainings and dedicated formation initiatives are especially important when considering how outdated are the current training art/music schools²⁴. In this sense, besides being a real sphere of recognition (through awards and fanzines), of expression (through podiums and shows), and of public education (through conferences and film screenings, hip hop festivals of the Francophone (West and Central) African ensemble encourage professional exchanges and developments, while furthering their translocal networks.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I emphasized the symbolic and material relevance of looking at productive dynamics involved in the African music, as a cultural field that can significantly frame and inform processes of regional integration on the continent. As such, I suggested the concept of “musical borderlands”, referring to the creation of common political and economic “ciments” that articulates cross-border solidarities. However, I also stressed that, despite its strong potential as a regional market, the music sector has been poorly invested by public officials and authorities, and thus largely dominated by an informal economy. In this regard, I proposed to read and render visible regional integration in Africa, while focusing on its “musical borderlands” as expressed in the practices of their “ordinary” citizens that are already at play across borders. In fact, I drew on managerial and entrepreneurial concepts to contextualise political and economic practices in the music field, and to recognise the inclusion of non-economic rationale in musical participation.

Besides, I provided a symbolic and pragmatic perspective of regional integration, through the articulation of distinctively situated cultural practices: those of Francophone (West and Central) African participants in hip hop music. Productively using and developing translocal networks to sustain their community, these participants demonstrate dynamic relationships between material production and social reproduction that, under contemporary capitalism, converge, allowing new socialities to emerge with the potential to create political relations. I thus referred to

²³For detailed information, see <http://www.hiphopkankpe.com/>

²⁴ This structural deficiency was indeed one of the main worries expressed by the Association for Music Professions in Senegal in an open letter addressed to the presidential candidates during the election campaign – For detailed information, see: http://www.dakaractu.com/Musique-Culture-Lettre-ouverte-aux-candidats-a-l-election-presidentielle-senegalaise_a16883.html

hip hop festivals emerging from the belief that Hip Hop is a unique cultural movement, which has allowed an African youth to emancipate itself, through a democratic and independent spirit of contestation. In doing so, this productive community has developed practices, which reaffirms translocal, transurban, transborder solidarities, and translate in practice the concept of “musical borderlands” and its cultural articulations of regional integration in Africa.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnaud, G. 2007. "L'économie Des Musiques Africaines: Un Terrible Paradoxe." *Africultures* 69: <http://www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=livre&no=2178>.
- Barrowclough, D., and Z. Kozul-Wright. 2007. "Voice, Choice and Growth Through Creative Industries: Towards a New Development Agenda." In *Creative Industries and Developing Countries: Voice, Choice and Economic Growth*, ed. D. Barrowclough and Z. Kozul-Wright. London & New York: Routledge.
- Bauwens, M. 2007. "P2P and Human Happiness." In *Third International Conference on Gross National Happiness*, 233–247. Bangkok: The Centre for Bhutan Studies.
- . 2009. "Class and Capital in Peer Production." *Capital & Class* 33 (1): 121–141.
- Bazin, H. 2000. "Hip-hop: Le Besoin D'une Nouvelle Médiation Politique." *Mouvements* 11 (La Découverte): 39–45.
- Benga, N. A. 2002. "Dakar Et Ses Tempos: Significations Et Enjeux De La Musique Urbaine Moderne (c.1960-années 1990)." In *Le Sénégal Contemporain*, ed. M.C. Diop, 289–308. Paris: Karthala.
- Bennett, A. 2004. "Consolidating the Music Scenes Perspective." *Poetics* 32 (3-4): 223–234.
- Bhabha, H. K. 2004. *The Location of Culture*. London & New-York: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. 1993. "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed." In *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. R. Johnson. Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers.
- Cloonan, M. 2007. *Popular Music and the State in the UK - Culture, Trade or Industry?* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Diouf, M. 2002. "Des Cultures Urbaines Entre Traditions Et Mondialisations." In *Le Sénégal Contemporain*, ed. M.C. Diop. Paris: Karthala.
- Ekinsmyth, C. 2011. "Challenging the Boundaries of Entrepreneurship: The Spatialities and Practices of UK 'Mumpreneurs'." *Geoforum* 42: 104–14.
- Foucault, M. 1976. *Histoire De La Sexualité I - La Volonté De Savoir*. Collection Tel. Paris: Gallimard.
- Granger, R. C., and C. Hamilton. 2010. "Re-spatialising the Creative Industries: a Relational Examination of Underground Scenes, and Professional and Organisational Lock-in." *Creative Industries Journal* 3 (1): 47–60.
- Hözl, W. 2005. *Working Paper Series: Creative Industries in Vienna: Development, Dynamics and Potentials*. WWTF.
- Howes, F. 1949. *Man, Mind and Music*. London: Seeker & Warburg.
- Johannisson, B. 2011. "Towards a Practice Theory of Entrepreneuring." *Small Business Economics* 36: 135–50.
- Kozul-Wright, Z. 2001. "Challenges and Prospects in the Music Industry for Developing Countries." In *Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Proceedings of the Youth Forum, Music Industry Workshop*, ed. United Nations. European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium.
- Kristeva, J. 1969. *Semiotiké: Recherche Pour Une Sémanalyse*. Paris: Seuil.
- Meschonnic, H. 1982. *Critique Du Rythme: Anthropologie Historique Du Langage*. Lagrasse: Verdier.
- . 1995. *Politique Du Rythme, Politique Du Sujet*. Lagrasse: Verdier.

- Negrissim'. 2009. *Toute Une Vie*. Negsounds Productions.
- Nouss, A. 2002. *Métissage, Transculture Et Singularité*. Trait d'union, coll. "le soi et l'autre" & Pierre Ouellet.
- . 2005. *Plaidoyer Pour Un Monde Métis*. La Discorde. Paris: Textuel.
- Pilkington, H., and R. Johnson. 2003. "Peripheral Youth - Relations of Identity and Power in Global/local Context." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6 (3): 259–283.
- Rubin, C. 2004. "Le Texte De Rap: Une Écriture De La Voix." *European Medi@Culture-Online*.
- Scherer, K. R. 1995. "Expression of Emotion in Voice and Music." *Journal of Voice* 9 (3).
- Smith, M. P. 2003. *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Steyaert, C. 2007. "'Entrepreneuring' as a Conceptual Attractor? A Review of Process Theories in 20 Years of Entrepreneurship Studies." *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development: An International Journal* 19 (6): 453–77.
- Steyaert, C., and J. Katz. 2004. "Reclaiming the Space of Entrepreneurship in Society: Geographical, Discursive and Social Dimensions." *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 16: 179–96.
- Steyaert, C., and H. Landstrom. 2011. "Enacting Entrepreneurship Research in a Pioneering, Provocative and Participative Way: On the Work of Bengt Johannisson." *Small Business Economics* 36: 123–34.
- Théberge, P. 1991. "Musicians' Magazines in the 1980s: The Creation of a Community and a Consumer Market." *Cultural Studies* 5 (3): 270–293.
- Throsby, D. C. 2002. *The Music Industry in the New Millennium: Global and Local Perspectives*. Division of Arts and Cultural Enterprise, UNESCO.
- Turok, Ivan. 2010. "The Prospects for African Urban Economies." *Urban Research & Practice* 3 (1): 12–24. doi:10.1080/17535060903534131. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17535060903534131>.
- UNCTAD, and UNDP. 2008. *Creative Economy Report 2008*. United Nations.
- Wenger, E. C. 1998. *Communities of Practice□: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Learning in Doing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. C., and W. M. Snyder. 2000. "Communities of Practice: The Organizational Frontier." *Harvard Business Review* 78 (1): 139–146.
- Yeung, H. W. 2009. "Transnationalising Entrepreneurship: a Critical Agenda for Economic Geography." *Progress in Human Geography* 33 (2): 210–35.
- Zumthor, P. 1984. "The Impossible Closure of the Oral Text." *Yale French Studies* 67.

OBVIOUSLY THIS DRAFT NOT FOR WIDE CIRCULATION

Border Crossing in Congolese music, patronage across borders.

Joe Trapido

Hellos and thankyou...

N.B.

(The talk I will play 3 song excerpts Associe by Fally Ipupa

Beau Gosse Ya Paris ny Papa Wemba

And Tshatsho Mbala le monde est méchant by Wenge Musica BCBG)

I was not one of the people who conceived of this panel, but when I began to think about the theme of Congolese music and borders I realised that there are so many different ways in which Congolese music crosses borders. Congolese music was born in the 'mirror cities' of Kinshasa and Brazzaville, which face each other on the north and south banks of the Congo river.

Congolese music has also been perhaps the most important pan African cultural flow, linking Africans across borders in almost all of sub-Saharan Africa. The creativity of Congolese music, combined with a powerful radio transmitter in Brazzaville, meant that from relatively early Congolese music became the template for modern music making, and indeed in the domestication of modernity (Jeseiwicki**** White****) more generally, across many frontiers in Africa, indeed in most of Black Africa.

There are doubtless many other ways in which Congolese music crosses borders, but in this talk I want to concentrate on just one aspect of this rather large theme. I will be discussing how Congolese music is used to obtain money, prestige and power. And in particular how these desirable entities can only be accessed by crossing geographical frontiers. Musicians make money by constructing a network stretching to patrons across various borders, yet they will only attract this patronage if they remain strongly attached to Kinshasa. A city which is strongly associated with joy and rather potlach-like rituals of social reproduction in the minds of the Congolese.

I am going to play a brief excerpt from a song, from around 2006 by one of the the young stars of Congolese music, Fally Ipupa dedicated to the Angolan based diamond dealer Tshatsho Mbala Kashoggi.

Associé Associé Tshatsho Mbala 'Kashoggi',

Associate Associate, Tshatsho Mbala 'Kashoggi'

Oza ba diamant ebele

You have many diamonds

Lokola parbrise arriere ya car epanzana

As if the rear windscreen of a car had shattered

Opesa pe bolingo te?

Won't you give some love?

We will hear more about this song and about Tshatsho Mbala later in this presentation but I should explain briefly some artistic conventions in operation here. As with popular music in most other parts of the world the overwhelming theme of Congolese music is been love. Perhaps less usual is the fact that the songs are very often about real, named individuals and are generally sung in the first person, as a narrative of love for this named individual. Another peculiarity is that there is a long history of men (most musicians in Congo are men) singing songs in the first person as women, songs which often expressed themselves hopelessly in love with a real named protagonist. There are many reasons for this tendency to sing as women, but clearly one of them is patronage. Congo is a patronage based society and most (though not all) patrons have been male. Figures from the 1960's and seventies were well known to have sung songs for particular merchants or politicians. Tabu Ley, one of the great names of Congolese music, dedicated a song to a man who owned a furniture shop, and left his bill unpaid.

The revenue streams from 'conventional' sources – concerts and record sales - were pretty strong until well into the 1980's but this misses the central issue. Patrimonialism extends to the dispersal of

royalties. Access to royalties themselves has long been fiercely politicised in Kinshasa. Establishing when this began is a difficult business – I conducted interviews with musicians who stated that the Congolese rights body, SONECA, had ceased to pay out royalties properly in the 1960's, when Joseph Kabasele had been president of the musicians' union. Be this as it may, it was clear that by the 1980's SONECA was only paying out to those with extensive political connections. An informant who played guitar in *Empire Bakuba* - an *orchestre* which had great success in Congo and in wider African markets – remembers:

SONECA didn't pay. Only to the dinosaurs, Tabu Ley, Franco, those people there. Go to Kinshasa. Take a look at the state of SONECA - you will cry! ...I remember Pepe Kalle [président d'orchestre of Empire Bakuba] went to SONECA and they said they had nothing for us – at the time we had had some big hits in West Africa – Pepe [who was a large man] picked up the table and threw it at the wall. (Paris 3/7/2007)

Eventually even the 'dinosaurs' had their problems, but popular musicians who were of the same generation as the politicians, i.e. those who reached maturity in the years before independence, were, in general able to negotiate access to resources of one kind or another

In the fifties, successful musicians of the this generation - known as the *deuxième génération* - had managed to tread a fine line between glamour and disrepute, constructing lasting friendships with those who would go on to rule after independence. In the seventies *présidents d'orchestres* of this generation (though not rank and file musicians) thus held considerable social and political capital.

But this was not true of the younger generation, known as the *troisième génération*. Bereft of direct political patronage, and in an economy that was contracting rapidly, younger musicians were forced into patron-client relations with well-connected musicians of the *deuxième génération*, men such as Franco and Tabu Ley.¹ There was a sense in which, despite their popularity, the musicians of the

1 *Zaiko* was backed by Franco and, because of Franco's association with Mobutu, they were the most strongly *Mobutiste* of the *troisième génération orchestres*. *Viva* was initially backed by Tabu Ley and *Langa Langa* stars by Verkys. All three of these men had strong regime connections.

troisième génération were little people - *mutu pamba*. Thus, while one might pay for a *troisième génération orchestre* such as *Zaiko Langa Langa* to perform at a function, entering into a tributary, kin-like relationship with such musicians would have been anathema to the children of the elite. This meant that while several musicians of the *troisième génération* travelled to Europe as individuals in the seventies, they did not have the patrons to put up capital for a tour with their *orchestres*, or for recording sessions in European studios.

Papa Wemba's journeys to Europe in the early eighties (in 1980 with *Viva la Musica*, and again in 1981 on his own) stand out because of the extent to which he was able to establish a network of Europe-based patrons. Papa Wemba was able to develop a new kind of patron-client interaction. Based in new artistic forms and a new sensibility, it also contained the germ of a new political economy, one where crossing borders was the way to survive. This did not emerge from a clear blue sky however – it drew on older cultural logics, along with recent narrative and melodic conventions in popular music. As stated the principal form in Congolese music since the 1940's has been the love song, sung from the point of view of a first person narrator. It has also been common for this narrative persona to be female, even though musicians singing these songs have almost all been male. From the early 1980's releases of Papa Wemba, this device became an even more central narrative conceit. The status of the love object/patron as a resident of Europe was consistently stressed in most of the songs. A further common narrative device, introduced at this time, was to make the song a declaration of love for a beau in Europe, from a (female) lover in Kinshasa, as the following example *Beau Gosse ya Paris* - originally released in 1985 – illustrates.

<i>Beau Gosse eh, Beau Gosse</i>	Pretty Boy, Pretty Boy,
<i>Ngai awa na Kin eh</i>	I here in Kin, eh!
<i>yo kuna mosika ozali]</i>	You there, are far away.
<i>Tindela ngai mua ndambo</i>	Send me word. Just a little,

<i>ya maloba na se ya mukanda]</i>	in a letter]
<i>Ebonga wapi cherie?</i>	Where are you hidden my love?
<i>Julien, oh mosika yango se mpoto</i>	Julien, oh Europe is really far away
<i>Mokolo nini Nzambe</i>	On which day, God,
<i>Oyo nakofete ya ngai eyenga tango okoya?</i>	Will I celebrate Sunday [with you] when you come?]
<i>Essengo ebandi kokima</i>	The joy begun, it will run from me.
<i>ngai nzoto zonga noki noki]</i>	come back soon.]
<i>Nani akobala ngai yawhe ?</i>	God, who will marry me?
<i>Beau Gosse eh Beau Gosse ngo</i>	Pretty boy pretty boy. This is,
<i>Beau Gosse, ya Paris</i>	Pretty boy, from Paris.

(Wemba 2000)

The format did several notable things. The model of success it promoted - the *mikiliste* – was clearly a version of the *ambianceur*, the good-timing romancer of women, who was already a feature of Kinshasa’s urban folklore. The figure of the *ambianceur* was associated with a certain kind of rather fetishised European modernity and, as such, the *ambianceur* was associated with an African bourgeoisie and showed an orientation to, even an imitation of, the world of the whites (see Biaya 1996). But the *mikiliste* took this orientation much further and tied the idea of the *bon vivant* to a physical access to Europe.

At the same time it also stressed the idea of a retinue in Kinshasa. Unlike other states in Africa, where the weakness of the central state seems to have made the adulation of the natal village or region of origin of primary importance, the obsession in contemporary Congolese models of success is associated with having a retinue back in Kinshasa. Despite a disastrous fall in standards of living, Kinshasa continues to be construed as the premier site of pleasure - ‘mboka elengi’ - pleasure town - ‘Kin kiese’ - Kinshasa Joy. Indeed, in some respects this is *because* of the collapse in incomes.

Income disparity makes Kinshasa all the more pleasurable for those with money: a place for sex, music and the joyous giving-off of imported goods. Those who earn money elsewhere, such as the *Bana Lunda* - diamond miner in Angola, the migrant, etc. will return to Kinshasa to engage in prestige consumption and receive the adulation of retinue.

Thus, a spectacular return to Kinshasa and a wild dispersal of resources was very much part of the new model of success that the *mikiliste* embodied. Potlatch like dispersal and display - based especially around the bar - had always played a central part in the making of reputations in Kinshasa (see Lafontaine 1970, Biaya 1996). What was novel was that this new economy of prestige relied on using media, above all recorded music, to cross frontiers. For a relatively limited group of *troisième génération* youth, this new sub-culture afforded a way to escape the stranglehold on resources which the preceding generation held and, in the process, escape their status as little people, *mutu pamba*.

By the 1990's migrants to Europe were not the only individuals acting as patrons for *mabanga*. In the 1980's a collapsing economy and a liberalisation of the mining sector led to a boom in artisanal diamond mining. In the 1980's major discoveries were made along the Kwilu River in northern Angola. The deposits were significant and the diamonds are of extremely high quality, but Angola's civil war meant that large amounts of artisanal extraction took place² (see De Boeck 1999, Monier, Jewseiwicki and de Villiers 2001, Mbiki 2008). This led to a massive 'diamond rush' of Zairians from across the border. The majority of these migrants, like Tshatsho mentioned above, had roots in Bandundu, a province with historical and geographical ties to Northern Angola³.

2 The town of Cafunfo at the centre of the region, changed hands several times, but the surrounding country was controlled for most of the period by Unita, rebels backed by the west (and their proxies in Zaire and South Africa) for their opposition to the pro-Soviet MPLA government. The export of these diamonds via Zaire onto the world market, in flagrant breach of a UN embargo, propped up the Mobutu regime and prolonged the conflict in Angola greatly. Initially this was an aim of US foreign policy which sought to keep various counter insurgencies 'off balance sheet'. Later it was an inconvenience as they sought a rapprochement with the oil rich MPLA.

3 Luba migrants faced greater difficulties in Lunda Norte because of a suspicion by UNITA that they

By the early nineties the *Bana Lunda* had emerged as a distinct identity in Kinshasa, with migrants to Angola returning there and spending dollars on the kinds of potlatch which we have discussed. Much of this money was spent on *mabanga*, with musicians in Kinshasa mythologising the *Bana Lunda* in similar terms to the *mikiliste*.

The imperative to keep oneself known in the theatre of Kinshasa, and the desire by politicians to use musicians for their own ends, led to some fascinating cross border struggles. Which I explore through the next piece of music. Now I shall play the song, which was from the Album Pleins Feux, and was written by Werrason, then one of the front line in the group Wenge Musica BCBCG. Now leader of the group Wenge Maison Mere, which is probably still the most popular musical ensemble in Congo.

The main part of the song, sung by Werrason is a paen to Tshatsho the diamond dealer based in Angola but before we come on to Tshatsho Mbala, I would like to make a brief aside. As on other songs this one contains very many individual name checks for other patrons who are not part of the song's main narrative. These are sold individually by various musicians in the group – the main dedication belonging to the songs author. One name which jumps out at me, as another example of cross border patronage in Africa, is that of Nosy Muamba, which is sung by the JB Mpiana:

Ya Nosy, le roi soleil eh

Big brother Nosy, 'the sun king eh'.

yango po' ngai azali parrain

This for me are godfather

yango po'ngai azali papa.

supported the opposition to Mobutu. Luba would also likely have had greater connections in Kasai's diamond fields.

This for me is a father

Nosy Muamba, was a former president of the Congolese football league. He was involved in a syndicate importing counterfeit currency into Zaire, a crime for which he was tried and found guilty in 1995. After the collapse of the Mobutu regime, he came to South Africa, where he became famous as the owner of a Johannesburg nightclub, *Sankai*. He was also part of a predominantly Cameroonian syndicate involved in counterfeiting. He was caught once again and he is currently serving a prison term.

But on to the major protagonist in the song Tshatsho Mbala, and to the cross border setting of Angola where he was based. The ruling class in Zaire had once relied on copper to prop up their rule, now only two things allowed them to stay in power. One was the resources of sovereignty, which meant that aid budgets still flowed through Kinshasa. The other was the desire of the USA to keep its support for the counter insurgency in Angola off balance sheet. The trade in conflict diamonds via Kinshasa allowed them to do this, and the Zairian ruling class jumped at the life line this offered. Thus a number of Mobutu's inner circle ran planes into Lunda Norte, ferrying in supplies and carrying out diamonds. son. E.g. his son, Kongulu, aka 'Saddam', and his security chief, and ethnic confrère Honore Ngbanda (Danis****), and Bangala businessman Bemba Saolona (the father of Jean Pierre Bemba, leader of the Ugandan backed rebel group the MLC, currently on trail in the Hague). UNITA were running a kind of rival state, yet without the 'resources of sovereignty' (Englebert****) that come from recognition. This was the reason why the Zairian government was able to profit from Angolan diamonds. But a great deal of the dealings between the Zairian government and UNITA appear to have been indirect.

This was where 'l'empereur' Tshatsho Mbala 'Kashoggi' comes in. And for those of you that haven't worked it out Kashoggi is after Adnan Kashoggi, the Saudi Arms dealer of the 1980's. Tshatsho

Mbala was born in Kikwit, in the province of Bandundu. Like many Zairians, when Tshatsho finished his studies in the early eighties he set off to look for diamonds. His first excursions in the diamond trade seem to have been in Kasai in the south of the DRC, around the towns of Kananga and Tshikapa. Later on going to Lunda Norte in Angola. Tshatsho arrived relatively early in the Diamond boom there and he was able to stike up a strong relationship with Jonas Savimbi leader of UNITA. Tshatsho himself dealt in diamonds but he was also able to set himself up as fixer/passage obligé for Zairians in Lunda Norte, who were in general very vulnerable to the whims of the UNITA regime. Such vulnerability principally concerned the 'little people', who were subjected to exemplary beatings for the most trivial offences and could be summarily executed at the whim of a local UNITA *delegado*, but on occasion the vulnerability extended up the political network.

It was thus that Tshatsho was able to do something inconceivable on the other side of the frontier – which is to say to resist the will of Saddam. I have not penetrated the details of the dispute, but in the early 1990's Tshatsho and Saddam were in conflict, and Tshatsho was able to restrict Saddam's access to the diamond fields of Lunda Norte. Tshatsho ensconced in his Angolan fastness was safe. But the conflict could not have come at a worse time for what was then Zaire's most popular music group, Wenge Musica BCBG. Why? Well they were about to release an album *Pleins Feux*. The album was larded with praise shouts for Tshatsho Mbala, and one of the stand out tracks, *Tshatsho Mbala le monde est méchant*, was dedicated to Tshatsho.

And indeed the lyrics to this song, in the characteristic mix of French and Lingala that is Kinshasa speak, sound as if they were deliberately written to take Tshatsho's side in the dispute. The song has a rather lightly articulated narrative, where Werrason sings as a woman who has overcome doubters to live with Tshatsho Mbala. The main idea conveyed however is that those who say bad things about Tshatsho are ungenerous and wrong - 'haters' in black american parlance.

Kojuger moto na mosika ezali mabe,

Judging a man from far away is bad

Approchez pembeni koyeba vraiment ndege na ye

Come close and know how he is

Batekisa finga na yo soi-disant ozali mabe

They circulate insults about you claiming you are bad

Mais na Vandi pembeni na yo na moni seulment le contraire

But I have dwelt/stayed close with you and I see only the opposite

Tshatsho Mbala, Kashoggi eh, na moni eh, le monde est mechant.

Tshatsho Mbala Kashoggi eh, I see e the world is a bad place.

In fact this was entirely accidental, the album seems to have been recorded in Paris before the dispute emerged, and Wenge Musica BCBG had already had enough experience of Saddam to know not to cross him. Saddam himself was a keen music patron, and had founded a music production company, Yosshad productions. One of Yosshad's early decisions, encouraged by a certain individual (any Congolese will know who I mean, confidant of Saddam, one time Paris resident, people smuggler and music patron, now a friend of Joseph Kabila and member of parliament for the ruling PPRD), had been to back Wenge Musica BCBG's rivals Wenge el Paris, a splinter which had developed after several musicians, led by Marie-Paul, stayed behind during the *orchestre's* first visit to Paris. In any case despite Saddam's patronage Wenge el Paris foundered, and by the time *Pleins Feux* was released it was apparent that Wenge Musica BCBG had taken the laurels in the Wenge family. Yet an air of tension remained between Saddam and Wenge Musica BCBG, and stories circulate about rivalries over women, musical equipment, and even a bitterness about a television appearance by the group in ties. I should explain that ties were considered an anti- Mobutiste gesture. Mobutu banned ties in the seventies as part of his cultural revolution inspired 'recourse to authenticity'. Ties were unbanned in a partial liberalisation in the 1990's but were often seen as a symbol of the opposition.

But, accident or not, the album *Pleins Feux* was banned in Zaire and, while the rest of Wenge Musica BCBG's output is so well known in Kinshasa that it is a kind of soundtrack to the 1990's, that album is, to this day, not well known there.

The *Bana Lunda* mode of success closely resembles that of the *mikiliste*. This is hardly surprising in that the *Bana Lunda* seem to have very consciously set out to imitate the *mikiliste*. Informants close to Tshatsho said he had initially intended to use Angola as a way to raise capital for the journey to Europe. This imitation reflects the fact that *mikiliste* practices are grounded in an older Central African political economy. What is interesting is that in most ways the *bana Lunda* forms of production display far more material similarity with the economies of the Central African past than is the case with that of the *mikiliste*. The *Bana Lunda* economy, based on violence, primitive accumulation and external demand for a basic commodity shows a striking continuity with the economies of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries in the region, which were based around such items as slaves, ivory or rubber (see Vellut 2004, Harms 1981).

One new ingredient in this Central African political economy of the late 1990's was the politics of sovereignty, which was an essential background to the cross border economy of reputation in which the *Bana Lunda* participated. Yet sovereignty was grafted onto an existing politics, one where the role of the intermediary was, as ever, crucial.

Another similarity with the past was the radical instability of this political regime. The political allegiances on which diamond entrepreneurs depend are extremely unstable. This instability has a double edged relationship with music patronage, on the one hand it can mean that patrons can disappear suddenly and without warning, on the other hand it is one of the reasons why diamond dealers and others who need musicians. The conspicuous acts of largesse such as music patronage become more important as a way of letting others know that one is still 'on top'.

One musician friend described working on a production funded by Tshatsho in 2002 when news came through of the death of Jonas Savimbi. 'My God he was furious,' the informant remembered, 'but what could I do? It wasn't my fault Savimbi was killed'. It is clear that the decline of Savimbi had a very negative effect on Tshatsho's finances, and when I began fieldwork on my doctorate in 2005 or so, it was very widely asserted by informants that Tshatsho was 'finished'. The success of the song *Associé* by Fally Ipupa, which I played at the start of this talk, which was dedicated to Tshatsho, and his further investments in Fally subsequent to this, have allayed this impression somewhat.

Abstract ABORNE Annual Conference 2012

Karen Büscher, Conflict Research Group, Ghent University, Belgium
(Karen.buscher@Ugent.be, +32473183149)

Installing order at the border. Micro-level impacts of managing, controlling and securing the Congo-Rwandan border.

Since 2009, reinforced diplomatic ties between the DR Congo and Rwanda have resulted in changing political and economic transborder relations. The rapprochement between the presidents Kabila and Kagame aimed at regional security, the restoration of political trust and the reactivation of economic cooperation. Despite the recent turmoil in the region, this peace-deal seems to hold until present. The most discussed outcome of this deal were the several joint military operations to eliminate the Rwandan armed rebel group operating on Congolese territory. But also on a more local level, this deal impacted on transborder dynamics, as it was translated into a new bilateral effort to install a better 'border management. On the one hand, the changing border regime supported a further 'opening' of the border, on the other hand it resulted in a more severe control and regulation of transborder mobility and trade. Several initiatives were undertaken to reinstall order and security in this urban borderland. In this paper, the author investigates the spatial, political and economic impact of these measures on local, every-day practices of border crossing. The paper is based on extensive ethnographic research on social and economic transborder mobility between the cities of Goma (RD Congo) and Gisenyi (Rwanda). The central focus will thus be on local agency and popular responses to a changing border management.

Introduction

At the end of the year 2008, after another violent episode in the Congolese conflict with the CNDP rebels led by Laurent Nkunda countering the Congolese army, a sudden rapprochement between the Congolese and Rwandan Presidents left observers worldwide in astonishment. In November 2009, after the Congolese president Kabila reached out to the Rwandan president Kagame to end the violent conflict in Eastern Congo, the two leaders made a series of bilateral commitments to install order and peace in the region. This rapprochement of the two long-time adversaries, was by the international community immediately warmly applauded, and by the local population perceived with much suspicion. This unexpected U-turn was a ‘marriage of reason rather than love’¹; and involved a strategic move for both parties motivated by the constraints and respective interests of the two respective presidents (Crisis Group Report 2010). The bilateral engagements resulted in the ‘secret agreement’ of Nairobi 2009, of which the exact content for many remained a big question mark and became subject to much speculation. The first outcome of this joint effort for peace, was the integration of the CNDP rebel movement. In no time, the rebel leader Laurent Nkunda was arrested in Rwanda, and the integration of the CNDP units into the regular army FARDC soon followed. A second outcome was the joint military operation of the Congolese and the Rwandan national army to chase after the FDLR, a Rwandan Hutu rebel movement operating in the Kivu region since 1995 in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. That these two main ‘initiatives’ did not deliver the expected solution to durable peace, became clear soon after they were launched. Laurent Nkunda was immediately replaced by General Bosco Ntaganda, under who’s wings CNDP could reinforce and even expand its influence in the region. Despite its official ‘integration’, CNDP’s ‘pseudo-static’ networks in their occupied regions remained intact. The Congolese-Rwandan rapprochement has clearly altered the power balance in the Kivu’s in the advantage of CNDP. For example, by the installation of former CNDP-units in the mining sites cleared from FDLR by the Amani Leo operations, it could reinforce its power position (and in extension reinforce Rwanda’s access to Kivu’s minerals)². Further, the military operations to combat the FDLR generated more insecurity instead of preventing it. Despite three successive operations conducted by the Congolese and Rwandan army, the humanitarian situation in the region has deteriorated, and instances of extreme violence have multiplied.

In the past year, the overall failure of these regional ‘initiatives’ has been demonstrated and discussed extensively³, especially in the light of the current dynamics of desertion and the resume of the fighting between the Congolese army and the different armed groups controlling the region. However, in this paper we will not further elaborate on these recent dynamics. What we are interested in, is rather the local outcomes of the secondary objectives of the rapprochement between Congo and Rwanda: namely the re-establishment of political trust, diplomatic relations and economic exchange. Rwandan direct and indirect involvement through the different phases of armed conflict in Eastern Congo, has strongly deteriorated relations between Kigali and Kinshasa. Since the second Congolese war, from 1998 onwards, bilateral relations were totally suspended and replaced by a bitter enmity. The sudden normalization of these relations and the transformation from enemies into ostensible allies, was locally perceived as particularly puzzling (Queyranne, 2012). This unexpected twist in regional relations resulted in the relaunch of ‘mixed commission’, the reanimation of regional economic development and the appointment of new ambassadors. These events were locally described as “une nouvelle ère”, “nouvelle étape”, “un premier pas franchi” and “un progress significatif dans l’histoire”⁴

¹ Jason stearns

² Interview Kris berwouts: <http://congosiasa.blogspot.com/2010/02/interview-with-kris-berwouts.html>

³ XX

⁴ “La rencontre Kabila- Kagame entérine la reprise des relations diplomatiques” <http://www.france24.com/fr/20090806-rencontre-kabila-kagame-enterine-reprise-relations-diplomatiques->

This cautious onset to regional integration as part of a larger peace-building effort, had a particular impact on the local socio-political and economic reality on the Congolese-Rwandan borderland. In general, changing relations between two nations logically may have a direct impact on the border, as it is precisely here that these change or transformation can be measured at best. It is in these particular zones that the changing nature of transborder relations becomes tangible and visible, not only through changing border 'management' from above, but also through local border practice from below (expressed in local interactions, exchanges and the perception of 'the other'). One presupposes that more than in the meeting rooms in Kigali or Kinshasa, the direct effects of the changing diplomatic relations are more explicit at those places where the two respective nations meet and their inhabitants interact.

Furthermore, one of the main direct implications of the diplomatic 'U-turn' was explicitly related to the border. A key means to obtain regional stability, peace and development, was to install order in the borderland. The Congolese-Rwandan border clearly reflects the 'border paradox' as described in numerous border studies: it is at the same time a zone of opportunity and a source of disorder and danger⁵. From the Rwandan side of the border, the situation of a weak state, violence and disorder in the DRC is being contrasted with its own conditions of firm state control and internal security. In the DRC itself, this border zone is perceived as a 'space of resistance' (Tull 2005). The Kivu region has a strong 'insurrectionary tradition' and historically developed as a centre of contest and resistance from which the central political authority has been continuously challenged (Tull 2005). This borderland can thus be perceived as a frontier zone, an area over which political control by the regional metropolises is absent or uncertain (Kopytoff 1987: 170). As spaces of contest and resistance against exogenous attempts to control/define, these zones are often destabilising and upending "the established meanings and limits of place and identity" (Kaiser & Nikiforova 2006: 936). The nature of this frontier zone as a political space with specific characteristics of disorder and violence, has of course been reinforced by the region's history of violent conflict.

The changing political relations between the DRC and Rwanda thus resulted in a changing border regime that aimed at a better management of the border, by at the same time reinforcing its character as a zone of opportunity, and imposing more order and control. This article offers a study of the translation of these political agreements in everyday 'border practice' on a very local level. The paper thus **starts from an ethnographic study of local transborder dynamics on the Congolese-Rwandan border to offer a micro-perspective analysis of processes of regional integration and peace-building**. By its micro-level approach, this paper thus inscribes itself in the shift in political-anthropological border studies away from a descriptive approach to boundaries towards the analysis of agency and social processes in borderlands (see for example Kolossov, 2005; Paasi 2005; Newman 2006). In line with the recent work of Bruns and Miggelbrink (2012), this paper demonstrates that the borders are more than institutional constructions or the results of government policies, and that they are shaped by trade and other daily border activities and practices, just as much as by broader political and economic processes. This analysis thus aims at understanding how changing border management (translated through agreements, accords and security intervention for example) impacts on daily border practices and how it has impacted on the 'disorderly' character of the borderland.

In a first part of this paper, we will briefly situate our case study and pay specific attention to the role of border dynamics and activities in local urban livelihoods. In a following part, we present the evolution of transborder political and economic relationships between Rwanda and Congo, to better situate the recent transformation from a relation of war-making to peace-building. Further, we then zoom in on the different strategies of installing order, from the physical re-tracing of the borderline to the fostering of transborder relations and regional 'co-habitation'. In a last part of this paper, we

⁵ see for example Anderson & O'Dowd (1999); Nugent & Asiwaju (1996); Zeller (2009); Das & Poole (1991), Bennafle 2002).

then analyse the micro-level responses to these strategies and measures, and we evaluate their impact against the **concepts of order and disorder**.

Ethnographic data used in this paper have been collected through extensive fieldwork in Goma (D.R. Congo) as part of a politico-anthropological research on the relation between dynamics of violent conflict and processes of urban transformation in the Eastern Congolese periphery. To present a micro-level analysis, ethnographic research methods were used and information for this paper mainly stems from interviews and focus groups with local actors present and active on the Congolese side of the border (such as transborder traders, smugglers, transporters, show owners, custom officers, policemen, local state authorities etc.).

Situating the asymmetric Goma-Gisenyi borderland: transborder exchange and local livelihood opportunities.

(insert map)

The case study of this paper is the border between the cities of Goma (DR Congo) and Gisenyi (Rwanda). The 'twin cities' of Goma and Gisenyi historically evolved along a strong economic interconnection and interdependence. They share a long history of urbanisation and today these two towns have almost merged into one single urban space. However, the relation between these twin cities is one of asymmetry and inequality (Doevenspeck & Morisho 2011). According to Paul Nugent, border towns often impersonate different kinds of unequal relationships (Nugent 2011). For the case of Goma-Gisenyi, these inequalities clearly reflect the broader regional political and socio-economic asymmetry between the DRC and Rwanda. The evolution of the two countries has occurred in quite different ways and nowadays the two nations are often portrayed as being one another's opposite, with regards to order, development, regulation and security. Inequalities are thus locally translated in different political regimes and regulatory systems, and in different levels of state capacity and security. Goma is a city of around 800.000 inhabitants, its urbanisation is largely the result of informal processes of migration and settlement and its development lacking any form of urban planning. Like all other urban centres in the DRC, dynamics of state failure are not only reflected through this informal urbanisation process but also by its insecurity and general state of '*desordre*'. To the contrast, Gisenyi is a small, clean, well-organised and safe town with approximately 70,000 inhabitants, well equipped with infrastructure (Doevenspeck & Morisho 2011) and where the state is strongly and visibly present on all levels.

One does not need to spend more than a couple of hours at the Goma-Gisenyi border to notice the non-stop dynamic border crossing in both directions. This constant mobility and exchange occurs for very different reasons. Congolese teachers go to Rwanda because of higher salaries, while Rwandan students often go to Congolese schools because of lower costs (Tegera & Johnson 2007). Even for ordinary activities such as checking one's bank account or searching for a good internet connection or even a good party, crossing the border is engrained in daily life. Many Congolese *Goméens* have moved to Gisenyi in the last three years, because insecurity and because of inflation of house prices as a result of the increasing presence of humanitarian organisations and UN staff in Goma. For Rwandans, Goma (where taxes are not lower but are most of the times not entirely paid) offers other economic opportunities than in Rwanda, and attracts many of them to daily transit to the city in search for a job or to do business (Tegera et al. 2007). For all kinds of inhabitants of both cities, the border and transborder activities have become an important element in their daily livelihoods. The border has become a source of opportunity for many Congolese and Rwandan 'borderlanders'. And it is precisely this asymmetric situation and the existence of two separated sets of regulations and political and economic organisation, that creates possibilities and opportunities in border crossings and that as such brings the two cities together in a joined dependence on transborder exchange.

As a transit point between two different business spheres, two different regimes of control and taxation, this urban borderland largely depends on transborder trade, being it 'legal' import- and exportations, or 'illegal' smuggling. As is also the case for many other African borderlands, the Goma-Gisenyi border has been a site for private gain and survival. All kinds of actors are directly or indirectly involved in the exploitation of the border as a source of income. Hoehne and Feyissa have called these dynamics the 'resourcing' of the border, where, through local agency the border is appropriated to generate economic, social and political opportunities (Hoehne & Feyissa 2011).

The most explicit example of how borderlanders in Goma and Gisenyi 'making use' of the border is by small scale transborder trade⁶. "It is not so much the spectacular smuggling of minerals to Rwanda, or the petroleum import fraud that gives meaning to the border for the people who live with it, but their mundane effort to make a living out of it by changing sides with undeclared goods" (Doevenspeck 2011b: 13). This trade occurs through formal as well as informal networks, but as it concerns small amounts of goods, it is often not officially declared and most of the time, taxes that are paid are rather 'bribes' or the outcome of personal negotiation between traders and state agents. It is therefore difficult to make a distinction between 'official' and 'unofficial' when analysing transborder trade in the Goma-Gisenyi borderland⁷. Traders themselves speak of 'fraud' when goods do not pass across the official border posts. Small scale transborder trade, stimulated by different tax systems, is the key source of income for thousands of Congolese and Rwandans. Besides the economic differences, the higher degree of state control in Rwanda is also key. Ambulant vending for example, often performed by female vendors, is forbidden in Rwanda, pushing them across the border to gain a living⁸. As such, for many Rwandan women, the border is a welcome opportunity to escape the economic restrictions of the authorities in Rwanda (Doevenspeck and Morisho 2011: 9).

All day long, the border crossing post *petite barrière* is crowded with Congolese and Rwandan vendors, traders and transporters, crossing in both directions. The main part of the transborder traders are women, who often buy goods in bulk and sell them further in small portions (Banza Bakajika 2008)⁹. While over the *grande barrière* minerals, petrol, cars and constructing materials are imported or exported, the *petite barrière* is the gate for 'portable' goods. Many of these products are foodstuff; from the Congolese side, maize, beans, manioc, palm oil, dried fish, and peanuts are sold on Rwandan markets. From the Rwandan side, meat, bread, milk, tomatoes and fruits are brought to Goma (Lange and Kimanuka 2010). But also other consumer products such as alcohol and cosmetics for example are traded and smuggled over the border.

Livelihood-opportunities emerging from border dynamics are however not only restricted to transborder traders, smuggles or transporters. Besides the trading activities themselves, the activity of managing, policing and controlling this trade offers significant opportunities and financial benefits for particular groups present at the border. This is especially the case on the Congolese side of the border. In the border districts of Goma, one encounters a variety of state-and non state actors that are directly or indirectly involved in the local 'regulation' of transborder trade, almost all of them imposing some form of 'taxation'. Besides the formally recognised custom and taxation services, there are multiple other, informal tax collecting agents present at the crossing posts. In a study carried out by Pole Institute, 30 different agencies involved in 'tax control' were identified at the

⁶ In line with International Alert, this trade is defined as commercial activity generating daily transactional revenues of less than 100 USD by trader (Lange & Kimanuka 2010: 4).

⁷ This is an old discussion, already introduced by Mc Gaffey and Roitman, amongst others. Titeca and de Herdt have used de Sardan's exploratory concept of 'practical norms' to analyse the particular modes of regulation of transborder trade (Titeca & de Herdt 2010).

⁸ Interview ambulant vendor (field notes Gillian Mathys, Goma, May 2010).

⁹ According to a recently published study on small scale transborder trade, 86% of transborder traders are women; 91% of the transborder traders only have finished their primary education and the average age is 27 years (Lange and Kimanuka 2010).

Goma-Gisenyi border in 2007, of which only 4 are have the legal authority to do so (Tegera & Johnson 2007). There is a true complicity between formal and non-formal services involved in the regulation of transborder trade, where not only taxes, but also security, for example, has to be negotiated. Peter Andreas referred to this practice of ongoing negotiation as 'border games' (Andreas 2000). There are multiple players involved in these games in Goma. For migration and custom officers that operate at the crossing posts and for the soldiers patrolling the borderline, complicity in fraudulent transborder trade is the main source of their daily income. Often acting as private agents, state officers negotiate with economic agents for personal benefits. The number of these state officials who are actually involved in, or turn a blind eye on the illicit activities at the border is quite high, especially on the Congolese side. Whereas Congolese border officials seem to be easy to bribe, the Rwandan border guards seem to be generally open for negotiations but also much more aware of observation by their superiors (Doevenspeck 2011b: 14). Next to the state officials; there are the units of the national army and police that patrol on the border on an individual basis, as a survival strategy. Specific cases are the 'démob'¹⁰ and the 'Kajorités'¹¹, who can be found at all times hanging around the borderline. Besides, there are numerous informal 'associations', 'unions', 'cooperatives', that directly or indirectly engage in the 'regulation' of this transborder trade. These structures are an example of the 'gate-keeper livelihoods' (Raeymaekers 2008; Goodhand: forthcoming) that are locally created around networks of transborder trade. They are part of the fluid institutional landscape, where private actors are governing public space. As is also the case for other levels of urban governance, agents can easily change roles, as state agents can for example be smugglers at the same time (Banza Bakajika 2008).

Evolution of the Congo-Rwanda border regime.

Like is the case for all African borders, the tracing of the Congo-Rwanda border was the result of an arbitrary mapping by European Colonial powers. This mapping occurred in the context of conflict and contestation between Germany and Belgium. The conflict over the mapping of the region had direct ramifications for the way colonial space was appropriated. This resulted in a jostle for posts: both German and Belgian (Congo Free State) troops tried to establish posts in the area where the boundary was disputed (Büscher & Mathys, forthcoming). When in 1905 Gisenyi was founded, consequently Goma was erected one year later. Until 1908 (when Congo Free State became the Belgian Congo), the most important meaning of the border was its function of delineating territory. Borders as a tool for controlling people's mobility and for installing regimes of taxation, paramount to the (post-) colonial states, was clearly a later development (Matthys).

In 1910, the border that still is in place nowadays was delineated in an agreement between Belgian, German and British colonizing powers. The border now became more effectively policed and 'controlled'. The physical trace of the border has changed very little since then (Büscher & Mathys, forthcoming). In the light of the first World War, the proximity of competing powers across the border resulted in an tension and increased monitoring of the border. From 1916 onwards, the 'national' border became an internal one, when Rwanda was Ruled by Belgium as part of the mandated territory (Ruanda-Urundi). That the border was 'internal' to the Belgian colonial space meant that the border remained relatively 'open', although its significance as a means to control the movement of the population and their labour was enforced. However, the colonial state proved to have a rather weak capability to effectively control the border, due to the absence of a real policing as well as to the nature of the border sin this region and their influence on the political economy (Matys) Independence of Congo (preceding that of Rwanda) created tensions along the border; as Belgians in Rwanda feared that anti-European sentiments in Congo might spill over into Rwanda. Small fights did take place between Goma and Gisenyi in January 1960. In 1961, a Goma-Gisenyi convention was signed by the respective civil and military authorities under the supervision of the UN. One of the aims of this convention was to solve the problem of the 'zone neutre', the unhabited

¹⁰ Demobilized soldiers

¹¹ From the englis 'causality', war veteran

strip of land running along the border separating Rwanda from Congo. At that time, this neutral zone was littered by 'illegal' Congolese settlements. In some cases these Congolese citizens had passed the border pillars and settled themselves on Rwandan territory.

In post-independence years, during the '70 and the '80s, political transborder relationships were characterised by a general stability, directly linked to the close relationship between Mobutu and the Rwandan president Habyarimana. In 1976, the CEPGL¹² was created by the signing of the Agreement of Gisenyi. This sub-regional organization, aiming at installing security, favoring development, promoting transborder trade and establishing broader economic and political cooperation, was the most important embodiment of regional cooperation between Rwanda and the DRC. The close relationship between Mobutu and Habyarimana was also reflected in rather lax border controls (Doevenspeck 2011). During this same period, informal transborder trade increased tremendously, generated by the porous character of the border, and by the implosion of the formal economy. This informal trade between Zaire and Eastern Africa had a longstanding history (MacGaffey 1991), but became more pronounced during Mobutu's Second Republic (Tull 2005: 88). Vwakyankazi relates the expansion of the informal economy between the seventies and eighties to the proximity of the border. According to him, the amount of smuggled goods was considerable: e.g. up to 60% of coffee produced in 1985-86 would have been marketed outside the formal economy (Vwakyankazi 1991: 50). These trading networks were controlled by some of Kivu's politicians and Rwandan immigrant elites, with the complicity of custom officials and police at several -including Goma's- border posts (Tull 2005; Vwakyankazi 1991).

The first important rupture in the border regime occurred in 1994 during the Rwandan refugee crisis in and around Goma. When the Mobutu regime proved to be unwilling to secure the border, the Rwandan army invaded and started the first Congolese war. The regime changes in Rwanda (1994) and Congo (1997) had a considerable influence on the character of political relations between these two states. Where presidents Habyarimana and Mobutu managed to maintain a stable relationship with regards to common initiatives of border control, this seemed far more difficult when presidents Kagame and Kabila came into power. Regional violent conflict made the mutual relationship more difficult and put initiatives with regards to border control in a completely different daylight. Bilateral relations between Kinshasa and Kigali reached an all-time low during the second Congolese war, but the *de facto* occupation of Eastern Congo by Rwanda and the good relations between Rwanda and the RCD rebel movement (based in Goma) resulted in a flourishing transborder trade in natural resources (connecting Kivu's artisanal mining centres to the international market, via Kigali) that occurred in a situation of virtually no border controls (Doevenspeck 2011).

With the political decline of the RCD-Goma and the Congolese elections of 2006, the degree of Congolese state control over the Congolese-Rwandan border increased (Doevenspeck 2011b). From August 2007 until the end of 2008, the insurgency of Laurent Nkunda's rebel movement CNDP meant a new period of tension on the Goma-Gisenyi border. With Nkunda threatening to take over the city of Goma and with circulating rumours of Rwandan involvement, a general atmosphere of distrust and fear strongly influenced transborder interaction in this urban borderland. Ofcourse, security concerns emerging from this situation also lead to an increased policing and militarisation of the border, on both sides.

But while bilateral political relations worsened, on the local level transborder economic cooperation and trade has persisted throughout decades of war and cycles of violence (Lange & Kaminuka 2010). This has even made some argue that this transborder trade could lay a basis for regional integration and local peace building from below (see for example the plea of Pole Institute and International Alert to encourage local initiatives in this sense¹³). It is quit surprising that in a general context of

¹² Communauté Économique des Pays des Grand Lacs

¹³ REF

armed violence and regional tension, the border has kept its open character. However, violent conflict has influenced local transborder relationships at another level. War has clearly fostered exclusive identities for example, as local inhabitants have been influenced by the strategic mobilisation of identities by political elites, sharpening existing fault lines between Congolese and Rwandans in this border region.

The geopolitical context of conflict, the tense relationship between Congo and Rwanda and the increased militarisation of the border thus had a considerable impact on local urban socio-economic dynamics and the daily interaction across and along the border. The discourses of distrust and suspicion and the anti-Rwandan sentiments circulating in Goma's border districts during moments of conflict well reflect how dynamics of war and violence have magnified the paradoxical perception of the border as a zone of opportunity as well as a zone of disorder and danger. For Goma's inhabitants, the presence of the border and the proximity of Rwanda was no longer only perceived as an advantage; this connection and the permeability of the border were also increasingly experienced as disadvantageous and threatening. Discourses and local narratives on the 'open' nature of the border generating insecurity and 'infiltration' of arms, bandits, spies or other 'negative actors', strongly re-emerged during the Nkunda rebellion¹⁴. Through these discourses, one observes a renewed attention to the borderline as a means of division and separation. The significance of the border is thus continuously changing and sensible to regional tension. It can suddenly shift from a zone of opportunity to a zone of danger, from a point of interaction to a point of exclusion. Finally, this obvious that this ambiguous character is easily being mobilised and politicised by political and military actors.

It is very clear that dynamics of violent conflict reinforced the importance of issues such as protection and security as crucial aspects of the 'management' of the Goma-Gisenyi border. During the Nkunda rebellion, Goma's inhabitants projected their longing for protection on a severe controlled, clear cut border. Although they largely depend on the free interaction between Goma and Gisenyi for their daily livelihoods, they also desperately long for a clear and visible border to feel safe and protected¹⁵. The 'porous' nature of the border that becomes problematic during moments of political and military tension between the DRC and Rwanda, is locally blamed on the weakness of the Congolese state. The incapability of the Congolese state to control its borders is an issue that knows a long history. Not even during the colonial period, the state has been able to fully extend its control over the margins.

Changing border management: Re-installing order in the unruly borderland

The sudden rapprochement between the DRC and Rwanda and the signing of the bilateral agreement between the two presidents in 2009 resulted in a renewed cooperation and a renewed collective border management. Not only on the regional level (by the resume of the CEPGL economic and diplomatic agenda's) but on a more local level as well (by the mutual visits of the respective urban and provincial authorities for example), transborder relations were rebuilt. On the very local level, the transformation from a situation of war-making into a situation of peace-building was translated into a renewed effort to impose order in and control over transborder dynamics, without hindering economic benefits linked to transborder exchange. To achieve an improvement of security conditions, demands a more severe control. To achieve an improvement of economic exchange requires a smooth border crossing. The border management thus followed a dual approach: to reinforce control and security, and at the same time to reinforce transborder trade and the 'open' character of the border.

¹⁴ See Oldenburg (XXX) and Büscher (2011)

¹⁵ Doevenspeck has elaborated on local narratives on the border as a 'gateway for aggressors' (Doevenspeck 2011b).

With regards to security, some measures were pretty straightforward. Next to a reinforcement of the mixed patrol system to patrol the border, in November 2009, a new unit of the Congolese National Police, the '*Police des frontières*' was deployed in Goma. The main objective of this newly created police force was presented as aiming at "*faire face à tous les problèmes des frontières. A surveiller celles-ci pour qu'aucun ennemi ne s'hasarde à approcher notre frontière, à la violer et à agresser même le pays*"¹⁶. With regards to the encouragement of 'free crossing of people and their goods', the most important measure to mention here was the permanent opening of the main crossing point between Goma and Gisenyi (as part of a collective CEPGL strategy to facilitate free transborder circulation). As an expression of the political rapprochement between the DRC and Rwanda, the 'grand barrier' was kept open till midnight from September 2009, and since April 2012 it has been open 24/24 hours¹⁷. The Goma-Gisenyi border functioned as a test-case for other CEPGL borders. Further, aiming at a better regulation of transborder activities, several initiatives were introduced to harmonise procedures of transborder migration and trade. On the Congolese side, this effort to 'harmonisation' (which, as we will observe is an extremely difficult task in the context of an extremely asymmetric borderland) was mainly translated through an attempted centralisation, formalisation and 'uniformisation' of custom and taxation services.

In this part, we will analyse how changes in the border regime and border management have been translated into spatial, political and economic strategies of control and regulation over the Goma-Gisenyi border. Although these strategies are part of an intervention of both the Rwandan and the Congolese state on their shared borderland, we will focus our attention here to dynamics on the Congolese side of the border.

Spatialities of installing order : Redrawing the borderline

With the normalisation of diplomatic relations, came a new attempt to a physical (re)-materialisation the border between Goma and Gisenyi. The geographic strategies of the regulation of space were particularly focused on the specific problems of the '*zone neutre*'. As we already mentioned, the issue of the occupation of the 'neutral' border strip had been a constant problem; illegal settlement already took place in the early '60's. Official documents mention 'Congolese', who had settled beyond the line of border pillars¹⁸. Settlements of this kind increased from both Rwandan and Congolese sides, creating a situation in which at certain places, Goma and Gisenyi seemed to be merged into one urban agglomeration. One could enter a house from the front door in Rwanda to arrive in Congo by its backyard. The physical boundary markers (*bornes-frontières*) disappeared and were sometimes even built upon. This fostered local perceptions and discourses on the increasing blurring of the borderline, discourses that, on the Congolese side, were often associated with Rwanda's hidden intentions to extend its influence in Goma and the region in general by a geographic 'annexation'.

From the 70's onwards, attempts were undertaken to 'normalize' the neutral zone. Numerous mixed 'border commissions' have been set up in order to solve this ambiguous situation by the demolition of the shacks and the reconstruction of the borderline (Büscher & Mathys, forthcoming). These interventions of the re-materialisation of the borderline often involved much discussion amongst the local authorities, as many argued that there was no consensus in local documentation over the exact location of the border. As a Congolese professor one stated on a conference held Goma: "the

¹⁶ General René Abindi on Radio Okapi 01/11/2009 «Goma: une unité de police des frontières désormais opérationnelle» (<http://radiookapi.net/sans-categorie/2009/11/01/goma-une-unite-de-police-des-frontieres-desormais-operationnelle/>) (last access date 28/02/2011).

¹⁷ The secondary crossing post '*petite barrière*' still closes at 6pm.

¹⁸ Division Provinciale de l'Urbanisme et Habitat du Nord-Kivu, "Proces-Verbal de la réunion de la sous-commission technique mixte chargée de la matérialisation de la ligne frontières des bornes etres le Zaire et le Rwanda tenue à Gisenyi du 24 au 25 janvier 1994", referring to 'Convention Goma-Kisenyi du 25 Mars 1961 par les autorités Civiles et Militaires des Villes de Goma en Kisenyi sous la supervision de l'ONU'.

Congolese state doesn't even know where its boundary markers are located, they have to go to Tervuren¹⁹ to find out".

The occupation of the neutral zone is clearly hindering an effective control of the border and transborder mobility. At present, the Rwandan authorities have succeeded to evacuate the zone from their side. From the Congolese side, this is not the case. Parts of the border district of Birere²⁰ spread out into the zone, and local residents are housed here, some of them having 'illegally' constructed, others having obtained legal permissions to do so. This creates the complicated situation where the same authorities that once licenced the occupation (such as the urban department of urbanisation or cadastre, for example) now act to remove this same occupation. Furthermore, not even the very institutions safeguarding the border were sacrosanct: in 1993 it was established that the extension of one of the Congolese customs posts was situated in Rwandan territory²¹. Eviction from the Congolese side thus advances with difficulty and is answered by strong local protest and contestation.

Behind these centralised bilateral attempts to tackle this issue, clearly lies the perception of the borderland as a source of danger and disorder. The particular porous nature of the *zone neutre* facilitates uncontrolled border crossing makes it a perfect sit for small-scale smuggling. Fraudulent transborder traffic takes place through the labyrinths of small pathways crossing private yards, locally referred to as the *makoro*. These loopholes are used by many smugglers to get their merchandise to the other side of the border without paying the multiple and costly taxes collected at the barriers. Congolese and Rwandan smugglers have developed trading networks appropriating these tracks, in informal agreements with local inhabitants and border patrols. Already in the reports of the early '60s is stated how the neutral zone evolves towards "a place where fraudulent and even subversive activities increased which were difficult to control"²² (Büscher & Mathys, forthcoming). Retracing the border and clearing and controlling the neutral zone thus need to be understood as an attempt to tackle the negative outcomes of the permeability of the border.

The joint effort between a Rwanda and the DRC to install order at the border resulted in August 2009 in the onset of the construction of a 12 meter large highway along the border strip; "*Une autoroute de 12 mètres de large devrait s'imposer de part et d'autre de la frontière officielle marquée par des bornes frontières*"²³. The rapprochement between the two regimes on the highest levels, gave these 'mixed efforts' a new élan; "*dans le cadre de la reprise des bonnes relations avec nos voisins, les descentes sur terrain sont exécuter pour mieux surveiller, pour mieux gérer la situation problématique. (...) Cette nouvelle lecture de la frontière est une opportunité d'intervenir*" (Interview chief of DGM, Goma November 2009). The demolition of Congolese illegal dwellings coordinated by the city mayor of Goma, proceeded the construction of this road. However, this operation was called off one year later when the city Mayor got involved in several scandals and was accused of being bribed by wealthy real estate proprietors. **The road has tot been finished.**

¹⁹ Belgian colonial archives.

²⁰ Vibrant neighborhood which stretches itself along the border. Transborder trade from the Congolese side is organised from this neighborhood, thousands of Congolese as well as Rwandese are involved as traders, transporters, in shops and warehouses. Birere is Goma's heart of the informal urban economy.

²¹ Interview Chef de Division de l'Urbanisme (Goma, November 2009).

²² Division Provinciale de l'Urbanisme et Habitat du Nord-Kivu, "Proces-Verbal de la réunion de la sous-commission technique mixte chargée de la matérialisation de la ligne frontières des bornes etres le Zaire et le Rwanda tenue à Gisenyi du 24 au 25 janvier 1994", referring to 'Convention Goma-Kisenyi du 25 Mars 1961 par les autorités Civiles et Militaires des Villes de Goma en Kisenyi sous la supervision de l'ONU'.

²³ Radio Okapi 26/08/2009 «RDC-Rwanda : une autoroute entre Goma et Gisenyi pour délimiter les deux villes» (<http://radiookapi.net/politique/2009/08/26/rdc-rwanda-une-autoroute-entre-goma-et-gisenyi-pour-delimiter-les-deux-villes/>) (last access date 28/02/2011).

This latest effort to materialise the border has further reduced informal transborder smuggling along the 'hidden loopholes' across the neutral zone²⁴. However, it has not resulted in the general decrease of smuggling; as we will see, small scale smuggling at the official crossing posts has increased as a reaction to other measures undertaken by the local authorities to control and regulate transborder activities.

Controlling transborder trade: Centralisation, formalisation, uniformisation.

"A more formalised collaboration should be built between the Goma and Gisenyi authorities, with the goal of fostering the small-scale cross-border trade, in line with the DRC Constitution which grants provincial governors the right to sign agreements with authorities of neighboring country provinces, as far as small-scale cross-border trade is concerned".

Formalisation: to decrease informal taxes. These taxes are a violation of the CEPGL agreements.

On the Congolese side: numerous taxation services (authorized and non-authorized) see list ([International Alert + Report Titecā](#)). See also literature ([Tegera, Trefon 2009, Englebert 2010](#)). State agents underpaid: taxation is their daily income.

One of the measures: *Guichet unique*: a way to centralise and stop confusion internal competition between different taxation services. But this does not solve the problem. To the contrary: informal taxation occurs very effective through the system of the guichet unique (see site Uvira).

Other measures have been undertaken to eliminate the illegal presence of taxation mechanisms on the border. But they persist.

The efforts to put an end to this situation are complicated by the fragmentation of the Congolese state and the instrumentalisation of 'disorder' by different actors. Not only taxation agents hold on this informal systems, a large part of the Congolese traders themselves prefer the informal taxation process in Goma when they compare with the situation in Rwanda. Because on the Congolese side, informal mechanisms enable traders to negotiate. Notion Legitimacy – Legality. So formalisation is not attractive, to several actors involved.

Renewed pressure to implement COMESA 'Simplified Commerce Regime' (RECOs): simplified tariff regime with tax exceptions for certain goods and simplified processing for small scale traders.

COMESA is also supporting small scale trade by providing them information on their rights and technical assistance concerning taxation processes. = creation of COMESA information points . Strategy "Commerce au Service de la Paix". Bureau d'information on the Goma-Gisenyi border. + vision local traders, local reactions.

This initiative needs to be framed in an **increasing attention to small-scale transborder** trade. Renewed attention to this cross-border trade, not only as a means for poverty reduction, but also as a basis for regional integration, stability and peace.

Increasing attention from NGO's and international organisations (mushrooming of studies: see [reports WB, International Alert, UNWomen etc.](#)). This trade is presented as a 'road to peace and integration'.

Rapprochement between Kin & Kgl encouraged transborder trade: a context of peace and stability + more open borders favours economic transaction. (compare situation 2008 Nkunda war, pillages, military harassment etc.).

Stability created favourable conditions for the re-establishment of the local economy and cross-border trade. Increasingly, the dynamics of transborder trade are presented as a basis for regional integration and regional stability.

The role of this trade in peace building: "une nouvelle ère dans les relations bilatérales entre les populations du Rwanda et de la RDC à travers ces échanges commerciaux».

²⁴ Focus group transborder traders (Goma, March 2012); interview staff member International Alert (March 2012). As these activities illegal, we cannot verify the exact evolution of these activities through statistical data.

Achieving regional stability and peace by encouraging cross-border dynamics: fostering of cross-border relations

Studies on potential of transborder trade: presented as "*mechanisme fondamentale pour le renforcement de la stabilité dans la région*". (WB). The publication of numerous reports on small-scale crossborder trade has stimulated local authorities to cooperate. Meetings and seminars organised between local & provincial authorities, different agencies responsible for border control & taxation, and local traders.

Normalisation of bilateral relations between RDC and Rwanda resulted in the 24/24 opening of the border. Apart from an increased control and regulation, at the same time they encourage 'free' circulation of people and they foster 'good relationships' between neighbours. (Reinforcement of CEPGLs protocol on free movement of persons, labour, services etc.).

History of armed conflict has negatively impacted on transborder relations. With the improvement of bilateral relations, tensions between local communities along the border have decreased (refs to interviews March 2012); See Alert: 29: '*We are less and less discriminated against, even by the Congolese population, since the Nkunda affair ended.*' Whenever North Kivu province is insecure, trade between Goma and Gisenyi is blocked, resulting in rising prices. (Alert 29).

However, on the very local level, amongst transborder traders, mutual frustrations persist. There is a strong connection between the two sides of the border through daily cross-border trade, but at the same time there is much division; relations of competition. (see interviews mamans vendeuses, see report Titeca, see International Alert/Apiba).

"There is much frustration of Congolese traders towards the strict rules in Rwanda. Ambulant vending is forbidden, and Congolese women cannot access Rwandan markets. They can only buy and sell through Rwandan cooperatives, and they have to work with fixed prices, they cannot negotiate"

"Congolese female traders are bothered by competition from their female Rwandan counterparts, and the conviction that, when there is a lack of goods in Rwanda, Rwandan traders 'favour their brothers'. Rwandan women feel that they are 'chased from the market' by their Congolese competitors; do not have a market of their own; and are subject to harassment from multiple agencies. Rwandan women have the same feeling of discrimination as their Congolese counterparts, complaining that sometimes Congolese women 'refuse to sell them their merchandise'.

Given the strong interdependence of Goma and Gisenyi markets, female Congolese and Rwandan traders are, indeed, in competition. This explains their sense of discrimination or 'unfair competition'. To this competition – a normal phenomenon in trade anywhere – is added a sense of distrust arising from the recurrent conflicts, which traders tend to express only indirectly (Alert 28).

Cohabitation became a magic word in the donor-discourse on regional integration and peace-building (reflected in numerous publications). It is also a central issue in the discourse on the rapprochement between Kin and Kigali.

Although some of these measures may seem 'superimposed', they are just a reinforcement of existing patterns: "*ces relations de proximité sont réelles, propres et visibles, même si on ne les médiatise pas autant que les relations superficielles entre les autorités*" (Polé).

BUT as stated by NEWMAN: "*And yet there is also something artificial and superimposed about the forced opening of borders and the creation of integrative borderland landscapes (much in the same way that the creation of borders in the first place is often artificial and superimposed upon a geographical or social landscape) (...) The notion that good fences make good neighbours often accurately reflects the disposition of peoples who wish to maintain and perpetuate their difference, even where this is not necessarily accompanied by animosity or outright political exclusion. Not every trans-border region results in the meeting of minds, nor do they necessarily being about a form of transitional hybridity consisting of a mix of characteristics from each side of the border. Not all*"

peripheral regions can, or want to be, transformed into transition zones. This is particularly the case where long-rooted tensions and conflict have existed in a region or between particular groups. In other words, the globalization impact on borders is as geographically and socially differentiated as most other social phenomena – in some places, it results in the opening of borders and the associated creation of transition zone borderlands, while, in others, the borderland remains a frontier in which mutual suspicions, mistrust of the other and a desire to maintain group or national exclusivity remain in place". (Newman 181)

The effort to make a transitional borderland of this frontier zone faces multiple challenges. See report Pole (2011) on 'defi du voisinage'. REAL regional integration and good transborder relationships may emerge from the asymmetrical borderland and may derive from "the use of the border to exploit, legally and illegally, funding opportunities or differentials in wages, prices and institutional norms on either side of the border" (Anderson & O'Dowd: 595).

Analysis: From war making to peace-building: what has changed on the border?

These measures to 'install order' are the outcome of a top-down border management that is part of a broader bilateral approach to regional integration and peace building. However, it has been demonstrated by border studies in general that processes of both regional integration as well as the management of transborder dynamics are never effected through these kind of politically directed decisions alone. Top-down initiatives to regulate and control border dynamics always interplay with bottom-up processes (Das & Poole, 2004). The ways in which states deal with their territories are not only the result of deliberate regime policies (from the centre), but also the result of the ways these areas are structured themselves (Boone, 2003). The centralized approaches to regional integration, peace-building and border management interacts with localized practices of regional integration that takes place from below and occurs in the margins of official institutions (Mbembe). The impact of these localized practices tends to be stronger in a context of a weak state, such as is the case of the DRC. The work of Timothy Raeymaekers has demonstrated that the regulation of the border and transborder dynamics in the DRC is a complex process of authority negotiation between different state- and non state power groups (REF). Dynamics of war have strongly determined the nature of these power negotiations and dynamics of transborder governance as well as the nature of the actors involved. This paper will analyse to what extent the shift in political relations between Rwanda and the DRC 'from war making to peace-building' and the resulting change in border management has impacted on these natures.

Despite these different measures : much remains the same.

First of all: these measures did not change the nature of the local processes of border regulation or border 'governance'. Few changes also in the nature of the ACTORS engaged in local border management. A normalisation of the bilateral relationship & transformation from war to peace did result in a decrease of armed actors present at the border. However, this could not change the 'armed' or 'militarized' character of transborder trade and local dynamics of border regulation (for the impact of war on border governance & role of armed actors see Raeymaekers: transformation of politics of transborder trade, 'protection for sale' 2010; 'Silent encroachment' 2009) At first sight, the disappearance of 'uncontrolled' military units present at the border may seem to imply a better monopoly of the state to regulate/control/install order at the border. But the power networks of Bosco in local border governance for ex. demonstrate that the opposite is true.

For ex.: the attempts to put an end to illegal smuggling by the interventions in the neutral zone resulted in a decrease of smuggling through the 'makoro'. But at the same time, cross-border points were 'openly' controlled by Bosco's entourage engaged in illegal transborder trade.

(Kabila-Kagame deal thus appeared not only to be a failure with regards to the integration of CNDP) (Jason).

The new actors introduced in local border regulation (such as the 'police des frontières') do not make a difference²⁵. They are just another added actor, increasing confusion in responsibilities. No real effort has been made to enforce the coherence between the different actors present at the border. Illustrates the fragmented nature of the Congolese state that largely remains.

More-over, these actors present at the border make every effort to maintain this fragmented nature. There is much local resistance to initiatives of 'installing order', as disorder needs to be maintained: it is the basis resource for the daily livelihoods of many actors involved in transborder transactions & its 'governance'

(Argument in 3 stages):

➔ **Assumed Integration/ 'harmonisation' of the borderland is difficult given its extreme asymmetry**

Efforts to stimulate and regulate transborder dynamics can not really be 'joint' efforts because of the asymmetric situation. The Goma-Gisenyi border forms a break between one of Africa's most internally secure territories, and one of its least. The Rwandan state maintains tight control over cross-border commerce and domestic activities, Eastern DRC remains a site of residual and violent insecurity (Lamarque). Cross-border discrepancies.

We have been focussing on the Congolese side: hybrid forms of governance, role of non-state actors (see Vlassenroot, Raeymaekers, Tull...). Weak performance of the state.

➔ **Asymmetry and discrepancies should be maintained to a certain extent as they are the basis of the 'resourcing' of the border (opportunities in border crossing)**

Assymetry creates opportunities: Economic activities for which the border is the raison d'être. The co-existence of different regulatory regimes on opportunity structures which invites smuggling, unofficial exchange rates an illegal immigration (Baud & van schendel 1997). Adapting ALVATER 'arbitrage economies', border-dependant activities may be seen in terms of arbitrage or the exploitation of differentials in prices, interest rates, exchange rates and share prices over time and space. The cross-border economic relationships generated by arbitrage tend to be limited, sometimes short term and unstable, 'informal' and perhaps illegal. They are dependent on asymmetries, including different market failures or dysfunctionalities on either side of the border. These border-dependent economies can show remarkable flexibility in adapting to short term policy changes and in accommodating to shifts in global an national economies, they are conservative in a deeper sense. They serve to sustain, rather that to undermine or supersede, the state border, feeding off the juxtaposition of different freauntly asymmetrical or mis-matched, politico-administrative institutions, policies and markets, on either side of the border.

Jackson: (borderlands & transformation): Borders are literally an invitation to profit. In the abstract, Congo and Rwanda are two opposed poles interrupted by a strict break; but the border zone completes circuits between them. Borders as sites of 'potential difference' – differences that are both potential (realizable) and potent (powerful). (Jackson: 430). Borders, rigidly separating politico-cultural and economic poles create the incentives, the tensions, to deplete themselves through

²⁵ Example of the *police des frontières*: Their mandate (to secure the borderline & combat illegal immigration and fraud) is in conflict with the customs officer's mandate. (see WB) Since 02/11, customs are authorised to be armed order to protect themselves and also to combat fraud. Pdf stops working at 18h, when the border closes. So they cannot act upon illegal immigration. The creation of this unit seems just another agent present at the border, another group of actors that comes to 'depend' on the border. Increases competition and confusion. Did not take long before this unit was criticized and lost its credibility (see: JUNCTION 30/11/2009 "Panique à la Grande barrière : Un officier de la police des frontières bloque un véhicule dans la zone neutre pour trouver son compte").

transborder circuits and flows.

Borderlanders are strategically instrumentalising these asymmetries combining opportunities from both sides. Navigation. Not only traders, but also all kinds of 'gatekeeper' livelihoods. Initiatives to integration, uniformisation, cooperation, thus do not always work out in an advantageous way. They may restrict opportunities emerging from asymmetries.

→ **Disorder needs to be maintained as a basis resource in local livelihoods at the border**

PhD: *"Ce qui nous amène à faire des affaires à Goma, c'est l'opportunité dans le désordre, si je peux dire. Ici t'es en mesure de faire des choses qui ne seront jamais possible à l'autre côté. Pour faire de l'argent, il vaut mieux Goma. Ici il y a plus de possibilités, et surtout on ne paie pas trop d'impôts. Le business rend mieux ici, et avec un peu d'argent tu peux commencer tout sortes de business ici (...). Ici c'est le désordre, mais pour les affaires, c'est bien au fait. Il faut seulement les connections et le courage. (...) Tout est à négocier ici, ce qui n'est pas le cas à l'autre côté"* (Interview Rwandese trader, Goma November 21 2009) in: (Büscher 2011)

This statement clearly points at what Chabal and Daloz have called the 'instrumentalisation of disorder' (Chabal & Daloz 1999) and the nature of disorder as a resource of opportunities. For the quoted traders, 'disorder' is in the first place defined by the weakness of the state to control and survey economic transactions and the possibility to corrupt. Goma, as a 'deregulated zone' thus appears as a space of vibrant profiteering (Comaroff & Comaroff 2006: 6). Deregulation not only stimulated economic innovation in Goma, it also led to a profound transformation of the economic city profile, boosting alternative sectors of profit and commercial activities in which, when having the right connections, large amounts of money could be made rapidly.

Re-start from the concept of order/disorder in the borderland. (Chabal & Daloz, Roitman, Das & Poole). The failed attempts by official authorities to define, control and secure the border, point at the inability to 'capture' and regulate the borderland from below ('uncontrolled' nature is f.e. illustrated by the issue of the neutral zone).

However, the 'uncontrolled' character of the border and the borderland in general, is not only a matter of the weakness of the state. Firm border control between Goma and Gisenyi simply cannot be achieved in a context where many people, -even those who are responsible to control, secure and regulate it- depend themselves on this 'uncontrolled' character of the border. The state therefore plays an ambiguous role in both 'control' and 'exploitation' of transborder trade (Buscher & Mathys, forthcoming).

It has often been pointed out in borderstudies that many states in Africa are engaged in processes of either co-opting or circumscribing mobility in their margins, as a means to attempt the pacification of a 'disorganized' borderland. But as Bennafla and other scholars have argued, this same disorganization in the margins could also be seen as a mode of governmentality, something from which the state can benefit (Bennafla 2002; Goodhand, 2009).

For those actors present at the border who need to supervise the measures to install order, ending this disorder is disadvantageous. All interventions (formalization, centralization and uniformisation), will lead to the loss of 'livelihoods' of the state services depending on the border.

People have not only come to cope with disorder, they have made a living out of it. They exploit it. Taxation is a good example.

We observe all kinds of ways to circumvent the implementation of the measures as described above.

Report Titeca: Efforts to intervene in this situation are blocked off. They are complicated because of the fragmented nature of the Congolese state, and the instrumentalisation of disorder by the implicated actors.

Examples: (interviews Maria & APIBA, focusgroup traders, interview DGM).

- Local reaction to decree to reduce number of agencies involved in taxation on the border

Early draft – NOT FOR CIRCULATION without explicit permission by the author

- Local reactions to the proposition of the 'guichet unique' system.

Link back to actuality : Perspectives today: the end of a bilateral peace-agreement ? From peace-building to war-making again?

CEPGL: trois projets intégrateurs pour rapprocher les populations

avril 21, 2010, | Dernière mise à jour le 21 avril, 2010 à 4:55 | sous [Économie](#), [Nord Kivu](#), [Sud Kivu](#).

L'implantation d'un marché frontalier, l'amélioration de la desserte en électricité et la coordination du tourisme sont les trois objectifs retenus lors la rencontre des gouverneurs du Rwanda, de la RDC et du Burundi, tenue en début de semaine à Gisenyi, ville rwandaise frontalière du Nord-Kivu.

Depuis Gisenyi, ville rwandaise frontalière de la RDC, de petits commerçants viennent ravitailler quotidiennement Goma en fruits, viande, pain et autres denrées alimentaires.

En revanche, les petits commerçants de Goma ne bénéficient pas des mêmes avantages. Ils se plaignent de certaines restrictions imposées par les services rwandais de migration.

Selon Gabriel Toyi, un projet permettant de contourner ce défi est en cours de matérialisation:

Nous sommes en train de penser à la mise sur pied d'un marché frontalier qui sera installé en zone neutre entre Gisenyi et Goma.

Par ailleurs, le secrétariat exécutif de la CEPGL milite en faveur d'une meilleure desserte en énergie des villes frontalières.

Des études de faisabilité sur la réhabilitation des centrales hydroélectriques de Ruzizi se clôtureront à la fin avril. Plus de 300 mégawatts seront disponibles.

Ils viendront s'ajouter aux 100 autres mégawatts qui seront produits par l'exploitation commune du gaz méthane du lac Kivu. Une bouffée d'oxygène pour des populations confrontées à de récurrents problèmes d'électricité, selon la CEPGL.

rapprochement permettra non seulement d'accroître les activités commerciales transfrontalières, mais aussi de rapprocher les peuples.

Les frontières de Ruzizi 1 et 2, Kavinvira-Gatumba-Bugarama, resteront ouvertes après une évaluation de la phase expérimentale attendue pour le trimestre prochain.

est l'une des résolutions issues de la réunion des ministres de la Défense du Congo, du Rwanda et du Burundi vendredi à Goma, à l'invitation du secrétariat exécutif de la CEPGL. En effet, les ministres de la Défense des trois pays membres de la Communauté économique des pays des Grands Lacs, CEPGL, ont élaboré vendredi à Goma, un projet sur un cadre permanent de dialogue et de concertation en matière de défense et de sécurité mutuelle entre leurs Etats, rapporte radiookapi.net

cette réunion de la commission de défense et de sécurité v

signent le rapport final. Les résolutions issues de cette rencontre se focalisent, dans leur ensemble, sur le renforcement de la sécurité et consolidation de la paix dans la sous-région, conformément aux objectifs de cette réunion.

Leurs Excellences Messieurs les ministres ont mis en place un cadre permanent de dialogue et de concertation des pays membres en matière de défense. Ils ont instruit le secrétariat exécutif d'élaborer un projet de protocole de défense mutuelle à leur soumettre rapidement

the effective re-launching of the Economic Community of the Countries of the Great Lakes (CPGL), which was ratified in Goma on 6 August 2009 during the first bilateral summit between the two heads of State since the 1996 war (Crisis group)

Greg Queyranne, 2012 "Enemies to Allies: The dynamics of Rwanda-Congo Military, Economic and Diplomatic Relations", The Journal of Pan African Studies, 4: 10 (305-312).

Early draft – NOT FOR CIRCULATION without explicit permission by the author

Achille Mbeme 'At th Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality and Sovereignty in Africa. In: Beissinger Mark R. & Crawford Young: Beyond State Crisis: Postcolonial Africa and Post-soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective.

TRANS-BORDER SECURITY DILEMMA IN WEST AFRICA: THE PROLIFERATION OF TRADE IN ARMS AND EMERGING TERRORIST NETWORKS*

By

Osarhieme Benson Osadolor, PhD

Department of History & International Studies

University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

Email: osbenosadolor@fulbrightmail.org

Abstract

Across West Africa's international boundaries, the regional efforts in controlling arms deal and illegal trafficking in weapons has yielded little or no results. One consequence of this dilemma is that the proliferating trade in arms had provoked and prolonged armed conflicts and civil wars, and undermined to a great extent, peace initiatives in resolving such conflicts. The trans-border smuggling of illegal arms had raised the issue of regulation and shipment of arms to West Africa. This paper provides a critical appraisal of the contentious issues in the negotiation of a legally binding international instrument to combat illicit trafficking in firearms, which had aided groups to engage in violent conflicts. In complex relations, this problem connects trans-border security issues in West Africa with the search for peace, stability and security in the region, not least of which is the concern for post-conflict peace-building and the processes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). While this in itself illustrates the security challenges, of greater concern is the emerging terrorist networks, their training bases and the cross-border nature of conflicts. Exploiting the porous borders of West Africa, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb has spread its operations to the Sahel, including Nigeria where fears have been heightened by the high impact terrorist attacks of Boko Haram.

KEY WORDS: West Africa, arms transfers, trans-border security, conflicts, disarmament

Introduction

In the West African sub-region, over ten million illicit weapons are estimated to be in circulation.¹ This has destabilized the region by sparking, fuelling and prolonging conflicts as witnessed in the outbreak of civil conflict and wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau,

* Paper presented at the University of Edinburgh, Centre of African Studies 50th Anniversary International Conference on "Cutting Edges and Retrospectives", Edinburgh, UK, 5-8 June 2012.

Cote d'Ivoire, Tuareg revolts in Mali and Mali and the Niger Delta insurgency in Nigeria. The complexity of the security challenge is such that the arms deal and illegal trafficking in weapons to a great extent, has fostered a culture of violence, undermined peace initiatives, obstructed relief programmes, exacerbated human rights abuses and hampered development in the region. The arms scourge illustrates the nature of the trans-border security dilemma in West Africa, and the pursuit of policies in the negotiation of a legally binding international instrument to combat illicit trafficking in firearms.

Small arms and light weapons are the vectors of violence that undermines public security. Their proliferation often results in the emergence of several armed groups that have been linked with escalating armed violence in the sub-region. Such armed violence ranges from ethnic and religious conflicts to resource-driven conflicts and separatist agitations. Exploiting the porous borders of West Africa, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb has spread its operations to the Sahel, including Nigeria where fears have been heightened by the high impact terrorist attacks of Boko Haram, an Islamic sect.² Boko Haram is fighting against Western-styled education, and has called for the imposition and strict application of Sharia law throughout Nigeria. The sect began its in the first year of the 21st century and operates on a doctrine known as "maitasine" based on an extreme interpretation of the Quran in which violence is an acceptable means of dealing with non-believers of their doctrine. Since 2009, Boko Haram has turned Nigeria into Iraqi, Afghan, Yemeni or Somali-styled insurgency.

In order to best understand the trans-border security dilemma in West Africa, this paper focuses first, on the trade, transfers and proliferation of arms in the sub-region; discusses the conflicts and trans-border security dilemma; articulates the position of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the Moratorium and Convention on small arms and light weapons; reviews the trend in the emergence of trans-border terrorist networks; and examines the efforts in effective arms regulation and control. The aim is to provide a critical appraisal of the contentious issues in the security politics of West Africa that serves to illustrate the need for a common intervention by member states of ECOWAS for disarmament. The paper concludes with reflections on the nexus between security and sustainable development in the sub-region

and therefore, the imperative of the interventionist actions for a legally binding agreements and instruments in combating illicit trafficking in arms.

The Trade, Transfers and Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa

The end of the cold War has been associated by R. T. Naylor with the proliferation of small arms in several countries, including West Africa.³ According to him, the need to dispose off Cold War weapon surpluses and expansion of production capacity led to a glut of weapons in arms-producing countries and this in turn, led to the “desire to promote arms exports as a means of earning foreign exchange.”⁴ The new access to weapons by some non-state actors transformed erstwhile latent tensions into violent conflicts. Since West Africa was not a target for the proxy wars of the superpowers and did not witness the large scale distribution of arms to cold War satellite states, it can therefore be assumed that the majority of arms in circulation in the sub-region are relatively new and a product of post-Cold War dynamics.⁵

There is a “common understanding that proliferation of conventional arms contributes to human rights violations, breaches of international humanitarian law, to intensifying and prolonging armed conflict, and threatens national and regional security.”⁶ Yet, the arms trade is interesting because it is where foreign policy concerns such as security, human rights, and international order interact with economic concerns such as trade, jobs, and profits.⁷ The nature of the interaction raises issues that are related to the arms market, the regulation of supply and demand at the national and international levels. A central issue is how the regulation of arms export controls the trade, transfers and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

What is crucial is the trans-border security dilemma in West Africa of the illegal trafficking and illegal transfers of small arms and light weapons and their illicit proliferation. A United Nations study has shown that “small arms have a disproportionate impact – while accounting for only one-fifth of the global arms trade, they maim and kill far more than any other conventional weapons.”⁸ In the first decade of the post-Cold War era, Guinea-Bissau, “with a long history of being a reservoir for leftover Soviet weapons, is a key source of illegal trafficking into conflict zones in the sub-region.”⁹ There are other sources of trafficking which occur in such manner that illicit purchases and transfers are done through the alteration and falsification of

genuine end-user certificates, insurance and other forms of documentation and flight diversions either in collusion with governments or without their knowledge.¹⁰

Other sources of arms proliferation have been identified as small and light weapons designated for peacekeeping and peace support operations; through Private Military companies (PMCs) providing security in conflict zones; government arms stockpiles; arms collected during disarmament and demobilization; the porous borders of West Africa allows for easy transportation of arms; and finally local manufacture may give rise to proliferation.¹¹ There are other ways that may be investigated in which small arms and light weapons get into hands of non-state actors.

Conflicts and Trans-Border Security Dilemma in West Africa

Armed conflicts in Africa have expanded the frontiers of the gun trade. The exacerbation of the diffusion of firearms into the civilian domain,¹² led to the upsurge in armed violence in the late 1980s and the 1990s in West Africa and the outbreak of conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This period witnessed small-scale insurgencies in Guinea, Senegal and Mali and other theatres of conflicts in the sub-region. Since the borders of West Africa are porous, this has been exploited by insurgents, with its implication for trans-border security in the sub-region. Available evidence indicates that the millions of small arms and light weapons in circulation in West Africa are unprecedented in the history of the sub-region.¹³ What has accounted for this is that inter-regional transportation of arms is relatively easy once the arms are in the sub-region. The arms are either concealed in containers labeled in legal cargo as building materials or smuggled across borders using illegal routes.

Although, international cooperation has not been lacking in dealing with the problem of illicit proliferation of small arms,

The Security Challenge: ECOWAS Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons

A significant step in confronting the problem of arms deal and proliferation in West Africa was the consideration and adoption of ECOWAS Moratorium. Member States admitted that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons constituted a destabilizing factor in the sub-region and a threat to the peace and security of the people. The 21st session of the Authority of Heads of

State and Government in ECOWAS adopted a three year Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons on 30 October 1998¹⁴ and was renewable at the end of that period.¹⁵ This was renewed on 1 November 2001 for another three-year period.¹⁶ The moratorium specifically provided for the establishment of a national commission drawn from state and civil society organizations to get involved in the supervision of the processes of disarmament.

The ECOWAS initiative was the first process of developing a mechanism to deal with weapons proliferation in West Africa. Indeed, the moratorium was the first of its kind in Africa.¹⁷ With hope on the political will and commitment of Member States, the moratorium was expected to evolve as a strategic framework for disarmament. But as the degree of compliance by Member States has varied since 1998, the moratorium had little impact on the proliferation of small arms. First, this is because the moratorium was voluntary and had no legal enforcement. Second, the long-term strategy for eliminating illegal stocks of small arms and light weapons was dependent on the effectiveness of the national commission in each member state. A more coordinated position by ECOWAS leaders to combat the illegal trade in small arms led to the promulgation of ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Material in 2006.¹⁸ It was ratified and came into force in 2009 as a significant milestone in enhancing regional security through concerted action in combating the scourge of arms proliferation. This was followed by the meeting of Ministers of Defence and Security in 2010 to review and adopt the plan of action for its implementation.¹⁹

The chapters and articles of the ECOWAS Convention redefined the institutional capacity of the sub-regional body in addressing small arms, light weapons, ammunition and related material issues. The adoption of the Convention also led to the establishment of the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP) to build the capacities of the 15 member states,²⁰ in combating the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms in West Africa. Within the limits of its activity, ECOSAP had succeeded in facilitating the establishment of National Commissions of Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (NATCOM) and provided them with the support for capacity-building and resource mobilization for a coordinated regional action and linkages with international partners.

In the ECOWAS Convention, the regulation and control of small arms acquisition, possession or use within the territories of the member states depended solely on the guarantee of the West African governments. While this was an attempt to seek the commitment and political will of member states, it also put on them the obligation not to ensure that small arms and light weapons are transported through their sea, land or air space into other territories. This also required the member states to establish and maintain an effective system for the transit and transfer purposes of all import and export of small arms and light weapons. However, article 5 of the Convention sets out the detailed requirements for an exemption request, including the quantity, exact types duly marked under the ECOWAS classification system, supplier details, number and period of shipments as well as transportation type, transit locations, end user and the end use to which the arms will be put to use.²¹

Trans-Border Terrorist Networks

The spread of operations of the Al-Qaeda terror network to West Africa was once speculated and security experts remained doubtful about the speculation. New evidence point to the presence of terrorist groups and networks in the sub-region.²² However, new groups are emerging with political activity that relies on violence or the threat of violence to achieve their ends. This form of armed violence relates to the use of terrorism as a form of psychological warfare.²³ Of particular interests are those in Nigeria and Mali. In Nigeria, Boko Haram does appear to be exhibiting certain characteristics of the global terrorism franchise, among them the release of video messages, the use of suicide bombers, attacks on symbolic targets over the past year – such as the United Nations headquarters in Abuja and continuing attacks on churches.²⁴

Before the Boko Haram uprising, in 2005 security analysts in Washington, DC, United States of America began to argue that the Sahel region was the newest front in Islamic terrorism of the presence of a group called al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM); since then the American government has pledged roughly \$120-150 million a year toward fighting terrorism in the Sahelian nations of Algeria, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali and Chad, mainly in the form of training security forces and military exercises.²⁵ Evidence now point to the connections between Boko Haram and AQIM and al-Shabab in Somalia.

The Tuareg uprising in Mali since January 2012, coordinated by the Tuareg-dominated National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA) and which has thrown Mali into its deepest crisis since independence, is linked to the Sahelian terror network of AQIM or al-Qaeda. AQIM has been using northeastern Mali as the home base and safe haven since 2008, while carrying on the business of kidnapping Westerners, trafficking arms, drugs and people and keeping the southern Sahara in a state of lockdown.²⁶ The Tuareg rebels are also fuelled by weapons stolen from Muammar Gaddafi's arsenals in Libya, and which has turned the uprising as the most far-reaching in the 50-year-long Tuareg struggle for self-determination. However, the link with AQIM connects Algerians, Malians, Senegalese, Mauritians and Nigerians who are split into cells.

Effective Arms Regulation and Control

The sub-regional efforts through ECOWAS Moratorium and Convention have been innovative and pragmatic attempts in arms regulation and control. The efforts have been strengthened through linkages with international partners and processes. In 2001 the United Nations Protocol which made illegal transfers of small arms and light weapons a crime reinforced the regional effort to combat the scourge. The adoption of a United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA) in July 2001, and which was followed with the United Nations Protocol against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition (the Firearms Protocol), and of course, the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) have attempted to control the proliferation of small arms. In 2009, the member states of the United Nations agreed on the need for a global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as an interventionist action for effective arms regulation and control.

In spite of this, the quest for effective arms regulation and control within the sub-region stands as a reminder of two major political truths. First, the levels of international support for all agreements on arms deal. Second, the effective cooperation among member states of ECOWAS that will contribute immensely to the success of the Convention. This assertion is based on the fact that the fight against the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the West African sub-region is such that no single nation could ever regulate and control the trade, transfer and proliferation of small arms.

Since the African continent is among the worst affected by armed violence, security analysts agree that small arms and light weapons contribute to igniting and fuelling the conflicts. After a revisit of the arms trade and proliferation, Robert Muggah identifies a host of nascent approaches to sustained reductions in small arms availability.²⁷ He points out that the rash of multilateral and bilateral conventions and agreements seeking to control illicit arms rapidly emerged from the late 1990s onward and most of these were of a ‘political’(non-binding) rather than a ‘legal’ (binding) nature.²⁸ Similarly, the various mediation and peace agreements in West African conflicts gave rise to disarmament and DDR programmes, which were intended to reduce, regulate and control the proliferation of small arms. While reducing the number of arms in circulation, such programmes provided for reintegration and reduction in defence budgets. Different groups are intensifying the need for global controls of small arms and light weapons.²⁹ This is because irresponsible arms transfers undermine development goals.³⁰

Conclusion

The regulation and control of small arms and light weapons is undoubtedly the nexus between security and sustainable development in West Africa. The security challenge posed by the menace in the trade, transfers and proliferation of firearms necessitated the adoption of ECOWAS Moratorium in 1998 and its Convention in 2006 for its small arms control programme. The misuse of arms had occurred in the contexts that combined warfare and crime. In coordinating their efforts in the regulation of the arms deal, member states of ECOWAS will need to act in concert with other regional and global mechanisms to strengthen the enforcement of arms treaty agreements.

Notes

¹ See for example, www.disarmament2.un.org:8080/cab/salw.htm.

² See for example, Iro Aghedo and Oarhe Osumah (2012), “The Boko Haram Uprising: how should Nigeria respond?” *Third World Quarterly*, 33:5, pp.853-869.

³ R. T. Naylor (2001), “The Rise of the Modern Arms Black Market and the Fall of Supply-Side Control,” in Williams, Phil and Dimitri Vlassis (eds.) *Combating Transnational Crime: Concepts, Activities and Responses*. Oxford: Frank Cass, pp. 209-36.

⁴ Ibid. p.216.

⁵ Linda Darkwa (2011), *The Challenge of Sub-Regional Security in West Africa: The Case of the 2006 ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons*. Discussion Paper 69. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, p.11.

⁶ Hilde Wallacher and Alexander Harang (2011), *Small Arms but Lethal: Small Arms Ammunitions and arms trade Treaty*. Oslo: PRIO, pp. 12-13.

⁷ Paul Levine and Ron Smith (2000), "Arms Export Controls and Proliferation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, p. 885.

⁸ IRIN humanitarian news and analysis, May 2008, <http://www.irinnews.org> (accessed 23 April 2012)

⁹ Godwin Onuoha (2006), "Contextualizing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Local and global intersections", *African Security Review*, 15, 2, p.111. See also Nils Duquet (2009), "Arms Acquisition Patterns and the Dynamics of Armed Conflict: Lesson from the Niger Delta." *International Studies Perspectives* 10, pp.169-185.

¹⁰ Darkwa (2011), *The Challenge of Sub-Regional Security in West Africa*, pp. 14-15.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 15-17.

¹² Abdel-Fatau Musah (2002), "Privatization of Security, Arms Proliferation and the Process of State Collapse," *Africa Development and Change* 33, 5, p.917. For a major contribution to current understanding of the formation and operation of security assemblages in a global world, see Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams (2011), *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹³ Small Arms Survey (2002), *Counting the Human Cost*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴ The adoption of the moratorium was followed by the acceptance of the responsibility of a code of conduct for its implementation.

¹⁵ ECOWAS Declaration of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, 31 October 1998.

¹⁶ ECOWAS Document, "Implementing the Small Arms Moratorium: The Next Steps." Report presented in Abuja, Nigeria, February 2000.

¹⁷ Mohammed Coulibaly (2008), "From Moratorium to a Convention on Small Arms: A Change in Politics and Practices for the 15 Member countries of the Economic Community of west African States (ECOWAS)," in *From Poverty to Power: How Active Citizens and Effective States Can change the World*. London: Oxfam International, p. 1.

¹⁸ ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, 2006, http://www.iag-agi.org/bdf/docs/ecowas_convention_small_arms.pdf (accessed 23 April 2012)

¹⁹ ECOWAS Commission (2010), *Meeting of Ministers of Defence and Security to Review and Adopt the Plan of Action for the Implementation of ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Exemption Request Form to the Convention*. Abuja: ECOWAS, Meeting Report.

²⁰ Benin, Burkina-Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

²¹ Darkwa (2011), *The Challenge of Sub-Regional Security in West Africa*, p.23.

²² See for example, Amado Philip de Andres (2008), *West Africa under Attack: Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism as the New Threats to Global Security*. UNISCI Discussion Papers 16, pp. 203-228.

²³ As at 1990, statistics revealed that there were over 600 terrorist groups worldwide and the number may have increased or decreased to the present day. See David E. Long (1990), *The Anatomy of Terrorism*. New York: Free Press. See also Cindy Combs (1997), *Terrorism in the Twenty-Five Century*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall; Charles W. Kegley Jr. (ed.) 1990, *International Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes and Controls*. New York: St. Martin's Press; Claire Sterling (1981), *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism*. New York: Holt, and Marius H. Livingston et al (eds.) 1978, *International Terrorism in the Contemporary World*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

²⁴ *BBC Focus on Africa* (London, UK), April-June 2012, p.10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁷ Robert Muggah (2010), "Rethinking small arms control in Africa: It is time to set an armed violence reduction agenda:", *Conflict, Security & Development*, 10:2, pp. 217-238.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 219.

²⁹ Control Arms Campaign (2006), *Arms Without Borders: Why a globalised trade needs global controls*. See www.controlarms.org

³⁰ Oxfam International (2008), *Shooting Down the MDGs: How irresponsible arms transfers undermine development goals*. Oxfam Briefing Paper. www.oxfam.org

Integration through Conflict in the Borderlands of the Great Lakes

Aidan Russell

Introduction

The Great Lakes region today is framed by two overlapping narratives of cross-border interrelations. Regional conflict, including the marked prevalence of alliances between states and neighbouring non-state actors in the violent pursuit of congruent goals, has characterised much of the last two decades. Conversely, half the region is becoming increasingly invested in formal, economic and political regional integration in the shape of the East African Community (EAC); cooperation in the streamlining of border regulations, keeping crossing posts open 24 hours a day to facilitate movement across the region, is one of the most apparent intimations of this effort, a practical action targeted at increasing economic integration that may, perhaps, be expected to have beneficial consequences for social integration between nations. Between conflict and cooperation the region is pulling in two ways.

These are the topics that dominate discussion of the area in most academic and policy circles today. The history of this broad stretch of central African territory, the justification for its conceptualisation as a region that might or ought to be integrated, is less considered, and when it is, vital holes remain in its study. Jean-Pierre Chrétien in particular has sought to explain the history of the ‘invention’ of the Great Lakes, linking the pre-colonial patchwork of culturally-related kingdoms to the current crises and developments, through the transformations of, primarily, Belgian and British colonialism.¹ Yet even in this valuable synthesis of much of his life's work, one period in particular is exposed as strikingly under-appreciated. The immediate post-colonial years of the early 1960s present a set of events, dynamics and ideas that closely match issues at stake today. But beyond the dutiful acknowledgement of the significance of the regional impact of the Rwandan Civil War (1959-1962) on the cataclysms of the 1990s, discussion of this period tends to revert to resolutely nation-bound analysis; above all, the Congo Crisis as an internal disaster tends to overshadow any thought for its neighbours or close consideration of its regional elements. The 1960s were the fulcrum on which the region turned, when early ideas or sentiments of integration were tentatively formed and lost, when the stage and practice of regional violence first emerged in its modern form. A better understanding of the nature of and

¹ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *L'Invention de l'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Une histoire du XXe siècle* (Paris: Karthala, 2010).

potentialities for regional integration across the close-set borders of the Great Lakes in this period is essential both for insight into the re-creation of this area as a fractious, yet discernible sub-region, and for the perspective it casts on the more recent events that have absorbed the energies and attentions of so many actors, local, national and international, in recent years.

The start of a much larger project, this paper will explore the informative circumstances and remarkable detail that is made available when the most ignored country of the region, Burundi, is taken as a stage that reveals a great deal of the regional pressures and initiatives that created the Great Lakes. In the turmoil of the early years of Independence, this patch of central Africa emerged as a region that was fundamentally defined by the borders that marked its centre.

Integrating Dreams

The premise of the destructions of the 1960s was a tangle of integrationist dreams similar to those pursued today. Ruanda-Urundi was intended for continued union at Independence in 1962, as not only the UN and the Belgian administration saw such cooperation as essential for the economic survival of the two tiny countries, but prominent voices internally endorsed this view in the late 1950s; 'I cannot imagine a Rwanda and a Burundi surviving on their own with their meagre budget,' argued an editorial in the Usumbura-based *Temps nouveaux d'Afrique* in 1959; 'Let us unite, the Banyarwanda and the Barundi, and why not the Congolese as well, to build our Central Africa - and from there, the whole of Africa'.² Even the passionately nationalist Uprona party in Burundi included a hope for continued confederation in its earliest documents.³ The slightly half-hearted inclusion of the Congolese in the *Temps nouveaux* exhortation was indicative of the weaker ties to the larger colony, but considerable movement encouraged by colonial policies had indeed established the possibility of a demographic drive towards integration; large numbers of Rwandans and Barundi travelled each year to the mines of Katanga and the fields of Uganda, with many settling in these regions as time went on and forming their own local political unions.⁴ Meanwhile, the Congolese who settled in Usumbura claimed to

² MB, "Aurons-nous un Ruanda-Urundi ou un Ruanda et un Burundi?," *Temps nouveaux* (1959).

³ Uprona, "Manifeste de l'Uprona," *Archives africaines*, Brussels (AAB), BUR 65 (1959).

⁴ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Des Sédentaires devenus migrants," *Cultures et Développement* 10, no. 1 (1978): 71-101; Alfred Claeys-Bouuaert, "Letter to Resident: *Association des Banyarwanda-Barundi (Ouganda)*" AAB, BUR 66 (1954).; Kabanguka P, and Nyirahuku A, "Association des

represent up to two thirds of the entire African population of the city, the economic hub of Kivu established in the territory of Urundi. Seeking to safeguard their own interests, representatives of these Congolese workers and businessmen appealed to the brotherhood of the Barundi by speaking of '*la grande famille belge*' of which they were all a part.⁵ Even tentative thoughts of a proto-EAC were entertained. The first political party in Burundi, the *Union nationale africaine du Ruanda-Urundi* (Unaru), explicitly presented itself as the local cadre of the Tanganyika African National Union, militating for Independence and Union, while Uprona and its iconic leader Prince Louis Rwagasore actively presented themselves as the missing link between Nyerere and Lumumba; propaganda for both TANU and MNC-Lumumba were discovered being distributed in the urban centres of Burundi.⁶ Though otherwise a relatively supine political figure, even the mwami (king) of Burundi spoke favourably of the possibility of his nation one day 'forming a union that may include other neighbouring states'.⁷

These shoots of integration failed, however. Some were weak to begin with; the mwami's image of a regional union was in fact expressed as a vague possibility for the future that was intended to argue against the enforced, immediate union with Rwanda. Unaru, dominated by Muslim Swahili-speakers who lived in the urban *Centres extra-coutumières*,⁸ struggled to extend their message to a rural Burundi that tended to perceive them as foreigners, while events and political convenience soon drove Uprona to insist loudly on the separate independence of the Kingdom. The Congolese appeal in Usumbura was met with resentment by a Barundi population who were excluded from the economic success of the *Tutelle* capital, and saw it rather as a bulkhead of Congolese occupation, a border city that entailed the encroachment of Congo onto the ancient territory of Burundi. The attempts at integration in this

ressortissants du Ruanda-Urundi, Bukavu," *AAB*, BUR 66 (n.d.).

⁵ Le Cercle du Progrès, "L'Avenir politique du Ruanda-Urundi et les Congolais," *Temps nouveaux* (1959).

⁶ For example, "BI 188," (*Kitega*) *AAB*, BUR 65 (1960).

⁷ "Chronologie Politique 1959," *AAB*, BUR 74 (1960).

⁸ Areas excluded from the structure of 'traditional authority' endorsed by the Belgian administration, and subject to direct rule on the model of the urban areas of Congo; a number of these centres, while often thought of as explicitly colonial creations, in fact had their roots in similar pre-colonial policies, when the nineteenth-century kings of Burundi sought to restrict and control the movement of Swahili merchants in their territory. See Joseph Gahama, *Le Burundi sous administration belge: La période du mandat, 1919-1939* (Karthala, 1983); Emile Mworoha, *Histoire du Burundi: Dès origines à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Hatier, 1987).

urbanised border strip rather exacerbated separate nationalisms. Disdainful comparisons of regional history and experience were raised to denigrate the perceived Congolese arrogance; Burundi was an ancient nation, for which Belgium was a tutor, while Congo was an artificial conglomeration, made by the 'paintbrush of the Whites', for which Belgium was a coloniser.⁹ The Congolese demanded to be given the assurances that Europeans had received in Congo, that their goods and businesses would remain their own, and a space opened up for them on the national scene; 'We can only wonder at their audacity, which verges on impudence,' wrote some Barundi. 'Have they invested capital in this country, or do they consider themselves a necessary cog in its wheels? Do they believe that their departure will change a thing?' Of course, the argument went on, 'Burundi is known for its legendary hospitality; it will not refuse them sanctuary if they show themselves worthy of it...'¹⁰

However, the key element that rendered the initial ideas of integration impossible was, indeed, the Rwandan Civil War. First horrified at the ethnic violence that they considered impossible, inapplicable to their own society of hutu, tutsi, twa and ganwa princes, then disgusted by the idea of abolishing a monarchy, so passionate were they for their own, the Barundi were swiftly united against the idea of unity with Rwanda. Little interest similarly emanated from the new republican government to the north, scarcely open to the idea of federating their tentative, new-born ethnic Republic with what they regarded as a feudal, reactionary monarchy. Independence was eventually granted in an uneasy compromise, separate nations sharing elements of an economic union that was soon abolished.¹¹ As Congo too underwent its trauma of schism and war, regional integration appeared inapplicable in a context where national coherence was everywhere under threat.

Beneath the politics and national self-image, the large-scale movement of refugees out of Rwanda presented both a possibility and a threat to regional integration. The threat was immediately apparent, as certain militants began to launch armed attacks on their

⁹ Lecteurs Barundi d'Usumbura, *Temps nouveaux* (1959).

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ The monetary union was dissolved at the end of 1963, just 18 months after Independence. This is an issue that requires further consideration, however; local conceptions along the border frequently explain that Ruanda-Urundi was 'one country' so long as it shared two things: a language and a currency (Interviews, Busiga and Kabarore, 2010). This expression is maintained alongside a clear and strong perception of difference and a deep historical claim for the border itself; there is here a productive element of apparent contradiction that demands to be probed further.

former home from bases in Uganda, Congo and Burundi, but both the conduct of these raids, and the context from which they were launched, incorporated significant potentialities for particular incarnations of distinctive 'integration' along the borders of the Great Lakes. These are the potentialities that will be explored here, their particular circumstance and nature raising vital points of discussion for the understanding of the historical situation of the region, the echoes and contrasts raised in the 1990s, and wider considerations of border integration in states of conflict. While a broader perspective may seem to suggest that the conflict destroyed the shoots of integration discussed above, there are hidden details and informative moments on the micro scale that illustrate the potential that conflict has to drive a peculiar kind of integration in and of itself.

The Refugee Regime and Attempts at Integration

Before exploring the details of the identities, movements, actions and claims of certain individuals among the refugees and other migrants that expose this paradoxical integration through conflict, a word must first be said regarding the attitude of the Burundi government and the regime experienced by the refugees that crossed the border. Often portrayed as naturally sympathetic to the tutsi cause of the *inyenzi*,¹² welcoming refugees with open arms and actively supporting the creation of a refugee army within its borders, Burundi was in fact decidedly ambiguous in its treatment of the displaced Rwandans, divisions in policy and action reflecting the fatal fracturing the state was undergoing at the time. Lemarchand and Reyntjens have substantiated some of the Rwandan government's outraged allegations of high-level support for the exiled leaders of its enemies, identifying an atmosphere almost of conspiracy behind closed doors in Bujumbura at this time that saw a marked cooperation between militants from across the region;¹³ Rwandan *inyenzi* leaders mixed with powerful elements of the ruling class of Burundi, collaborated with Congolese *simbas* and even had substantial relations with Chinese Maoist envoys. But while an exceptionally important phenomenon, this collusion did not represent the rule for refugees across the country.

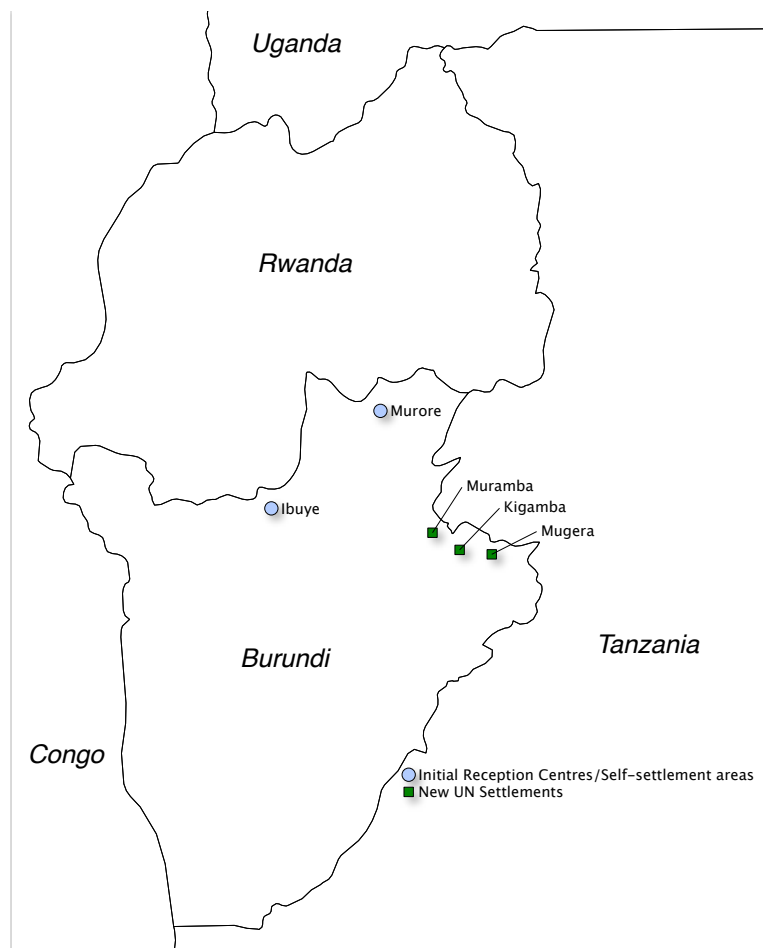
¹² 'Cockroaches', the common name for the raiders who attacked Rwandan territory.

¹³ René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, Library of African Affairs (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970); Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda*, vol. (117) (Anvers, 1985); Filip Reyntjens, "Rencontres Burundaises: Inyenzi du Rwanda et rebelles du Kivu in les rébellions dans l'Est du Zaïre (1964-1967)," *Cahiers du CEDAF* (1986).

The official response to the influx of refugees ranged from a marginally better-than-average humanitarian response, to the absolutely typical combination of fear, resentment, hostility and frustration exemplified by many governments in equivalent situations. First refuge was, characteristically, left to personal initiative and religious institutions, both pre-existing ties and new generousities providing some support in the borderland.¹⁴ But authorities of all descriptions, from local and national government to international agencies, soon came together in a consensus that the border, the most densely populated area of the entire Great Lakes, was not a suitable location, that self-settlement was leading to new problems and dangers (feared most of all by figures in the local Burundi government, whose correspondence on this issue was notably emphatic), and that forced removal to the more sparsely-settled eastern edges of Burundi was preferable. Women and children were shipped out by truck, having first been pressured to return home but refusing almost unanimously, while men were required to walk across the country, driving their cattle with them.¹⁵ Essentially, the refugees were removed from proximity to one border, only to be transplanted right next to another, the new camps a relatively short distance from the Tanzania frontier where another set of UNHCR settlements were being developed. But on the Burundi side, under notable pressure from the government, the international agencies undertook what might have been a remarkable project that gave unusual attention to integrating the substantial new settlements into the surrounding milieu; the potential for a degree of social and economic integration of Rwandans into Burundi society was recognised, and tentative moves were made towards it.

¹⁴ Self-settlement in some cases followed links previously established through on-going cross-border trade, while other forced migrants offered labour to strangers in exchange for food (L.W. Holborn, et al., *Refugees, a Problem of Our Time: The Work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951-1972*, vol. 2 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975)). This brief period of local integration, and its longer-term consequences, can be linked to similar situations in which conflict has been seen to lead to integration through the reformation of communities in forced movement (for example, Schmidt, H. "Love and Healing in Forced Communities: Borderlands in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation." edited by Paul Nugent, and A. I. Asiwaju, 183-204. London: Pinter, 1996); preliminary observations based on local historical interviews undertaken for a separate project suggest that this may be a productive line of inquiry. On the other hand, catalogues of refugee numbers in the borderland communes coincide with oral accounts that dispersed settlement among the local community was dwarfed by large concentrations of exiles who established distinct, 'private' refugee camps in locations such as the seat of the Anglican bishopric at Ibuye; the church continued to host refugees up until the mid-1990s (Interviews, Ibuye, 2010; refugee surveys collected in the *Archives nationales du Burundi (ANB)*).

¹⁵ Boniface Simvura, "Letter to Provincial Governors - *Recensement et transfert bétail des réfugiés ruandais*". *ANB*, BI 13 (1966). Lists of the refugees to be removed alongside their 'desired' destination present the almost comical extent to which the government's expressed belief that those staying in Burundi would be a 'minority' was a delusion.



The premise of the situation was almost encouraging; a number of incidents that invite further investigation saw Rwandans demand to be allowed to remain in Burundi, rather than be transplanted to Tanzania. But comprehensive integration required the UNHCR to be persuaded to stray from its brief, and records of high-level meetings between the Prime Minister, other government representatives and the UNHCR officials disclose this diplomatic struggle.¹⁶ The government was motivated by naked, and not unreasonable, self-interest, as it demonstrated that in the least-developed area of an exceptionally poor country the local infrastructure could not hope to provide the necessary means to the new villages, and co-operative development would benefit both Rwandans and local Burundi, simultaneously defusing the potential for hostility and resentment. Providing an exit plan for the UNHCR, by which the project could be handed over to the ILO and UNDP once it passed the 'emergency' stage, proved the key to clinching a plan of integration, and by 1965 the UNHCR considered that the settlement projects were 'first and foremost a long-term rural development project', rather than a question of refugee relief.¹⁷

¹⁶ Rémy Nsengiyumva, "Compte Rendu de la réunion du 17 novembre 1962 pour l'exécution du plan de solution du problème des réfugiés au Burundi," *ANB*, BI 13 (1962).

¹⁷ Nathaniel H Goetz, "Towards Self-Sufficiency and Integration: An Historical Evaluation of Assistance Programmes for Rwandese Refugees in Burundi, 1962-1965," *New Issues in Refugee*

The success of the Burundi government in arguing for a more integrated approach, however, was followed by almost inevitable failure in realising the project. Early reviews of the situation, despite significant problems connected to familiar stories of logistical incompetence, dramatically inappropriate site selection and divergent views between refugees and institutions, considered the settlements a broad success, marking a strong contrast with contemporary disasters in Kivu.¹⁸ Subsequent inspections, on the other hand, found the villages deserted, or rapidly dying from malaria, dysentery and a malfunctioning water system, where 'except for one or two isolated cases there was little or no social interaction between the refugee and local populations'.¹⁹ Intentions to integrate the projects, and support for residents of both nationalities, had largely come to nothing, with almost all funding and work devoted to the refugees and only 'encouragement' supplied to Burundi to interact with the Rwandans and glean some benefit from their presence. In fact, the most significant element of regional integration associated with the camps was an increase in cross-border movement and exchange between the camps themselves, links from the Burundi settlements to those of Tanzania substantially augmenting the ties already existing between the comparatively sparse populations of the borderland.

The nature or failure of integration as a result of conflict, in the movement and settlement of refugee families, is thus an ambiguous area that promises to be a productive topic of future research. The pursuit of conflict itself as a facet of integration, however, is a problematic issue on which certain observations can nevertheless be drawn. Between the high-level cooperation of Burundi and Rwandan exile leaders and the low-level experience of the majority of refugees, there was a third genre of border-crossing activity that perhaps more than any other exemplified the nature of integration created by the conflict. These were the groups of militants, rarely including those illustrious leaders who conspired in Bujumbura and incorporating few of those established in the official settlements, who struck on the borders of Rwanda and fell back to positions in Burundi or other countries in the region, and who remarkably integrated their conception of their own struggle into

Research 87 (2003).

¹⁸ In the official history of the UNHCR written in 1975, a review of one of the Burundi camps concluded with the hopeful, yet in retrospect ominous remark that 'one left Mugeru with a sense of the settlement's great potential if only the integration problem could be overcome' (Holborn et al., *Refugees*, p. 1139).

¹⁹ Goetz, "Towards Self-Sufficiency and Integration."

those of their hosts and neighbours.

Their conflict came as the internal politics of the respective states turned decidedly inwards, and in the early 1960s the borders were frequently closed. Angry at the use of Burundi territory by the exiled militants, Rwanda unilaterally shut the border crossings for extended periods, while during particularly intense times of internal violence in Rwanda the state in Burundi gave the illegal order to prevent the crossing of any refugees whatsoever into its territory.²⁰ The presence of white mercenaries in Congo alarmed both Rwanda and Burundi, who increased their military presence on their borders where possible, while Uganda balked at the movement of Rwandan militants across its border and attempted to establish a far stronger hold on its frontier. With the official refugee policy failing in this regard, it would seem that integration was never further away; yet the actions and movement of the disparate militants snatched the attention of the inwardly-turning states back to the borders that bound them together, and the paths that these individuals took in crossing the region between such sites of border conflict marked out the heart of the newly emerging Great Lakes. Two remarkable documents provide unusual detail on these matters; the intimation of potential rather than a conclusive weight of evidence, these exceptional sources will be explored next, to discover some of the lines of inquiry along which study of this period ought to proceed.

Integration in Conflict

113 Inyenzi

The formation of the *inyenzi* raiding parties largely consisted of low-level refugees, though apparently few of those who moved to the new villages of eastern Burundi partook in this violence, if UNHCR claims are to be relied upon.²¹ Their networks, linking Tanzania to Congo through Burundi, may nevertheless have played a key role; the Rwandan government alleged that arms for invasion were procured in Tanzania, transported through refugee networks in eastern Burundi, and employed in the bloody border strikes in Rwanda.²² A closer examination of the make-up of the border raiders, where possible, reveals curious details of their creation and membership, and how

²⁰ For example, Vice Prime Minister, "Telegram to Progou Ngozi," *ANB*, BI 6 (1964).

²¹ Holborn states that in the most dramatic *inyenzi* invasion of December 1963, only 20 of the roughly 400 raiders were drawn from the camps (Holborn et al., *Refugees*).

²² Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Rwanda), "Toute la vérité sur le terrorisme 'Inyenzi' au

their identities and actions contributed to the formalisation of the Great Lakes as a region.

One such remarkable glimpse is provided by the apprehension and expulsion of a single raiding party that was caught as it crossed into Burundi following an attack on Rwanda in early 1964. The previous months had seen a high-point of cross-border incursions, with the most significant invasion of the decade attempted in December 1963, a major refugee army crossing from Burundi into the eastern region of Bugesera and reaching almost to Kigali before it was destroyed. In the following weeks, up to four further, smaller raids were recorded in the same area.²³ But then, the violence switched to the opposite end of the border, when a mid-size party raided Cyangugu from Cibitoke in western Burundi. The Rwandan government reported that 'a Rwandan customs officer and two guards were attacked by a terrorist band coming from Burundi; they were tortured and put to death...at the same time as 30 other people (men, women and children), whose belongings were pillaged and taken away to Burundi.'²⁴ The strike was a notably border-centric raid; unlike the Bugesera invasion, this was not a deep incursion intended to threaten the heart of the Republic, but an attack that focussed on the personnel of the border itself, the state's representatives in a triangular borderland and the local borderland population. Beyond the moment of violence, however, the strike was most remarkable for the subsequent response from the Burundi state, as the group was arrested, judged and deported to Congo; 'Having entered Burundi after massacring the people of the prefecture of Cyangugu without any provocation on the part of the Rwandan population,' the notice of expulsion declared, 'they cannot be considered as refugees.'²⁵ The emphatic terms of this document indicate the contrast between the institutional response to the common *inyenzi* and the experience of the exile leaders in Bujumbura as described by Reyntjens; while the expulsion order was given on the exact same day that Prime Minister Ngendandumwe accused Rwanda of genocide relating to reprisals for Bugesera,²⁶ there appears to have been enough sensitivity to the context of violence

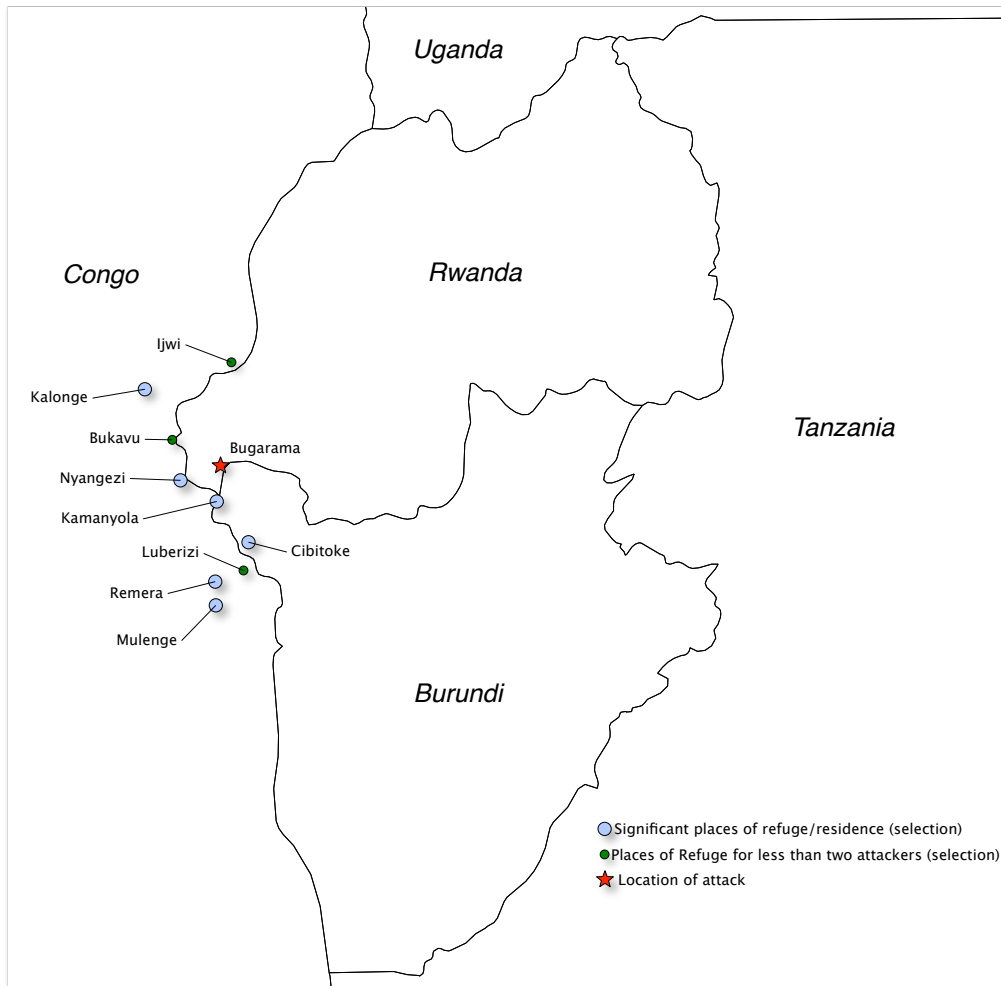
Rwanda," (1964).

²³ The Rwandan government cited raids on the 18th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd of January 1964 (*ibid.*); the UN envoy Dorsinville recorded only the first and the last of these ("The United Nations' Findings on Rwanda and Burundi," *Africa Report* 9, no. 4 (1964): 7-8).

²⁴ Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, "Toute la vérité."

²⁵ Bernard Bizindavyi, "Procès-Verbal et notification d'indésirabilité," *ANB*, B 12 (1964).

²⁶ This period is explored from an informative, if partisan perspective by Augustin Mariro, *Burundi 1965 : La 1ère crise ethnique*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005.



north of the border to recognise that an incursion into Cyangugu was unequivocally an act of aggression on behalf of the *inyenzi*. This was an attempt at an even-handed stance that might win support in the UN, during a time when the two states were being brought close to direct warfare by these private borderland strikes, and does not speak against the aid elsewhere given to the *inyenzi* raids by powerful Burundi, but it is nevertheless an informative moment in the border squabbles and violence of the time.

The expulsion order remarkably contained a record of all the 113 *inyenzi* who had partaken in the raid, giving their names, origins and places of refuge, providing a rare opportunity to study the movements that formed among the refugees and their host populations in this time. These movements stuck closely to the borders of the region in a most striking fashion. The warband was comprised mostly of those who had been born in southern Rwanda, as might be expected, but they had followed the Burundi

border all the way to refuge in Congo; far more varied than their places of origin, their points of refuge were clustered along the Congolese border with Rwanda. Some had been received in the notorious UNHCR camps of Mulenge (21 fighters), Kalonge (20) and Remera (13), where a retrospective report later observed that the plots of land provided to refugees were far too small, mostly used for short-term cultivation, and that those who resided there 'remained particularly susceptible to growing *inyenzi* agitation.'²⁷ But a further section of the band had found themselves in Kamanyola, 'self-settling' in the Ruzizi valley right at the angle where Congo meets both Rwanda and Burundi. When a fact-finding commission from UNHCR, UNOC and UNICEF first reached the refugee areas of the region in 1962, the Ruzizi valley had been marked out as an area where the general health situation was 'catastrophic', as opposed to merely 'bad and very bad' elsewhere.²⁸

The *inyenzi* band had gathered, therefore, in Congo, but chosen to cross the border first to Burundi, and then on to Rwanda.²⁹ The process of their formation is unfortunately inaccessible, their distributed points of refuge along the Congolese border simply demonstrating that the raiding parties were not necessarily formed *within* the camps, but created through coordination between them. Further, alongside the concentrations of 10 to 20 men in the camps and towns, there were a considerable number of individuals who were presented as lone refugees, residing in a wide variety of locations; their presence suggests a disparate agglomeration under personal initiative, adhering to the body of the warband forged in the camps. Yet however this process of formation and coordination worked, it appears to have included a vital element of cooperation with certain sections of the local population of both Congo and Burundi; in their number there are several individuals with no 'place of refuge' listed, who came from Nyangezi, right on the Congolese side of the Congo-Rwanda border, and from Cibitoke, the area of Burundi the group passed through to reach the point of attack. The Rwandan exiles, from borderland homes, regrouped in a new strip of borderland territory; gathering some support from their counterparts in both Congo and Burundi, their chosen line of attack was to cross two sets of borders, strike against the frontier representatives of their former home, and fall back to refuge behind the international line. Their actions no doubt derived from a significant degree of

²⁷ Holborn et al., *Refugees*, p. 1083.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Dorsinville's report seems to confirm something of this account, but also contains significant errors; he noted that the party had come from Kivu, but believed that they had been stopped by Burundi police *before* they could reach Rwanda ("United Nations' Findings.").

opportunism, exploiting the borders that proliferated in this region, but in so doing they marked out these multiple frontiers as the defining feature of an interconnected region.

Cooperation, Training, Ideology

The small sample represented by this single document and the incident it describes provides details that support broader observations of similar situations; some 500 'dedicated *inyenzi* fighters', for example, were reported to have arrived in western Burundi in December 1965, having previously fought alongside the Congolese rebels in an act that illustrated the growing integration of armed movements in both countries and are likely echoed in the presence of Congolese in the band described above.³⁰ But a richer glimpse of these combined issues, the integration of violent causes and the developing behaviour of patchwork border conflict, can be gleaned from another document stored in the Bujumbura archives. This document was composed in October 1964, when a group of six men were arrested in Busiga, north-central Burundi.³¹ They had been challenged by police on the road and produced *laisser-passer* documents that were issued by the authorities in Kirundu, in the north east of the country, and were therefore not valid for travel in the local area of Kayanza. But it quickly became apparent that these were not simply vagrants, but subversive elements engaged in dangerous activities, and their interrogation in the provincial centre of Ngozi uncovered a remarkable story.

The leader of the six was a local man, named Karega Sébastien, aged 40 and from Busiga commune. During the colonial period he had been in Congo, where he had joined the *Force Publique* and served in the colonial army for a year and a half in the late 1940s. For a further two years he was a military policeman in the border town of Bukavu, before leaving the army and earning money as a 'boy chauffeur' and petrol pump attendant in the same area. Moving back to Burundi around the Independence of Congo in 1960, he had found work as a shop worker and mechanic in Bujumbura, before rotting in unemployment for a couple of years. But in August 1963 his old military experience bore new fruit, as he was recruited to do a job for a man named Hamoudu bin Salim.

³⁰ Holborn et al., *Refugees*. p. 1123.

³¹ Ntahomereye, Cyprien. "Pro-Justitia." *Interrogation of Karega Sébastien, Yumba Alfred, Mande Jean, Baruwani son of Yuma, Ibrahim son of Bitunga, Mwamba son of Gasoriya, and Hamoudu bin Salim*. ANB, BI 5 (1964).

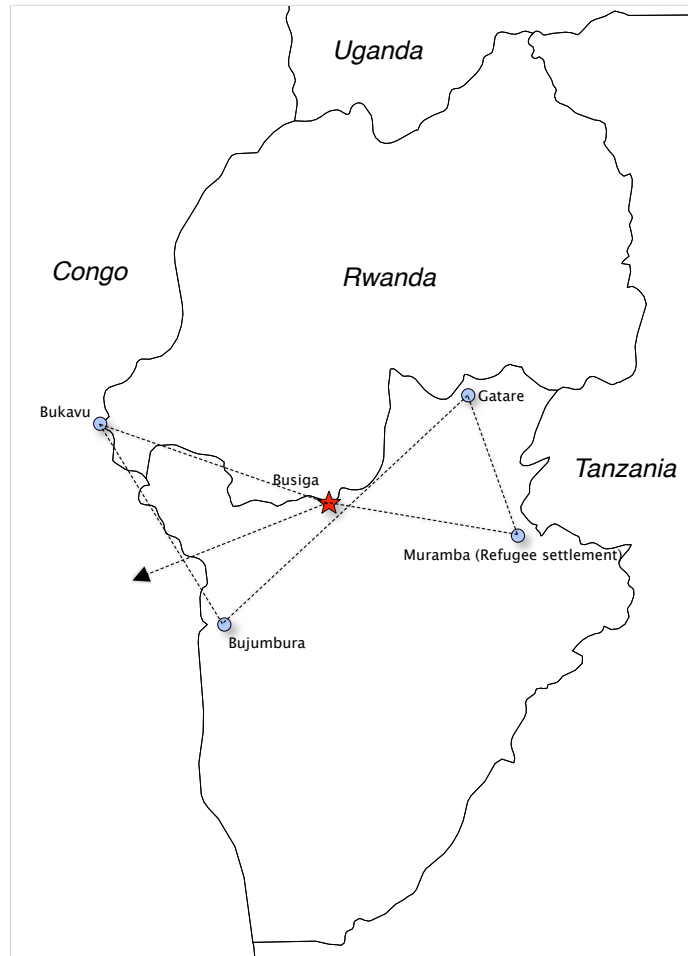
Hamoudu was a Rwandan. One of Karega's companions described the Hamoudu as 'a *métis*, resident in Bujumbura ... A capitalist, a collaborator of Monsieur Rukeba. Before the events in Rwanda he was a businessman in Kigali and had a great fortune. His belongings were wiped out by Parmehutu [the governing party of Rwanda] and he sought refuge at the same time as the others.' But Hamoudu was not simply one of the many Rwandan refugees in Burundi at this time. He was in fact one of the key figures of the tutsi monarchists in exile, who were led by François Rukeba. He had been named as Minister of Defence in the exile government claimed in 1962, and had since featured as a notable member of the Bujumbura clique around Rukeba.³² He had recently received some Fr 30,000 to be used to organise the militant tutsi youth in exile, but his expenditure seems to have been geared more towards his own personal profit, and he was in need of something to show for the considerable funds at his disposal. An attack on Rwanda was what was needed.³³

Thus when Hamoudu met Karega, he gave him a mission. Along with a small group of others, Karega was told to 'go to the different refugee centres to train and exercise them in the military arts, in order to undertake a conflict which was intended to reintegrate them in their native country'. He was sent to the border area in the north east of Burundi, between Lakes Cyohoha and Rweru, the closest part of the border to Kigali. There he found 'other soldiers like myself, charged with teaching refugees military tactics'. This mission, however, was to be conducted in a semi-clandestine manner, and when soldiers of the Burundi national army made patrols in the region 'to suppress troubles', Karega and the other military trainers would take their own refuge, switching to another borderland to hide out in the UNHCR refugee resettlement areas of Muramba and Kigamba to the south, since they knew that they were 'undertaking acts that were not authorised by the Government'.

The dubious use of funds under Hamoudu had significant consequences for the effectiveness of the training that Karega was able to carry out. Asked what weapons he had at his disposal, Karega replied that 'we had none, except right at the start we had five rifles'; these, however, were confiscated by the authorities when the refugees

³² René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 203; Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda*, p. 458.

³³ See Filip Reyntjens, "Rencontres Burundaises", p. 135, on the particular tensions in the Bujumbura clique over misuse of party funds, this incident included.



under his training first attempted to invade Rwanda. Certainly an abortive start to the great invasion of December 1963 is recorded, when on the 14th of that month an initial movement towards the border was apprehended by the Burundi army and the leaders, Rukeba among them, were arrested;³⁴ it may be that the confiscation of Karega's paltry arsenal occurred at that point. However, that false start was meant to be an attack on Bugesera, a point for which Karega's 'Gatare' base would seem to have been ideal, yet he claimed that the confiscation took place in the *Arrondissement* of Kayanza, well to the west; either this was one of the minor, otherwise unrecorded strikes, or it was an offshoot, a simultaneous attack intended to act in parallel to the Bugesera invasion. Either way, the path that Karega took, leading his refugee troops from the east of the country through to the centre, both reflects the narrowness of the space in which these manoeuvres were conducted, the absurdity of the claims that the refugee camps were in any effective manner 'away from the border', and likely his own input into the choice of route and target; a path through Kayanza would take him through his own home region, his section of borderland, on the way to Rwanda. His

³⁴ Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, "Toute la vérité."

life and path always stuck close to a border, wherever he went.

Deprived of their five rifles, but apparently not of their liberty for any substantial time, Karega and his fellows continued training the refugees. 'Currently we make use of pieces of wood to demonstrate the handling of a rifle or of any other weapon,' he explained. But eventually, Hamoudu's mishandling of the funds for this training put an end to the enterprise. 'He ought to have provided our salary and our military uniform,' Karega recounted, but they had received no pay for a substantial amount of time; one of his companions explained that they had frequently lived off the rations supplied to the refugees. In disgust, the *inyenzi* trainers resolved to go to find their 'boss' in Bujumbura, but furnished with only the travel documents they had obtained for movement in the east (how they had come by these documents was not illuminated), they could only get as far as Busiga commune itself, Karega's childhood home.

Though they had been apprehended before they could follow them through, it is interesting to note the future plans that Karega and his companions had intended to pursue. 'We were simply going to ask for our pay,' insisted Karega; 'After that, since we were already dissatisfied with our boss we had decided that once our salary was sorted we would return to Congo, where we are certain of finding a place in the army of Mulele.' He was a member of 'the military that fights for the MNC,' he stressed. And his fellows were even more emphatic, tying their employment under Hamoudu into a Congolese political axis; Yumba, only 25 years old at the time of his arrest, was asked if he too was a Mulelist, and proudly replied that 'We pursue exactly the same goal. We want at all costs that MNC-Lumumba wins, as well as the Unar party of Rwanda. We labour and we will labour until Mwami Kigeri is reinstated in his home in Rwanda and is back on his throne, because we know well that MNC and Unar always worked in concert. Our objective must be achieved.' The political integration of anti-colonial struggles before Independence was being reconstituted.

The alliances pursued between Unar and MNC exile leaders in Bujumbura, and their curious relations with the Chinese in this time, is a fascinating facet of this period. But in this series of interrogations in the borderland, we see the same claims of political continuity being made by those much further down the chain of command and hierarchy of power. Indeed, we see the products of this relationship in terms both more substantial and less fruitful than moral support or financial assistance. Karega's five companions were all Congolese by origin, and came from the regions on the

eastern edge of the country, particularly Kalemie on Lake Tanganyika. The young Yumba was 'simply a member of the *Jeunesse Lumumbiste*', he explained, and the fervency of his political statements under interrogation bore this out. The others, however, while making their statements of loyalty to the memory of Lumumba and of desire to return and fight against Tshombe, were rather more blasé; another 25 year old, Mande, was asked by the police whether he had come to train the Rwandans out of 'the good intentions of a good member of the *Jeunesse nationaliste Lumumbiste* or under the promise of payment', had no qualms of admitting to his mercenary motivations. Politics provided the justification, the rationalisation of Congolese training Rwandans in Burundi; money provided the attraction, and when Hamoudu failed to provide it, the men chose to return to the war they had left behind at home. Their profession had taken them from border to border in Burundi; their hearts, and wallets, took them home to a more personal war fought in the vast eastern borderlands of Congo.

Region and Borders

The product of the movements and conflict of such individuals was a growing mutual obsession between Rwanda and Burundi, national defence and retribution encroaching each others' borders and intimating war, only to be gradually defused by internal transformations and the establishment of the first regional bodies of dialogue, a series of tense Tripartite talks between the two and Congo at the end of the 1960s. Less passionate exchanges similarly underscored the unavoidable significance of the borders with Tanzania and Uganda. The countries of the Great Lakes experienced something of the classical story of European states, their borders solidified through war. But the particular stateless mobility of the majority of the combatants in this early conflict, and the close-set position of the frontiers between huge and tiny countries, ensured that the borders so tested were equally enshrined as the central seams of a coherent region, not just the boundaries of nuclear states. The Tripartite talks were the fruit of conflict that revealed the emergence of a discrete Great Lakes, links to Tanzania and Uganda to follow close behind; the Ugandan invasion of Tanzania and Burundi's military incursion into the latter in pursuit of its own exiles in the early 1970s continue this story of integration through conflict. Rwanda and Burundi were linked on all sides to all their neighbours, in a destructive form perhaps, but in an irrevocably close embrace. These disasters confirmed that the Great Lakes, in its conflict at the very least, was an integrated region to be considered as a whole, if one whose outer borders remain weakly defined. It is a region consolidated around the borders at its heart, a nucleus with uncertain edges.

The brief glimpses of the 113 *inyenzi* deported from Burundi, or the lives and activities of Karega and his Congolese mercenaries, therefore illustrate a pattern of behaviour, the growth of a new borderlander identity, that functioned within this developing conception of a region that internalised its frontiers. The careers of those involved in either story fully conform to a violent reconfiguration of the idea of a border identity, a self-conception developed by those whose lives and professions depend on the possibilities of the border; they were people who, largely, grew up in borderlands, came together in frontier regions and pursued their goals, whether for pay, politics or opportunity, by embracing a mobility that linked various locations along the frontiers of the region, striking on border populations and falling back to refuge among other borderland areas. But unlike the recent developments of behaviour exhibited by, for example, the LRA, in which a borderland armed group tracks across a region by following the border with all its opportunities for violence and escape, the figures in each of these stories link otherwise isolated hotspots of border activity together in a web that spans the region; their identity as borderlanders invested in violence appears generalised to a regional scale. This is perhaps most apparent in the case of Karega and his men; they crossed the region from one node of border conflict to another, and when we last see them they are heading back to Congo to seek further opportunity in a borderland war. By contributing their force, their skills for training, their political coherency that justified a regional continuum of otherwise disconnected violence, such people seem to have provided substance to the consolidation of the Great Lakes in this time; it was their activities, however unsavoury and deeply destructive to the populations of all the countries they touched, that ensured that the borders in which they invested so comprehensively emerged as the acerbic glue of a region integrated through conflict.

These are behaviours and dynamics that demand to be pursued further, enriching the picture of the time and extending to elucidate what elements of continuity link this crucial period with later years. More peaceful interactions, whether in the exceptional experience of the networks of non-combatant refugees or the quotidian exchanges of borderland communities that witnessed this movement but themselves remained stationary, must be the subject of future research, providing access to the alternative push and pull of integration and disintegration, of interrelations and mutual perceptions, that formed the Great Lakes away from crisis moments of violence and insubstantial state-level conferences. But it was the network of low-level actors in the web of violence that made apparent the paradoxical role of the borders to the highest levels of national and international leadership. Integration would take many forms, but as the countries of the region emerged into Independence, conflict was the first matter to bind them together.

Bibliography

- “BI 188.” (*Kitega*) *AAB*, BUR 65 (1960).
- Bizindavyi, Bernard. “Procès-Verbal et notification d’indésirabilité.” *ANB*, B 12 (1964).
- Le Cercle du Progrès. “L’Avenir politique du Ruanda-Urundi et les Congolais.” *Temps nouveaux*, 1959.
- Chrétien, Jean-Pierre. “Des Sédentaires devenus migrants.” *Cultures et Développement* 10, no. 1 (1978): 71-101.
- Chrétien, Jean-Pierre. *L’Invention de l’Afrique des Grands Lacs: Une histoire du XXe siècle*. Paris: Karthala, 2010.
- “Chronologie Politique 1959.” *AAB*, BUR 74 (1960).
- Claeys-Bouuaert, Alfred. “Letter to Resident.” ‘*Association des Banyarwanda-Barundi (Ouganda)*’ *AAB*, BUR 66 (1954).
- Gahama, Joseph. *Le Burundi sous administration belge: la période du Mandat, 1919-1939*. Karthala, 1983.
- Goetz, Nathaniel H. “Towards Self-Sufficiency and Integration: An Historical Evaluation of Assistance Programmes for Rwandese Refugees in Burundi, 1962-1965.” *New Issues in Refugee Research* 87 (2003).
- Holborn, L. W., P. Chartrand, and R. Chartrand. *Refugees, a Problem of Our Time: The Work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951-1972*. Vol. 2, Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975.
- Kabanguka, P, and A. Nyirahuku. “Association Des Ressortissants Du Ruanda-Urundi, Bukavu.” *AAB*, BUR 66 (n.d.).
- Lecteurs Barundi d’Usumbura, *Temps nouveaux*, 1959.
- Lemarchand, René. *Rwanda and Burundi. Library of African Affairs*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1970.
- Mariro, Augustin. *Burundi 1965 : La 1ère crise ethnique*. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2005.
- MB. “Aurons-nous un Ruanda-Urundi ou un Ruanda et un Burundi?” *Temps nouveaux*, 1959.

- Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Rwanda). "Toute la vérité sur le Terrorisme 'Inyenzi' au Rwanda." 1964.
- Mworoha, Emile. *Histoire du Burundi: des origines à la fin du XIXe siècle*. Paris: Hatier, 1987.
- Nsengiyumva, Rémy. "Compte Rendu de la réunion du 17 novembre 1962 pour l'exécution du plan de solution du problème des réfugiés au Burundi." *ANB*, BI 13 (1962).
- Ntahomereye, Cyprien. "Pro-Justitia." *Interrogation of Karega Sébastien, Yumba Alfred, Mande Jean, Baruwani son of Yuma, Ibrahim son of Bitunga, Mwamba son of Gasoriya, and Hamoudu bin Salim*. *ANB*, BI 5 (1964)
- Reyntjens, Filip. *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda*. Antwerp, 1985.
- Reyntjens, Filip. "Rencontres Burundaises: Inyenzi du Rwanda et rebelles du Kivu" in *Les Rébellions Dans L'Est Du Zaïre (1964-1967)*. *Cahiers du CEDAF* (1986).
- Schmidt, H. "Love and Healing in Forced Communities: Borderlands in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation." edited by Paul Nugent, and A. I. Asiwaju, 183-204. London: Pinter, 1996.
- Simvura, Boniface. "Letter to Provincial Governors." *Recensement et transfert détail des réfugiés ruandais*. *ANB*, BI 13 (1966).
- "The United Nations' Findings on Rwanda and Burundi." *Africa Report* 9, no. 4 (1964): 7-8.
- Uprona. "Manifeste de l'Uprona." *ANB*, BUR 65 (1959).
- Vice Prime Minister. "Telegram to Progou Ngozi." *ANB*, BI 6 (1964).

THE LIMITS OF EU COHERENCE IN PEACEBUILDING IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Ian Taylor

Abstract: The European Union (EU) is increasingly aspiring to be a global peace and security actor. Using the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as a test case to analyse such ambitions, this article reveals that the EU's ambitions to build peace and security are severely compromised by its bureaucratic and organizational complexity as well as by its ineffective policies. In fact, the EU's state-centred approach in the DRC has resulted in the EU's inability to deal with 1) the realities of governance in the DRC and 2) the strong trans-border dimensions of the conflict. As a result, the EU continues to lack a coherent strategy for the DRC, despite a large budget. The analysis concludes that the EU is more concerned with establishing a symbolic presence and a form of representation than with achieving specific goals.

Over the last decade or so there has been a substantial increase in the debate on the European Union's (EU's) role as a global actor (Hill 1993; Bretherton and Vogler 2006; Smith 2003). Following the implementation of the European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2003, the EU has expanded its pledged commitments in terms of peace and security policies, and these commitments have been undertaken with the ambition that "Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world" (European Commission 2003: 1).

One area where the EU has sought to ostensibly play a role in "building a better world" is in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Despite its absence from the Western public's consciousness, the conflict in the DRC has been the deadliest war since World War II. Leaving aside the millions of injured, raped and orphaned and the untold numbers forced into refugee status, more than 5 million people have lost their lives in the war since 1998 (Turner 2007). The conflict is in fact a tangled meeting point of various violent struggles at different levels – local, national and regional – and although centred mainly in the eastern half of the DRC, its manifestations and effects are global (Taylor 2003).

Briefly, the conflict(s) have their origins in the legacy of colonialism (with regards to citizenship, legal status and land tenure), questions of autochthony centred around Kinyarwanda-speaking communities, severe ruptures within the Congolese polity created by decades of criminal misrule by

the Mobutu Sese Seko regime (1965–1997), and massive population displacements and the concomitant ethnic tensions caused by political violence in Burundi and Rwanda, culminating in the Rwandan genocide of 1994 (Chretien and Benegas 2008; Reyntjens 2009; Lemarchand 2009). Dubbed “Africa’s World War” (Prunier 2008), the role of the EU as an actor in this postcolonial space is thus of great interest, particularly in the context whereby Brussels is actively advocating its global ambitions.

In this regard, the EU has applied a wide range of policies in the DRC. These policies formally aim to alleviate the suffering caused by the conflicts and to help rebuild the country politically – that is, engage in state-building. A significant amount of money has been disbursed by the European Union to implement extensive development and humanitarian activities. Indeed, between 2002 – when structural cooperation between the EU and the DRC resumed – and late 2010, Brussels mobilized 961 million EUR. This figure excludes humanitarian aid, which is defined as consisting of three main tools: emergency aid, food aid, and aid for refugees (European Commission 2010a). In addition to the Community’s approach, five military and civil missions under the mandate of the Council of the European Union and within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) have been deployed in the DRC since 2003. Furthermore, the EU has had a Special Representative (EUSR) for the Great Lakes region since 1996. Clearly, if measured in terms of finances spent and political commitment, the DRC is of great importance to the European Union.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this article is to analyse whether and to what extent the EU can be considered a unified and coherent actor in the eastern DRC, given that there has been criticism that the EU acts in such situations only to project a particular image while not implementing any practical and consistent set of policies (Gegout 2009b). We conducted fieldwork and research in both Brussels and the Great Lakes region in 2010, and our analysis is based on the assumption that internal coherence determines and circumscribes the practical effectiveness of external policies (defined below). Thus we scrutinize and analyse the European Union’s actor capability in the DRC through focusing on the coherence of the EU’s policy formulation and its implementation on the ground in the eastern DRC. In doing so, this article aims to contribute to the debate on both the EU’s coherence as an actor and the related discussions surrounding the nature and effectiveness of the EU’s multilateral efforts. A specific aim of the ESS is “the development of a stronger international society, well-functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order” (Biscop and Drieskens 2005: 2). Investigating whether such assumptions are correct in

the context of the EU's efforts in the DRC is a further fundamental aim of this article. Such an investigation is intrinsically linked to the question of coherence.

The article starts out by discussing previous research on the EU as a global actor in order to formulate a basic perspective on actorness and coherence, which guide the analysis. A general description of the EU's policies and efforts in the eastern DRC follows. We then analyse the institutional coherence of the EU, particularly the interplay between the European Commission and the Council. Shifting the focus towards the quality and relevance of the EU's efforts, we study how the EU is managing the regional dimension of the conflict as well as the regime in Kinshasa, which is characterized by dysfunctional bureaucracies and patronage policies. Against this backdrop, we then question the effectiveness of donor coordination in the DRC, the EU being a major donor. Finally, we draw some general conclusions regarding the EU as a peace and security actor in the DRC.

The EU as an International Actor

There is a rich literature on the EU's role in world politics. In a recent article, Ian Manners shows that this role has been described in a variety of ways over the past five decades, ranging from mythologies of the EU as a bull, a third force, a civilian power or a normative power, to a gendered construction of the EU's weakness, and, finally, to mythologies of the EU as a pole of power in a multipolar world (Manners 2010). Enquiries into the EU's global power and identity may of course be linked to coherence, but discussions about the latter also centre on the EU's capacity to act consistently. There has been an increasing number of studies on the EU as an international actor and on its coherence over the two last decades (Allen and Smith 1990; Hill 1993; Cameron 1998; Jupille and Caporaso 1998; Ginsberg 1999; Bretherton and Vogler 2006; Orbie 2008; Söderbaum and Stålgren 2010); and the EU itself has increasingly become preoccupied with the coherence of its policy delivery. As Szymanski and Smith have pointed out, the EU's

increasing emphasis on coherence [...] represents a gradual transition from its original focus on negative integration (ensuring that member state foreign policies did not adversely affect the Community) to positive integration (equipping the EU with the means to act coherently in world politics) (Szymanski and Smith 2005: 176-177).

We might aver that EU foreign policy cohesion may be summarized as the espousal of common policies and the execution of these policies by EU member states and institutions.

Connected to this, Bretherton and Vogler (2006: 35) define an actor as “an entity that is capable of agency; of formulating and acting upon decisions”. It is clear that the EU can act as a collective actor in international affairs and be seen as “one” by both outsiders and its own citizens – for instance, when signing a trade agreement or disbursing aid. However, being an international and global actor demands that the European Commission do more than, for example, disburse aid. Similarly, highly stated ambitions and a normative agenda are not automatically translated into coherent policy implementation, which Christopher Hill elegantly showed in an influential study about the EU’s “capabilities–expectations gap” (Hill 1993).

Presence needs to be distinguished from policy implementation. The EU’s presence stems from its very existence; and due to its relative weight (demographically, economically, militarily and ideologically), the EU impacts the rest of the world. It is, for example, the largest development donor in the world, and the size of its economy is comparable to that of the United States. The EU has also been active in setting up a military capacity meant to be used outside the region. This has provoked reactions and also created expectations from the outside. Obviously, presence is a complex and comprehensive material variable, depending on the size of the actor, the scope of its external activities, the relative importance of different issue areas, and the relative dependence of various regions upon the European market. A stronger presence means more repercussions and reactions and thereby an increasing pressure to act. In the absence of such action, presence itself will diminish. The crucial question is to what extent the EU’s strong international presence is actually being used in a purposive capacity to shape the external environment by influencing world affairs.

A growing capacity to act and implement policy follows from the strengthened presence of the regional unit in different contexts. Literature on the EU’s ability to project itself emphasizes that the EU’s external policy is closely connected to endogenous and internal conditions (Hill and Smith 2005; Bretherton and Vogler 2006). This link between the internal and external is equally evident in the EU’s official policy documents and treaties, which repeatedly stress that without a unified, coherent, consistent and coordinated external policy, the legitimacy of the EU as a global actor will be called into question. Indeed, recognizing this, the presidents of the EU Commission, Parliament and Council issued a statement on EU develop-

ment policy in 2005 which sought to henceforth implement development policies coherently. The statement asserted that the EU was

fully committed to taking action to advance Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) in a number of areas [...]. To make this commitment a reality, the EU will strengthen PCD procedures, instruments and mechanisms at all levels, and secure adequate resources and share best practice to further these aims (European Commission 2006).

Although PCD has been institutionalized, and various programmes and mechanisms have been established within EU structures, policy *incoherence* is still problematic. To make the concept of coherence applicable to the study, we propose a twofold categorization: First, institutional coherence relates to the EU's internal institutional machinery (e.g. Commission, Council, Parliament and Court) and implies the need for coherence within the EU's external relations. Yet institutional coherence presents major difficulties for the Union given that Brussels invariably handles single policy sectors in its external relations using two sets of actors (i.e. Commission and Council), each applying their own sets of procedures and priorities (Nuttall 2005). Second, vertical coherence indicates the degree of congruence between the external policies of EU member states and the EU's central institutions. This comes into play whenever one or several member states pursue national policies that are contrary (deliberately or otherwise) to policies agreed upon at the EU level.

The need for coherence is widely accepted, particularly as it relates to effectiveness. Effectiveness indicates the degree to which the EU has produced desired adjustments or changes in policy and practice in a particular targeted situation. The absence of such effectiveness and concomitant incoherence in policy formulation and implementation entails a higher risk of inefficient spending, duplication of activities, lower quality in output, and a reduced ability to provide service delivery. As a means to avoid such problems, the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) identified three key mechanisms by which policy coherence might be enhanced within the EU's institutional settings. First, explicit policy statements affirming coherence were deemed crucial. Second, inter-departmental coordination, including a specialized coherence unit, was seen as vital to accomplishing the policy commitments. Third, institutional capacity (and willingness) to incorporate – and then act upon – information and policy analysis was another important factor in promoting evidence-based methods to underpin policy formation (ECDPM and ICEI 2006: 17-18). The ECDPM's advice sounds like common sense, yet such policy rationality is often held hostage by national politics, priorities and sectional interests – as well as

inter-EU rivalry – which may not necessarily prioritize such logic. Though all EU member states endorse the notion that the EU's foreign policy should be guided by multilateralism, in practice this doctrine is weakened by the agency and behaviour of the very same member states. This reality contradicts the simplistic idea advanced by Kagan (2003: 37-42) that Brussels promotes multilateralism only to “hide another truth” – that is, that there are no other options and that the EU's commitment to multilateralism has a “real practical payoff and little cost”. In fact,

the EU member states support specific forms of multilateral cooperation if and insofar as such cooperation allows them to sustain their comparative economic [and political] advantage,

and member states

are selective in their support, [...] favouring those that are likely to produce favourable policy streams over time in a given issue-area (Pollack 2006: 124).

The EU in the Eastern DRC

The DRC is the twelfth-largest country in the world, covering over 2 million square kilometres. Despite its abundant resources, it is among the world's poorest countries and was ranked 168 out of 169 countries in the 2010 Human Development Index. Out of a total population of approximately 60 million, divided among 200 ethnic groups, 1.9 million people are internally displaced. Further, 458,000 Congolese refugees live in neighbouring Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, the Central African Republic, and Congo-Brazzaville (European Commission 2010c). This huge number of displaced people mirrors the long-lasting and complex conflict dynamics in the DRC and the wider Great Lakes region.

To tackle this set of regional crises, external actors mediated the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 1999, which requested the deployment of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to monitor the peace process. The “Inter-Congolese Dialogue” was also initiated, ostensibly to facilitate a transition to democracy. In 2002, a national power-sharing agreement was implemented, and a year later, a transitional period leading to elections in 2006 began. Violence, however, continued to occur in the country, particularly in the eastern DRC, as various militias, warlords and external actors (notably Rwanda and Uganda) continued to engage in widespread skirmishes and military activities (Van Leeuwen 2008). Subsequently, the mandate of MONUC was extended until

30 June 2010, when it became the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), with a mandate until 30 June 2011.

The regional nature of the conflict and its intensity, with the attendant catastrophic humanitarian situation, has led to the involvement of a wide array of African states as well as regional and international actors. From the start, the EU has been involved in and has sought to be a main player in resolving the conflict, albeit with varying degrees of success. Indeed, "the DRC has become a laboratory for EU crisis management" (Knutsen 2009: 456). Here, it is of utmost importance to distinguish the policies and efforts of the European Commission, on one hand, and those of the Council, on the other.

Policies pursued by the European Commission mainly revolve around development and humanitarian assistance, managed by the Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation (DEVCO), the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) as well as the Directorate-General for External Relations (RELEX). On the ground, in the Great Lakes region (GLR), the Commission is represented by its various Commission delegations in the capitals of Kinshasa (DRC), Kampala (Uganda), Kigali (Rwanda) and Bujumbura (Burundi). Furthermore, ECHO operates two field offices in the eastern DRC: one in Goma (North Kivu) and one in Bukavu (South Kivu).

The overall objective of the Commission's efforts is to stabilize the DRC and to support the reconstruction of the country – in essence, peace-building and state-building. To achieve these goals, the Commission currently provides roughly 584 million EUR under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), covering the period from 2008 to 2013. According to the objectives outlined in the Country Strategy Paper for the DRC, 50 per cent of the money provided is targeted at infrastructure, 25 per cent at governance, and 10 per cent goes directly to the health sector. The remaining 15 per cent is to be spent on environmental aspects, the management of natural resources, and the support of regional economic development and integration (Government of the DRC and European Commission 2008). In addition, ECHO directly provides the DRC with humanitarian assistance, which in 2009 totalled 45 million EUR (European Commission 2010b).

Alongside the Commission's activities, the EU also acts through the Council of the European Union, whose activities in the DRC are guided by the CSDP under the umbrella of the Common Security and Foreign Policy (CSFP). Through this, the Council has deployed a total of five civil and military missions to the DRC out of which two are still on-going. In 2003,

the EU launched its first military mission – codename: ARTEMIS – to contribute to the stabilization of the security conditions and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in the town of Bunia, eastern DRC (Council of the European Union 2003). From 2005 until 2007, the civil EU Police Mission EUPOL Kinshasa was deployed to help the Congolese national police keep order, particularly during the electoral period in 2006 (European Union 2005). To assist MONUC during the first democratic electoral process, a third mission – codename: EUFOR RD Congo – was also launched (Delestre 2006). In July 2007, EUPOL Kinshasa was replaced by EUPOL RD Congo and the scope of the mission was expanded from Kinshasa to areas all over the country, but especially to the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu. Since then, the objective of EUPOL RD Congo has been to support the reform of the security sector related to the police and their interaction with the justice system (European Union 2010a). The EU has been relying since 2005 on another security mission, EU Security Sector Reform Mission (EUSEC RD Congo), which is supporting the Congolese authorities in the rebuilding of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) (European Union 2010b).

The Commission and the Council's sharing of tasks has become increasingly complicated and has undermined EU cohesiveness in the DRC. This is especially clear in the area of external relations, where the two institutions have developed competitive approaches due to an overlap in responsibilities on both sides and due to a continuous expansion on the civilian side of the CSDP (Christiansen 2001). Thus, except for military crisis management, almost all EU efforts in the DRC in terms of civilian crisis management and security sector reform can be undertaken *either* by the CSDP *or* as part of development assistance programmes. Inter-agency rivalry is severe, and the lack of any significant agreement on a natural division of labour between the Commission and the Council is destabilizing the EU's efforts (Lurweg 2011). Indeed, the European Centre for Development Policy Management's stress on inter-departmental coordination as a prerequisite for coherence is significantly absent in the eastern DRC.

The overlapping of responsibilities and the rivalry are then compounded by coordination weaknesses springing from structural issues related to the nature of the various mandates and diverse instruments of Commission and Council entities. The Commission's remit in the DRC is largely long-term and aimed at broad development cooperation issues, which by their very nature are open-ended, whilst the Council's focus under the CSDP is largely short-term and constricted by a finite timeframe. The EU is not alone in finding that long-term development instruments are fre-

quently difficult to adapt to short-term perspectives – and vice versa. Again, the ECDPM's prerequisites for coherence are undermined, this time by the fact that explicit sets of policy statements upholding coherence are absent in a milieu where different arms of the EU are operating using very different timeframes and mandates.

On top of this existential problem between EU arms, a specific role has been carved out for the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Great Lakes region of Africa, which the EU defines as the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Besides providing political guidance to the CSDP missions, the EUSR remit is to ensure coordination between these missions, as well as between the missions and the other various EU actors on the ground. The EUSR aims to cut across the institutional divide between CSDP and community instruments, which in itself is a tacit recognition of serious institutional problems in coordinating any EU policy coherence (Council of the European Union 2010).

Yet as we detail below, a combination of EU bureaucratic in-fighting, institutional incapacity, the nature of the DRC conflict and an inadequate response by the EU to this reality, and the wider context of a highly dysfunctional Congolese state all conspire to radically limit the effectiveness of the EU's efforts in the eastern DRC and undermine any attempts at policy coherence.

The EU's Institutional (In)coherence

What is striking about the Union's activities in the eastern DRC is the high level of intra-EU tension, which has resulted in bureaucratic ineffectiveness at most levels of the organizational structures. The link between the Commission and the Council, as well as the relationship between EU institutions and actors in Brussels, Kinshasa and the eastern DRC all come together in this milieu. Inter-departmental coordination is very weak and sabotages the EU's status as a credible actor in the region.

Immediately striking in this regard is the amount of personal rivalry, mutual envy and open disrespect expressed by both Commission and Council actors in Brussels toward one another. While one Commission representative asserted, "We [the Commission] are not there [in the DRC] for the show but there to address the problem",¹ a representative of the Council Secretariat blamed the Commission for undermining projects and "being

1 Interview with a representative of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, 4 March 2010.

jealous” of civilian European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions, viewing them as properly within the Commission’s remit: “Military [programmes] they can accept because it is military and they are not in charge. But civilian, they say [the Commission] can do it as well”, stated one Council informant.² This tension between different actors has long characterized the EU’s efforts regarding the eastern DRC. For instance, when debate was raging in Brussels in late 2008 as to whether the EU should take a proactive stance vis-à-vis violence in the region:

The EU appeared far from united. Kouchner was the first to call for EU military intervention in the DRC: The then EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, quickly rejected the idea, the Belgians came out in support and the British sent mixed messages. Meanwhile, visits to the region by the EU special representative for the Great Lakes region, Roland van de Geer, EU Commissioner Louis Michel and Kouchner with the British Foreign Secretary David Miliband in early November left no impression of a unified front – Javier Solana was not even allowed to travel with Miliband and Kouchner on their plane (Vines 2010: 1101).

In interviews conducted in Brussels, it was evident that there is in fact a very high level of mistrust between the two EU institutions, caused by the aforementioned unclear distribution of roles and responsibilities. In practice, such confusion has led to inter-departmental rivalry between the two entities, which not only hampers coordination in Brussels but is then transferred to the ground in the DRC. As one Council informant noted,

People don’t like each other. People don’t understand each other and they don’t want to understand each other. Personal agendas, personal opinions sometimes override the political guidance, the strategic directions they [EU actors in the DRC] get from here, from Brussels. If we don’t really cooperate [in Brussels], how can they do a better job [in the DRC]? (ibid.).

This statement was reinforced by a representative of the Commission working in both Kinshasa and Goma, who described the EU delegations based in Brussels as quite territorial of their institutional turf, noting that there were various “races between people” – inter-personal rivalry – which

2 Interview with a representative of the Council Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium, 4 March 2010.

resulted in “games played with Brussels”.³ We detected institutional wrangling rather than coherence in the EU’s external activities in the eastern DRC throughout our research, and it was clear that this directly led to ineffective and inefficient approaches. This fact was acknowledged by some EU actors on the ground, who lamented,

We realize that everyone does the same thing, without any dialogue [...] What bothers me is that we can detect that there is a loss of energy and loss of money by acting so. Here, we do not know how to coordinate ourselves.⁴

For instance, there has long been a lack of common analysis at the EU level:

Both the Commission and the Council produce their analyses, based on different sources [...] The issue of a common “situational awareness” is of key importance for ensuring coherence across the policy domains, as is the need to functionally link the crisis management capacities of the second pillar with the longer-term competences of the Community, especially in post-conflict reconstruction (Hoebeke et al. 2007: 14).

To date, however, the Commission and the Council remain inadequately harmonized, which fundamentally undermines the ECDPM best practice recommendation that policy analysis serve and promote evidence-based solutions.

Compounding this intra-EU disarray is the fact that the relationship between member states’ representatives on the ground with Brussels was often described as complicated and full of tensions. One national ambassador of a member state asserted that “there is a total misunderstanding [between Brussels and the field]. It is very serious and we always have to justify what we’re doing.” The relationship was described as hierarchical and byzantine due to the multitude of actors, an overlapping of bilateral policies and those pursued under the EU umbrella, and a top-down approach from Brussels that often negated or sidelined policy advice emanating from the field in favour of prescriptions from Brussels-based bureaucrats who, although remote from what is actually happening in the DRC, believed their analysis was superior and – crucially – were strategically closer to decision-makers at EU headquarters.⁵

3 Interview with a representative of the European Commission delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.

4 Interview with a representative of EUPOL RD Congo in Bukavu, DRC, 8 April 2010.

5 Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.

The weakness of the voice of in-field actors was compounded by the nature of recruitment for EU positions. This relates to the ECDPM's prerequisite that institutional capacity must be strong so as to effect policy coherence. In fact, due to the unattractive living conditions in the eastern DRC, it was rare for experienced or senior staff to volunteer for positions or to remain in their posts for long. Indeed, many EU staffers based in the DRC were obviously young and inexperienced, often in their first post abroad. One EU employee confirmed that "in the EU delegation in Kinshasa, there are many young and inexperienced people working because of the working and living environment". A shortage of staff due to such factors then led to a constant switching of roles within the EU offices: "People in charge of infrastructure just change to governance" overnight.⁶ Where expert knowledge was needed most, due to the difficult working environment of the DRC, the reality is that the EU has to predominantly rely on inexperienced junior employees whose knowledge of the situation in the DRC is, at best, scant and often disturbingly naïve.

This problem of competency was then compounded by the structural difficulties caused by EU employment practice, which further exacerbated problems in attaining any long-term coherent European approach. Differing contract periods meant that there was a continuous change in staffing. Institutional incapacity was the result. As one respondent noted,

The problem is that everyone arrives at a different time during the year, which means that there is always a renewal in staff, which is very complicated. If you are looking for a medium-term goal, it requires almost every time to rebuild contacts. It is quite difficult.⁷

In other words, the nature of the bureaucratic machine of the European Union served to increase the significance of personalities and decrease institutional and vertical coherence in that experienced staff are outnumbered by junior colleagues who themselves are in a constant state of rotation and replacement. Obviously, none of this facilitates any notion of EU coherence. In fact, such incoherence plays out within the context of a regional conflict where the EU seems incapable of managing or implementing its goals in terms of its institutional responses.

6 Interview with a representative of the European Commission delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.

7 Interview with a representative of EUPOL RD Congo in Bukavu, DRC, 8 April 2010.

The EU's Response to the Regional Dimension of the Conflict

Despite the fact that most contemporary conflicts around the world are often defined as “domestic” or as “civil” wars, most conflicts in Africa are regionalized, and the war in the DRC is a primary example. Indeed, the conflict in the eastern DRC cannot be isolated from the regional neighbourhood, as strong cross-border dimensions defy borders and neat categorizations (Söderbaum and Stålgren 2010). As Gegout notes, an understanding of African regional politics is a prerequisite to effective engagement on the continent (Gegout 2009a). In this context, in evaluating the EU's efforts in the eastern DRC, it is necessary to assess the extent to which the EU actually conceives of the conflict as regionalized. As a UN official noted on the regional nature of the conflict, “It is a total mess until you tackle it [regionally].” Yet as this same informant admitted, multilateral bodies have been “frankly crap when dealing with cross-border issues” related to the DRC.⁸ Indeed, it is apparent that though the DRC's conflicts are connected to regionalized conflict systems, EU policy and planning frameworks remain constrained by analysis on the single-country level.

It is evident that diverse forms of regional networking, based essentially on a form of kleptocratic political economy, characterize the conflicts in the eastern DRC. What scholars have observed in the wider region is what Shaw refers to as a “war economy”, one of five typologies of regionalization currently remaking Africa (Shaw 2000). What is intriguing about the type of shadow networks present in the Great Lakes region is that they are not restricted by notions of state, but are instead regional, continental and global: The continent's boundaries are now truly transnational in scope, reflecting the intensification of the extraversion of the African state identified by Bayart (2000). In the context of the eastern DRC, the recognition that regionalisms in Central Africa are multi-layered and can and do involve transnational networks that may or may not be legal, or that reflect the “criminalization of the state” in Africa (Bayart et al. 1999), is fundamental. Indeed, as one Congolese informant put it, in the DRC “what is criminal is the state”.⁹

Such regional dynamics involve the participation of a multitude of actors, both state and non-state players – although in the DRC, neopatrimonialism has blurred such distinctions. In a traditional Weberian patrimonial

8 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.

9 Interview with an associate of the POLE Institute in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.

system, all ruling relationships are personal relationships, and the difference between the private and public sphere is non-existent. Under a neopatrimonial system, the separation of the public from the private is recognized (even if only on paper) and is certainly publicly displayed through outward manifestations of the rational-bureaucratic state. However, in practical terms, the private and public spheres are not detached from one another, and the outward manifestations of statehood are often facades hiding the real workings of the system (Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Taylor 2005). In the DRC, official state bureaucracies inherited from the colonial period, however weak and ineffective, have become dysfunctional and severely constrained in their officially stated duties. The nature of the DRC conflicts reflect the fact that the social and economic interconnectedness exists at the nexus of formal/informal, legal/illegal, national/global, etc., constituting what has been called the “three economies of Africa” (Freeman 2000). In such a milieu, the informality of patronage networks and the regional dimension of the conflicts that spawn such links need to be recognized. The complexities and heterogeneity of the regional nature of the violence revolving around the eastern DRC thus provide a challenge for policy-makers.

The problem is that the EU has not dealt well with cross-border issues and the regional dimension of the conflict, primarily because the EU’s approach in the DRC has been resolutely nation-based. Though the EU itself has increasingly acknowledged the regional dimension of the conflicts in some of its rhetoric, no practical mechanisms for dealing with this reality have satisfactorily evolved, which is due to the way the EU bilaterally works with governments through state-building and a national approach. Thus though the EU has a “Special Representative” for the wider Great Lakes region, for example, the security governance and institutional set-up inherent in the EU’s structures reinforce a statist policy methodology, one largely incapable of a truly regional approach. As one EU member state ambassador puts it, “You have to have a regional approach. If you don’t have a regional approach, you don’t solve national problems.”¹⁰ Yet this is precisely what seems to be taking place with regard to the EU’s efforts in the region.

The EU is organized and designed to deal with nation-states (however dysfunctional these may be) and not with regions (also see Schulz and Söderbaum 2010). The EU has found it very difficult to successfully engage in the context of a regional conflict where a credible regional counterpart is absent (any visit to the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries,

10 Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.

CEPGL, headquarters in Gisenyi, Rwanda, will confirm this analysis of the moribund state of that organization). Despite the condition of the CEPGL, the natural attraction of one regional organization (the EU) to another (the CEPGL) has led to Brussels exerting some effort in establishing links with the latter body, though the success has been negligible. One EU member state diplomat asserted that “the EU focuses on regional economic integration and puts weight on regional organizations”. Thus, “the CEPGL can be seen as an umbrella for contacts”. However, recognizing the somewhat derelict state of the Great Lakes organization, the diplomat added that “from a Brussels perspective, there is more weight on the CEPGL than it deserves”.¹¹ An EU diplomat based in Goma was more forthright, stating that the CEPGL was in fact

a project of the donor countries in the Great Lakes region, but we don't know exactly what we're planning. I don't know where we will end. The CEPGL was dead but now there is a kind of rebirth. However, there are only directors sitting on the top floor and they have no staff to implement projects.¹²

This confirms the comments of another EU member state diplomat, who acknowledged that taking the regional aspects into account and working with bodies such as the CEPGL was “certainly a challenge”.¹³

Building Peace with a Dysfunctional Government

As noted above, the EU has a statist approach and is heavily focused on building the formal structures of the DRC state. However, this is very problematic in a context where the ruling regime is part of the problem and a major cause of the humanitarian emergencies. Indeed, the DRC has long been characterized by disorder and state decay (Haskin 2005). This milieu is deliberate and affords a logical *modus operandi* for a variety of actors operating within areas where the formal state is in a process of eclipse. This scenario has long been developing within the DRC, where tendencies based on tribalism and ethnic polarization, stoked by ambitious local big men and tacitly tolerated by the political elite in Kinshasa, have been an historic means of providing a skeletal form of governance and control and have staked out postcolonial Congolese history, accelerated under Mobutu and continued

11 Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.

12 Interview with an EU member state representative in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.

13 Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.

under the Kabilas (see Callaghy 1984; Young and Turner 1985; Wrong 2000). These circumstances have in turn constructed a “shadow state” in the DRC (Reno 1998: 26), which, however dysfunctional, has retained enough substance to negotiate with and benefit from external actors’ willingness to conduct business. What exists in the DRC and has existed for many years is what the Congolese political scientist Ernest Wamba dia Wamba (2000) has dubbed *vagabondage politique*, a political culture

characterized by the following features: religious-like cult of the chief, intrigues, any means are all right to achieve power, commitment as a negative value (*vagabondage politique* or the constant search for the highest bidder), factionalism, etc.

What the Congolese state exhibits is “a generalized system of patrimonialism and an acute degree of apparent disorder [...] and a universal resort to personalized and vertical solutions to societal problems” (Chabal and Daloz 1999: xviii-xix). Disorder is not necessarily considered to be a state of dereliction or failure, but is rather a condition offering significant opportunities to those in the position to exploit such situations (Taylor and Williams 2001). Indeed, the conflicts in the DRC have generated their own instrumental logic of accumulation and have served to attract “businessmen”, or what Filip Reyntjens (2000: 25) has referred to as “entrepreneurs of insecurity”. In the DRC, all ruling relationships are personal relationships. Though the DRC is certainly publicly displayed through outward manifestations of the rational-bureaucratic state – a flag, borders, a government and bureaucracy, etc. – in practical terms, the private and public spheres are habitually not detached from one another, and the outward manifestations of DRC statehood are facades hiding the real workings of the system (see Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). The official state bureaucracies in the DRC have become dysfunctional and severely constrained in their officially stated duties. Post-colonial Congolese elites have relied on effected control and patronage (which they have gained by capturing power over the economy) rather than on the state in the form of a functioning administration. This swiftly degenerated into outright personal dictatorship under Mobutu and is something that continues to have a strong residual effect on today’s DRC.

It is true that *some* EU observers acknowledge this reality. As one member state ambassador remarked, “The DRC is not a state but an entity. It is not controlling its territory, not its army and not the East. There is anarchy in the DRC and in the Great Lakes region.”¹⁴ However, a major problem for

14 Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.

the EU in its engagement with the DRC is that of state sovereignty, meaning that the EU *must* work with representatives of the DRC “government” and treat such actors as if they truly represent an actual state and, just as fictitiously, represent the Congolese people. One political commentator from the DRC noted this contradiction:

In Kinshasa, there are [EU] ambassadors and they know what is going on but they don't want to say anything about it. So the question is: What kind of partners do you have in front of you? They are pretending that the DRC is a state and they are pretending that there is a political elite with a vision for the country. What is required is to get a minimum of a state. At the moment it seems as if a weak Congo suits everyone.¹⁵

This is a major conundrum for the EU and for all other international actors engaging in the eastern DRC. In short, everyone feels compelled to pretend that a Congolese state exists and that it is through this entity that cooperation and dialogue must be processed. As one UN informant phrased it, “The international community is obliged to deal with the Congolese government. The DRC is a sovereign country, but it is run by a criminal elite network.”¹⁶ This has serious ramifications for the EU, and EU officials stated that because there is no DRC state, “we don't have policies” to deal with it. Where this leaves the EU was made clear by an EU official in Goma who remarked that “the Congolese government knows how to play the game”.¹⁷ This disbursing of resources by the EU, ostensibly for the purpose of state-building in a space where there is no state to build is then compounded by a lack of donor coordination, again limiting the EU's coherence.

The Failure of Donor Coordination

The EU's efforts in the DRC are compromised by two interrelated problems in the donor community: First, the dysfunctional and kleptocratic Congolese state elites adroitly manage to divide the donors – the EU, its member states and other countries such as the United States – according to the self-defined interests of those elites. Second, the various donors themselves focus predominantly on donor visibility through implementing highly noticeable projects that promise immediate results rather than following a

15 Interview with an associate of the POLE Institute in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.

16 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.

17 Interview with a representative of the European Commission delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.

comprehensive and coordinated – and thus necessarily joint and long-term – strategy.

In terms of the first aspect, one interviewee highlighted the fact that the EU is well aware of the problems in dealing with a government such as the DRC's. To manage these circumstances, the EU linked its financing to extensive conditionalities. However, according to one interviewee, Kinshasa is not overly concerned by donor threats and conditionalities as "they [the government in Kinshasa] know that in the end, we'll [the EU will] pay". Speaking specifically of funding for supposed elections, the EU informant noted that "the money for the elections, for example, [was] taken from somewhere else", rather than submitting to EU diktats around transparency. This meant that with its bargaining power emasculated by the Congolese state elites playing one donor off against another, the EU was left "an actor for financing, yes, but not an actor for policies", a position that obviously radically undermines any notion of EU coherence (ibid.). Yet the EU has itself to blame for this outcome. An informant working with the UN in the eastern DRC stated that the EU missed the opportunity to bring all the donors together and thus avoid such spoiler tactics by Kinshasa: "An agreed[-upon] agenda would have been very helpful and if the EU as the political umbrella managed to bring the member states together, that would have been of great help."¹⁸

The significance of multilateralism is acknowledged by the EU, and the Union has often been understood as an actor with the greatest capability of rendering multilateralism effective in the eastern DRC. One commentator asserted the following:

We [the international community] do not have a focus and we don't have a direction. I'm still convinced that the mission can do something for the DRC; however, what I fail to understand is why it is so difficult to define what we're doing. Why is it not possible to raise these issues under the EU umbrella at the UN level? The people here on the ground see pretty clear what the major problems are, but why do the donors not get the UN to listen to them? (ibid.).

In such sentiments, the EU is seen as an actor that *could* contribute to effective multilateralism, but the current situation where there is a palpable lack of EU coherence vis-à-vis policy delivery means that there is a concomitant lack in any strategy by the EU in the eastern DRC that may lead to such an outcome.

18 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.

This argumentation ties in further with the second aspect mentioned above, the accentuation of visibility from the donors' perspective. There is clearly a lack of coordination between the administrative EU centres in both Brussels and Kinshasa and the ground level in the eastern DRC, and this has led to a detachment of the two levels and to hindered coordination of the actors involved. One EU informant in Goma commented,

There is an overlap with other European countries. The training of police officers, for example, is done by EUPOL and other countries. We share information but we don't listen to each other. Our problem as donors is that we want to have an immediate result.¹⁹

Another interviewee was even more outspoken, stating that with regard to the wider international community, "I believe that there is a massive communication problem. Kinshasa sucks in all information, but nothing comes out of Kinshasa."²⁰

Clearly, all donors focus on their specific projects and want to see immediate results as a means to justify the expenditure of resources to domestic constituencies. This is because in a complex humanitarian emergency such as the one in the DRC, long-term goals and achievements are incredibly complicated and unlikely to deliver results any time soon. Yet it is in such an environment where a comprehensive and long-term vision is most needed. In this regard, the EU lacks a clear strategy, and it seems obvious from research in the field that there is in fact no clearly defined strategy on how to build peace, security and development in the eastern DRC. What this has resulted in is an intangible consistency that is only exhibited through a public discourse, rather than something that might be called "real" and effective.

Conclusion

In examining the role of the EU in the eastern DRC, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the key EU political goal is not necessarily to solve the myriad problems (if that is indeed possible) but rather simply to be present *and* build presence, which of course could be seen as an element of projection. As one EU informant candidly put it, the reason for any EU presence in the east of the DRC could be explained by relating it "purely to political will".

19 Interview with a representative of the European Commission delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.

20 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.

This same informant questioned if indeed the work of the EU which she herself was involved in had any effect.²¹ Starved of resources and beset by institutional in-fighting, bureaucratic turf wars, and an inability to deal with the very nature of the entity that passes itself off as the Congolese state, almost without exception EU interviewees in the eastern DRC were dismissive of their own organization's efforts in building peace and security. One Goma-based EU actor had no idea what either Brussels or the EU office in Kinshasa did with the information that she passed to them,²² while another lamented, "I do not know what I am doing here" and went to say that "the EU's involvement is purely political".²³ The picture that emerges is one of an EU more concerned about visibility and its own image as a peace-builder rather than real achievements on the ground.

Participation in EUPOL and EUSEC was one way in which the EU gained visibility by a symbolic presence, but beyond such symbolism it was difficult to discern any real coherence vis-à-vis EU policy in the eastern DRC. High levels of intra-institutional tensions, personal rivalry, and overlapping responsibilities combined with high staff turnover (of mostly junior and inexperienced personnel) come together to foster bureaucratic ineffectiveness and a culture of institutional wrangling. This has rendered the EU's policy initiatives in the eastern DRC largely ineffective and inefficient. Indeed, what was found in the eastern DRC was almost the exact opposite of what the ECDPM recommends as the fundamentals upon which any coherent EU set of policies may be built.

Much of this results from structural problems inherent in the EU's organizational make-up. A multitude of actors, an overlapping of the policies of bilateral member states and the EU, and a top-down approach from Brussels negating and sidelining evidence-based policy advice emanating from the field all serve to complicate the relationship between Brussels and EU actors in the DRC. Policy statements are confused and often contradictory, with inter-departmental synchronization lacking in most aspects and institutional incapacity characterizing many of the EU's day-to-day activities in the region.

From a strategic point of view, the effectiveness of the EU's goals in the DRC is then compromised by the EU's seeming inability to move be-

21 Interview with a representative of EUPOL RD Congo in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.

22 Interview with a representative of the European Commission delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.

23 Interview with an EU member state representative in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.

yond discrete national borders (in spite of the tacit recognition, through the creation of the EUSR, of the regional dimensions of the conflict).

As an organization of states, it is perhaps to be expected that the EU will feel most comfortable dealing with apparent peers. Yet the empirical absence of the DRC as a state in the sense known in Europe and the EU's collaboration with a highly dysfunctional and kleptocratic Congolese quasi-state pose a major problem for the EU. After all, the EU is focused on state-building in a context where there is no state to build, and the state apparatus has been hijacked by a political elite with highly questionable personal interests. This raises the interesting issue of whether *any* global actor is capable of helping solve the DRC's myriad problems.

If this is the case, the continued disbursement of EU resources to a neopatrimonial regime like the one in Kinshasa becomes highly problematic. Yet it seems that the Congolese elites, who cannot manage to build a Congolese state (or, alternatively, have no interest in doing so), are highly adept at successfully dividing donors according to their own interests. The donors' own strategies of favouring high visibility but short-term projects to ensure donor presence facilitates this set of dynamics – which has been (rightly) termed a “game” by one EU informant in the DRC. This then leads us to an important question: In terms of the EU's role in the eastern DRC, can it be concluded that Brussels' key political goal is not necessarily to tackle the multitude of tribulations in the DRC in the best way (whatever this may be and if that is indeed possible) but rather to be present, to be seen to be “doing something” and thus to build some sort of institutional presence? In other words, do the EU's activities in the eastern DRC fit Gegout's dismissive observation that the “EU missions were carried out first and foremost to promote the EU as a security actor, not to help civilians in conflicts” (Gegout 2009a: 411). While presence *is* obviously one aspect of the EU's diplomacy, observers should not be misled in terms of the various shortcomings in the EU's approach to practically foster peace, security and development in the DRC. Indeed, “the EU is not perceived as a credible actor in African conflict management” (Gegout 2009a: 403). In other words, when evaluating the EU's policy delivery in the eastern DRC, actual effectiveness is not necessarily as important as projecting a presence and being identified as being there, even if being there does not help resolve the ongoing conflict situation.

Finally, the apparent lack of a clearly defined European strategy towards the DRC and the Great Lakes region along with the EU's subsequent marginal coherence lead to the assumption that there is no coherent EU strategy to render multilateralism effective, despite the EU's declared goal to

do so. A lack of explicit statements insisting on policy coherence, a lack of inter-departmental coordination and cooperation, and notable levels of incapability all seem to point in this direction. This of course has implications for the EU's own ambitions as an influential global actor.

References

- Aggestam, Lisbeth, and Francesco Anesi (2008), *The Security Development Nexus*, Stockholm: Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies.
- Allen, David, and Michael Smith (1990), Western Europe's Presence in the Contemporary International Arena, in: *Review of International Studies*, 16, 1, 19-37.
- Bayart, Jean-François (2000), Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion, in: *African Affairs*, 99, 217-267.
- Bayart, Jean-François, Stephen Ellis and Béatrice Hibou (1999), *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, Oxford: James Currey.
- Biscop, Sven, and Edith Drieskens (2005), *Effective Multilateralism and Collective Security: Empowering the UN*, Leuven: Institute for International and European Policy.
- Bratton, Michael, and Nicolas van de Walle (1997), *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bretherton, Charlotte, and John Vogler (2006), *The European Union as a Global Actor*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Callaghy, Thomas M. (1984), *The State-Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cameron, Fraser (1998), The European Union as a Global Actor: Far From Pushing Its Political Weight Around, in: Carolyn Rhodes (ed.), *The European Union in the World Community*, Boulder, CO/London: Lynne Rienner, 19-44.
- Chabal, Patrick, and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999), *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, Oxford: James Currey.
- Chretien, Jean-Pierre, and Richard Banegas (eds.) (2008), *The Recurring Great Lakes Crisis: Identity, Violence and Power*, Oxford: Hurst.
- Christiansen, Thomas (2001), Intra-Institutional Politics and Inter-Institutional Relations in the EU: Towards Coherent Governance?, in: *Journal of European Public Policy*, 8, 5, 747-769.
- Council of the European Union (2003), *Council Decision 2003/432/CFSP of 12 June 2003 on the Launching of the European Union Military Operation in the*

- Democratic Republic of Congo*, Brussels: Official Journal of the European Union.
- Council of the European Union (2010), *Council Decision 2010/113/CFSP of 22 February 2010 Extending the Mandate of the European Union Special Representative for the African Great Lakes Region*, Brussels: Official Journal of the European Union.
- Delestre, Francois (2006), *EUPOL-KINSHASA – The First European Police Mission in Africa*, press document EUPOL-Kinshasa.
- ECDPM and ICEI (2006), *EU Mechanisms that Promote Policy Coherence for Development: A Scoping Study*, Studies in European Development Co-Operation Evaluation, 2, Maastricht: European Union.
- European Commission (2003), *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, Brussels: European Commission.
- European Commission (2006), *The European Consensus on Development*, Brussels: European Commission.
- European Commission (2010a), *External Cooperation Programmes: Democratic Republic of Congo*, online: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/country-cooperation/congo-democratic-republic/congo_en.htm> (26 September 2011).
- European Commission (2010b), *Humanitarian Aid: Annual Report 2009*, Brussels: Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO).
- European Commission (2010c), *Humanitarian Implementation Plan 2011: Democratic Republic of Congo*, Brussels: Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection.
- European Union (2005), *The European Union's Engagement Towards Stability and Security in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*, Brussels: Council Secretariat.
- European Union (2010a), *EU Police Mission for the DRC (EUPOL RD Congo)*, Brussels: Council Secretariat.
- European Union (2010b), *EU Mission to Provide Advice and Assistance for Security Sector Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Brussels: Council Secretariat.
- Freeman, Constance J. (2000), The Three Economies of Africa, in: *African Security Review*, 9, 4, 66-81.
- Gegout, Catherine (2009a), EU Conflict Management in Africa: The Limits of an International Actor, in: *Ethnopolitics*, 8, 3, 403-415.
- Gegout, Catherine (2009b), The West, Realism and Intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (1996-2006), in: *International Peacekeeping*, 16, 2, 231-244.

- Ginsberg, Roy H. (1999), Conceptualizing the European Union as an International Actor: Narrowing the Theoretical Capability-Expectations Gap, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37, 3, 429-454.
- Government of the DRC and European Commission (2008), *Document de Stratégie Pays et Programme Indicatif National 2008-2013: L'Union Européenne dans le Monde – République Démocratique du Congo*, Kinshasa: Government of the DRC/European Commission.
- Haskin, Jeanne M. (2005), *The Tragic State of The Congo: From Decolonization to Dictatorship*, New York: Algora.
- Hill, Christopher (1993), The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualising Europe's International Role, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 31, 3, 305-325.
- Hill, Christopher, and Michael Smith (eds.) (2005), *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hoebeker, Hans, Stéphanie Carette and Koen Vlassenroot (2007), *EU Support to the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Paris: Centre d'Analyse Stratégique.
- Jackson, Robert H., and Carl G. Rosberg (1982), *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant*, Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Jupille, Joseph, and James A. Caporaso (1998), States, Agency and Rules: The European Union in Global Environmental Politics, in: Carolyn Rhodes (ed.), *The European Union in the World Community*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 231-230.
- Kagan, Robert (2003), *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Knutsen, Björn Olav (2009), The EU's Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and the Challenges of Civil-Military Coordination (CMCO): The Case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in: *European Security*, 18, 3, 441-459.
- Lemarchand, René (2009), *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lurweg, Meike (2011), Coherent Actor or Institution Wrangler? The EU as a Development and Security Actor in Eastern DR Congo, in: *African Security*, 4, 2, 100-126.
- Manners, Ian (2010), Global Europa: Mythology of the European Union in World Politics, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 48, 1, 67-87.
- Nuttall, Simon (2005), Coherence and Consistency, in: Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (eds.), *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 91-112.

- Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges (2007), *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, London: Zed Books.
- Orbie, Jan (2008), *Europe's Global Role: External Policies of the European Union*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Pollack, Mark (2006), Unilateral America, Multilateral Europe?, in: John Peterson and Mark A. Pollack (eds.), *Europe, America, Bush: Transatlantic Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, London: Routledge, 115-128.
- Prunier, Gérard (2008), *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Reno, William (1998), *Warlord Politics and African States*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Reyntjens, Filip (2000), The First African World War, in: *Africa Now*, 22, 6, 22-26.
- Reyntjens, Filip (2009), *The Great African War: Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996-2006*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shaw, Timothy M. (2000), New Regionalisms in Africa in the New Millennium: Comparative Perspectives on Renaissance, Realism and/or Regressions, in: *New Political Economy*, 5, 3, 399-414.
- Schulz, Michael, and Fredrik Söderbaum (2010), Theorising the EU's Role in Regional Conflict Management, in: *European Security*, 19, 3, 361-376.
- Smith, Karen E. (2003), *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Söderbaum, Fredrik, and Patrik Stålgren (eds.) (2010), *The European Union and the Global South*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Szymanski, Marcela, and Michael E. Smith (2005), Coherence and Conditionality in European Foreign Policy: Negotiating the EU–Mexico Global Agreement, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 43, 1, 171-192.
- Taylor, Ian (2003), Conflict in Central Africa: Clandestine Networks and Regional/Global Configurations, in: *Review of African Political Economy*, 30, 95, 45-55.
- Taylor, Ian (2005), *NEPAD: Towards Africa's Development or Another False Start?*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Taylor, Ian, and Paul Williams (2001), South African Foreign Policy and the Great Lakes Crisis: African Renaissance Meets *Vagabondage Politique?*, in: *African Affairs*, 100, 399, 265-286.
- Turner, Thomas (2007), *The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth and Reality*, London: Zed Books.
- Van Leeuwen, Mathijs (2008), Imagining the Great Lakes Region: Discourses and Practices of Civil Society Regional Approaches for

- Peacebuilding in Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46, 3, 393-426.
- Vines, Alex (2010), Rhetoric from Brussels and Reality on the Ground: The EU and Security in Africa, in: *International Affairs*, 86, 5, 1091-1108.
- Wamba dia Wamba, Ernest (2000), *The DR Congo Conflict and the Way Out: Some Ideas*, Boston Mass., 31 January.[B1]
- Wrong, Michela (2000), *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo*, London: Fourth Estate.
- Young, Crawford, and Thomas Turner (1985), *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Religion and Debordering practices in the Senegal Valley: Local populations and Refugees in the Cross-border Area of the Thillé Boubacar District

Mamadou Seydou KANE
Université Gaston Berger, St-Louis (Sénégal)
emeskane@hotmail.com

Abstract

The Senegal-Mauritania borderland is mainly peopled by local and refugee populations belonging to the transboundary Halpulaaren community. This area, known as the Senegal Valley, has historically been the theatre of enduring border processes, and also a buffer zone since the earliest times of Islamic expansion. Religion is therefore a significant dimension of the border life of these communities. It affects the ways in which the Senegal Valley populations relate to, and use the border, even when other factors such as political power and social processes are at work. This paper seeks to examine how and to what extent references to, and practices inspired by, religion are mobilized in debordering discourse and practices such as land claims, crossing, trading, smuggling, etc., and in regulating cross-border interactions and frictions.

Keywords: *Religion – Debordering discourse and practices – cross-border interactions – Senegal-Mauritania borderland*

Outline

Introduction

1. A few Specificities
2. “Sharing the Mosques and the Markets” : Perceptions and practices
3. “No Borders, New Limits”: Border Situations and Processes

Conclusion

Introduction

In the history and daily life of the border-straddling Senegal valley communities, religious elements lie at the heart of the cultural, economic and political processes, deeply rooted in the debordering logics of discourses and practices. This paper seeks to examine these as they are deployed, with particular emphasis on religion, by religious actors and the local populations

of some villages located in the Thillé Boubacar district¹, including the refugee site of Kadiogne.

Understanding border processes and situations in the light of religion and its connection with debordering practices in these borderlands, which are historically referred to as the Fuuta Tooro, is tantamount to revisiting scholarly work dealing with various aspects of the Senegal Valley, from a historical (Dia, 1980; Belvaude, 1989; Brenner, 1997; Garcia, 1997; Sall, 1997), and various anthropological perspectives (Donan and Wilson, 1999; Humery, 2006; Meintel and Leblanc, 2003; Santoir, 1998; Tandia, 2011). Religious phenomena have for a long period been denied importance in the theoretical literature on transnationalism 'as a prevention of dogmatism and a way to achieve tolerance among citizens' (Haynes, 2001, p. 146). Such socio-cultural patterns as kinship and ethnicity have been abundantly documented in comparison, but religion has now revealed its specific spatial dynamism (Dia, 1980) and its long untapped capacities of mobilization in the present conditions of globalized economic processes and shifting identities.

Yet the paradox that associates, in the same mental and spatial borderland picture, the global image of the religious leader as an indispensable actor and the hazy outline of his action at a specific local level, is striking to say the least. The question that this study seeks to answer is thus relative to the different aspects and effects of the interplay between religion and border agency and structure with regard to local integration.

This paper adopts a three-step approach, starting with some socio-historical considerations that stress the specificities of the Senegal valley borderlands, and then devotes the second part to perceptions and practices. This part elaborates on the mutual interaction between border agency and identity, with particular attention on the religious identity and aspects. A last section develops the resulting border processes and situations.

¹ 'The French metropolitan and overseas "départements" are divided into over 300 smaller administrative areas known as **arrondissements**, which in turn are divided into "cantons" and "communes". There are usually three or four **arrondissements** in a "département". The main town in an **arrondissement** (the "chef-lieu d'arrondissement") is the home of the "sous-préfecture". The "sous-préfet d'arrondissement" reports to the "préfet" and deals with local administration, development and public order.' (*Le Grand Robert & Collins Electronique*, VUEF, 2003)

I. A Few Specificities

The link between religion, socioeconomic practices and mobility in the valley is a rather ancient phenomenon due to the early Islamization of this region, and is a feature which has contributed to shape some processes that can be observed in the present-day context of interstate border. The border, as ‘a new phenomenon of social relations and political order making’, has been introduced by the colonial moment (17th and 20th centuries) (Tandia, 2011, p. 6).

The Geographic boundary of the Senegal-Mauritania borderlands in the valley, generally consisting of flat open country, is rather porous, except during the rainy season (June-September) that floods the river and makes most of the roads impassable. Otherwise, physical character of the region doesn’t oppose any major obstacle to the flows of smuggled commodities that cross into the north of Senegal, and permits the use of rudimentary means of transportation, carts mostly, on a maze of country roads.

The religious map of the Senegal Valley, presents a homogenous muslim region that is composed by two major brotherhoods (*Tarikhas*): the Qadriya and the Tijaniya, both of Sufi inspiration. The Qadriya is a rather ancient order founded in Irak and dates from the 12th century by Abd el Kader el-Jilani, a Sheikh whose mystic communities (*Zaouïa*) appeared in the Saharan regions at the end of the 15th century and were based in the Trarza region, in the Senegal-Mauritania borderlands (Belvaude, 1989, p72). The Qadriya crossed to reach the black populations on the Southern banks of the Senegal through the influence of some leading families.

The Tijaniya is born more recently at the end of the 18th century (early 13th century of the Islamic calendar) in Algeria, founded by Sheikh Ahmed Tijaani. It is a Sufi brotherhood that owes its popularity to its relative simplicity in terms of teachings and practices, and its dominant presence in the valley to the influence of Al Hadj Omar, a charismatic political and religious figure whose campaigns of Islamization in this region and resistance against the French colonial power left an indelible imprint on these borderlands, historically known as Fuuta Tooro (Belvaude, 1989; Humery, 2010). The latter comprised the Halpulaaren kingdom of Tekrou, and the neighbouring wolof kingdom of Walo, which saw the rise of Al Hajj Malick Sy, another prominent figure of the Tijan brotherhood in Senegal.

The campaigns of Al Hadj Omar, and later his son Amadu Sheku, had drained thousands of people among the populations of the valley toward the Sudan, and after the French conquest of this region and the defeat of Niuro in 1891 (Sall, 1997, p. 225), they were repatriated in the High and Middle valley by thousands also, in most precarious material conditions. Most of these Omarians had to collaborate with the colonizer to make a decent living, the luckier became employees in the colonial judicial apparatus (*Qadis*) and in the French trading posts, while at the same time devoting due time to the religious life that was theirs through teaching or pursuing their advanced koranic studies. The story and carrier path of Cerno Amadou Mukhtar Sakho, as retraced by Sall (1997) shows the extent to which religion is omnipresent in the history of cross-border exchanges in the valley, be they cultural or economic and even political.

The charism of the early religious figures, even if it no longer is what it used to be (Triaud, 1997, p. 12), or can't be found in the heirs of the modern age because of a new, different context with different stakes, still has an appeal. The latter can be measured by the many religious celebrations in the smallest and most remote places in the Senegal Valley. These are the *Gamou* (annual celebration of the Prophet's birthday by the communities of the Tijani brotherhood) and *ziarra*, which is common in Sufi spaces and is generally an occasion for a given community to invite the religious guides or representatives of the neighbouring and even remote communities. The *ziarra* is at the same time an occasion to honour the memory of a late religious figure, or to pay homage to a prominent religious figure of the organizing community. For both the dates are generally chosen by the communities or their religious leaders, even though some respect the calendar as regards the *Gamou*. This is why there are frequent religious events along the border, on either side.

II. "Sharing the Mosques and the Markets": Perceptions and practices

"We have relatives, acquaintances, in the villages of this side of the river in the same way we know people in the villages beyond, who live with the Beydans. They pray together, attend the same mosques. In fact, there is such solidarity; it's as if the Beydans² and us were just one

² An Arab-Berber group stemming from the integration between local tribes of the Sahara and Arab conquerors at the time of the Islamization of the Sahara, and which is found in the contemporary republic of Mauritania. (cf. Belvaude, 1989. p. 17, 41- 48 for details on the composition and social organization of this group.). They are

community. There is a deep kinship. Belonging to the same religion has been a considerable contribution to this relationship. Personally I never asked anyone if they belonged to the Tijaniya, the Qadria or something else. I know some of them have a wife, a family down here. The brotherhoods are just different ways to the same destination. For example I can go to Tamba by traveling past Dakar and Kaolack, and someone else will reach the same destination by taking the Madina Gounass road. It's the same."

Sidiki, aged 30, shopkeeper/smuggler, Thillé Boubacar

The populations on the Senegalese side belong mainly to the Tijaniya and, as the Mauritanian side of the border is also peopled by villagers of the transborder Halpularen community, a religious mobility is developed across the border. The villagers of Daara (on the Mauritanian banks) attend massively the Gamou organized at Dimat (a village 2km away to the west of Thillé Boubacar, and 10km away from the border). Inversely, the people of Dimat and the small villages and hamlets that are scattered all the way to the border cross to attend the Gamou of Daara. The same practice is reproduced by all the villages of the borderlands and with even less difficulty given that the distance from Daara to Dimat is one of the longest between the borderland settlements of the Thillé Boubacar area.

Tandia mentions a similar phenomenon in the neighbouring cross-border zone of Dagana:

'Today Blacks in Gani are allied with leaders of the southern Mauritanian religious brotherhoods. Today Gaye welcomes one of most important 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. (Tandia, 2011, p. 12, n. 19)

Such a cross-border dynamics highlights the view that religious expression is asserted through spatial mobility (Meintel & Leblanc, 2003, p. 6). Religious identities travel across borders on a worldwide but also a regional scale, shaping collective memories, both global and local (p. 7). The transnational religious mobility that is observed reflects a perception of the

also referred to as the *Moors*, but this term is more general and includes both the Beydans and the black populations of mauritanian descent (*Haratins*).

borderlands as a unified space, or of a shift from the idea of *Space* to that of *Place* (Donnan and Wilson, 1999, p. 9).

Yet the share of religion in such a perception must be put into perspective even though the contribution of the religious identity in bringing these communities together is far from being questionable. The smugglers acknowledge the experience of this closeness, but in the context of another type of exchange.

Border life, as experienced by smugglers, reveals much about the overlapping identities found at the border and at work in border processes. Religious/community belonging does not seem to play a part in forming smuggling rings. These are composed of a Beydan supplier, who hires a delivery man to pass the ordered commodities to the boatman (the latter works freelance), and once the goods have crossed, it is either the Senegalese client himself who takes delivery of the stock, or else he hires one of the specialized carters working freelance and generally living in the border villages. This distribution channel is more used by the clients based in places not immediately at the border and closer to the main roads in the borderlands, as is the case of Thillé Boubacar. The distribution cycle is complete as the Beydan supplier crosses, generally on Thursday (the day of the famous weekly market of Thillé) and goes round the clients' shops for repayment.

The market of Thillé Boubacar gathers, weekly, people from all the villages of the borderlands, and the sample from the Mauritanian villages across the border is more than representative. The same people who meet frequently in religious celebrations meet also weekly for economic exchanges, which creates a blend as to what they have in common, what strengthens their social cohesion. 'The trade is the religion', says Boubou Ly, nearly 65, a former smuggler and now a charcoal dealer in local markets. The obvious irony of the answer doesn't obscure yet the reality of overlapping identities, but also suggests the limited expression of the religious identity and reference to religion in these exchanges. The explanation Sidi Ahmed, a Beydan supplier aged 50 and based in Gourel Soli (Mauritania), is short and clear: 'thieves do not have time'. Yet the religious identity of the borderlanders undeniably determines the borderlanders' perception of their economic activities and frames the modalities of its exercise; all the smugglers interviewed in the several villages of the borderlands were invariably shocked at the idea of dumping their loads of smuggled goods in a mosque in the frequent cases of car chase by the customs.

Recourse to the religious actors in land disputes and cross-border negotiations with political authorities or security services (border police, customs) is not specially favoured among the other options available to local populations and smugglers. The latter are generally protected by their Beydan supplier in Mauritania in case they are in trouble. Smugglers acknowledge the reliability of having Beydans negotiate with their fellow Beydans in their favour: ‘it works,’ says Sidiki, ‘any other intervention may fail, but there is nothing a Beydan would refuse to another one’. Here the religious identity is challenged by the ethnic perceptions, which makes sense in the light of the socio-political reality of Mauritania. The key point here is yet the limited efficiency of local religious leaders in an environment of cross-border disputes, and the resulting perception of such local actors.

Another type of smuggling produces an unexpected collaboration as the refugee community of Kadiogne, named after the village adjoining Thillé Boubacar, houses the corrals of horses drained in Senegal by the Beydans. These are destined for the rural areas of the Louga region where there is a high demand. The Kadiogne refugees are evasive³ and even defiant in the face of questions about this new form of collaboration. They justify this new contact with those who dispossessed and expelled them, 23 years ago, by the fact that ‘the communities of the borderlands cannot possibly live in this area without any sort of connection’. The head of the refugee site explains that when they were in Mauritania, they were not in constant contact with the Moor populations because their pastoral way of life prevented them from settling permanently in the villages: “yet wherever we settled for a moment near a village, we would pray in the same mosques, we have that in common.”

If the Kadiogne refugees and Beydans have the religious belonging in common, they also have land disputes still opposing them. The reason why the Kadiogne refugees have not accepted the repatriation proposals is that the land they used to exploit in addition to their pastoral activities is still in the hands of the Beydans. The implication of religious figures of the region in the settlement of this issue has not been acknowledged by the refugees.

Religious mobility, as actualized in the religious actors’ and populations’ imaginary, refers also to the blurring of frontiers between the brotherhoods, thus producing a debordering effect between the different religious variants of the borderland communities. As regards cross-border marriages, they are more and more frequent either among populations of the

³ Omar H. Sow, nearly 70 and the Head of the refugee site of Kadiogne, demanded that the interview [he reluctantly consented to] not be recorded.

transborder Halpularen community or between these on the Senegalese side and the Beydans. In the latter case, the religious identity is a determining factor but the emphasis is rather put on the common ground of Islamic faith rather than on religious community belonging (Tijaan or Qadri).

The mosque and the market emerge from the borderlanders' narratives as two key elements that epitomize their debordering aspirations, thus debordering spaces, and spaces embodying the successful projection of their borderland imaginaries. Massignon (as cited in Dia, 1980, p.17) views Islam as consistent with 'the perpetual invention of various solutions for the same problem of external balance.'⁴ Islamization was marked by a rational management effort of the African economic space; the space ideology thus contributed by conquerors belonging essentially to a nomadic and warlike civilization, which is also a space civilization, opened broader economic perspectives than the traditional animistic ideology (Dia, 1980, p.66). The debordering dynamics ascribed to religion in border context has thus a historical grounding.

III. "No Borders, New Limits": Border Situations and Processes

"Their trade is rather directed toward Senegal. They bring camels, horses, cows for sale. Sugar and oil are the least they sell here. I haven't seen them selling chicken on this side yet, but that's all. Their trade extends beyond the border⁵. If they stop selling their goods in our markets, it will be hard to have a decent living in this region...If smuggling is forbidden by law, it is not forbidden by religion, and everybody takes advantage of it anyway."

Ousmane, aged 70, farmer and cattleraiser, near Loboudou

⁴ «'invention perpétuelle de solutions de solutions variées pour un même problème d'équilibre externe » (My translation).

⁵ Some 60 km at the west of Thillé Boubacar and very close to Rosso – one of the major border posts of the country – Richard Toll, a town on the main road whose population has been drastically increased by the working masses of the sugar industry, witnesses everyday the same ritual of buses (linking the High Valley to the capital city) stopping for a prayer-stop. Yet the prayer-stop is also an occasion for the passengers to get supplies of smuggled sugar from Mauritania. More important stocks of smuggled goods flood even the most remote cities through various channels because of the high cost of living and despite the watchfulness of the customs on main and minor roads.

Explaining earlier hesitations and reluctance to use the term *borderlands* as an archeologist, Parker (2006) gives, among other reasons, the fact that it includes the word *border*, which ‘betrays its close association with the linearity and rigidness of borders’ (p. 80) – which was not common in the ancient world. Borderlands contain such boundary sets as borders and frontiers, given that they are regions owing their existence to specificities resulting from the activities, exchanges and identities of various forms that are produced by the context of demarcation between states.

Donnan and Wilson (1999, p. 15) define frontiers as ‘territorial zones of varying width which stretch across and away from state borders, within which people negotiate a variety of behaviours and meanings associated with membership in their nations and states.’ This view is consistent with Elton’s (1996b, as cited in Parker, 2006, p.80) and Parker’s notion of frontiers as ‘zones of variously overlapping (but not congruent) political, economic and cultural boundaries.’ The frontier is thus ‘a zone where various types of boundaries intersect and overlap’ (p. 80).

Religion plays a part in the integration of the borderlands of the Thillé Boubacar area because of the mobilizing capacities of the religious identity. The suspending effects of religion in the border context create a favorable climate for cross-border economic exchanges. Yet the economic dimension as the motive power of integration is given a greater importance by borderlanders. This explains why some of them feel much closer to the Beydan populations of Mauritania than to the other members of the cross-border Halpularen community, in spite of kinship and religious ties. Boubou shares the view:

‘If it turns out that you, as a Mauritanian, can solve for me the problems I can’t possibly handle in Mauritania, and that I can do the same for you in Senegal, then we can get closer as I’m with the brother on the other side with whom I’m often engaged in land disputes. It’s good that we share the same religion, it is a bonus.’

This may somewhat explain the limited influence of the religious figures and also the limited recourse to their intervention in the problems occurring in cross-border exchanges. The hegemony of the religious identity is challenged by the arguments and logics of the equally expanding economic region. Ohmae’s (as cited in Brunet-Jailly, 2005, p. 641) notion of

economic regions emerging out of culturally homogenous borderland regions explicits here the role of the religious identity in favouring the extension of the economic boundary.

The latter is located far beyond the political border in the Senegalese lands and covers a good part of northern Senegal, whose populations have been increasingly relying on goods from Mauritania, in the face of the high cost of living that has been prevailing in Senegal over the last years. This dependence and expansion of the economic boundary in favor of Mauritania has been compounded by the confiscation, on the Mauritanian banks, of land that was in the hands of those who are now the Mauritanian refugees in Senegal. In this sense the argument of the religious identity raised by the refugees of Kadiogne is instrumental in legitimating an alliance with elements of a group with which the cultural boundaries are rather restrictive due to past conflict. According to Bava (2003, as cited in Meintel & Leblanc, 2003, p. 6), the migrant's condition breeds new modes of religious investment⁶. In this borderland situation, the religious identity (lack of boundary) is deployed against the fragmented national identity (the refugees of Kadiogne are Mauritanian nationals) in a context of extended economic borders to face a socioeconomic condition.

On an institutional level, what may be inferred from the described border situations is that the Mauritanian and Senegalese governments pursue different goals in their use of the border, through the implementation of different border control priorities. Mauritania's insistence on identity controls aims at strengthening the political boundary and reflects its concerns with a political integrity somewhat threatened by the long standing crisis that national identity has been undergoing in the country (See Marty, 2003 and Santoir, 1998, p. 97). The arabization policies of the Mauritanian state have had as an effect the promotion of one ethnic component at the expense of the others, thus producing what could be termed the "Jacobinism" of the Mauritanian State (Neveu, 2008, p. 4). In such a state of affairs, the debordering effort of a transnational community may be viewed as threatening. The need to safeguard the political border is all the more easily understood as Mauritanian economic frontiers go far beyond the border into Northern Senegal, which explains the fact that the latter deploys consistent defensive economic control along the border and in borderlands to curb the surge of smuggling.

⁶ « La condition de migrant génère de nouveaux modes d'investissement du religieux. » (My translation).

For both bordering objectives, the homogeneity of the religious landscape of the Senegal-Mauritania borderlands is challenging. ‘Indeed, although international borders divide stateless nations, borderland communities may remain unified by culture – ethnicity, language and/or religion – or by the nature of local political institutions.’ (Brunet-Jailly, 2005, p. 638) Building and maintaining a common religious identity is consistent with the shaping of a specific borderland identity, and obviously has a bridging effect that fosters and makes various forms of collaboration and mobility easier.

For instance, within the smuggling rings, the terms of the contract linking the client and the supplier have been recently reconsidered as there have been cases of confidence tricks. Some crafty clients have repeatedly reported the seizure of their stocks by the customs to escape settlement, and since then an agreement establishes that the goods seized or lost on Mauritanian soil are at the expense of the supplier, and if the seizure occurs after the stock has crossed into Senegal, repayment will be borne by the client.

The contribution of the religious identity to forms of cross-border collaboration and mobility is illustrated, at least through comparison, by the episode narrated above and its meaning; the terms of the contract ruling the smuggling rings before the confidence tricks triggered change were inspired by a principle of mutual trust. If this principle cannot arbitrarily be ascribed to the expression of a shared religious identity, at least it can be categorized along with the latter. We thus have, in the setting up of the new rule, the occurrence of a notion that reinforces the perception of the border by smugglers, and therefore turns a previously debordering activity into a bordering one. The suspension of the religious identity in borderlands might have the same effect on border perception and the nature of cross border exchanges.

The links between religious actors and state-actors at the local level is somewhat diminished by the rather hierarchical structure of the religious communities, which is found at work in the different branches of the Tijaniya and other brotherhoods. The notions of “grand marabout” (See Garcia, 1997) and “khalife general” are telltale of this situation. Religious leaders are involved in negotiations and dispute settlements by state authorities, but at a higher level than that of the communities where the problems occur, and their local religious actors⁷. This

⁷ The recent (October 2011) land grabbing issue and the killing it fatally entailed in Fanaye, a village 11km away to the West of Thillé Boubacar, are a case in point. The state authorities mandated Thierno Madani Mountaga Tall, the head of the Omarian branch of the Tijaniya, to negotiate with the populations, at the expense of the local religious authorities and their influence, even though they acknowledge Mr Tall’s legitimate authority.

centered approach obscures the potential influence of the local religious leaders and jeopardizes local integration in a sense. Donnan and Wilson (1999) deal with the notion of “cultural landscapes” in the sense that ‘culture ties people and institutions of the international borderlands to people and institutions within their own states *and* to those very far away’ (p. 12). These include a religious landscape, in the Senegal-Mauritania case, as brotherhoods historically rooted either in Senegal or Mauritania are found in the borderlands and in remote places of both countries. Belvaude (1989, p. 74) mentions a Sufi community of the Trarza (Mauritania) that belongs to the Niassenes⁸. The scope of influence of the brotherhoods is closer to Hayne’s (2001) notion of transnational religious actors.

Except for religious events, the local religious leaders of such villages as Dimat, Diagnoum, Thianguaye have a limited cross-border mobility. With such a restricted role in the political sphere and the moral impossibility of getting involved in such cross-border common practices as smuggling, the local religious actors are cut off from socioeconomic processes. Their role in achieving local cross-border integration, through the settlement of land disputes or the negotiation of refugee rights, lacks visibility, and strongly conditions local populations’ perception of the religious leaders as rather involved in cross-border dynamics for the sake of religious matters only.

Conclusion

The aim of carrying out this case study was to clarify the role of religious identity and religious actors in the various processes occurring in the Senegal valley borderlands and the extent to which they are decisive in shaping local cross-border integration.

Though religion is an important dimension of borderlife in the valley, as is shown by a consistent cross-border religious mobility, it is rather seen at work implicitly behind the debordering practices that it inspires – by shaping a specific perception of the border – than by the explicit display of religious identity in the exchanges and frictions of the borderland daily life. Though it serves as a framework that determines the modalities of border agency, religion is also sometimes instrumental to borderlanders in adopting and adapting practices to

⁸ The Niassenes are a branch of the Tijaan brotherhood whose religious guide, Baye Niasse, is from Kaolack (central Senegal). Baye’s disciples are found in other parts of Africa, and mostly in Nigeria where an important Niassene community can be found.

border situations. This complex role of religion in the Senegal valley border processes is in a sense perceptible through the figure of the religious leader in this region, as he is caught in the imbalance between the local communities' expectations and the crippling effects of the relation between states and major religious guides that imposes a logic of hierarchy. The achievement of integration is demanding, and religious leaders in the valley need to widen the scope of their influence for religion to play a more constructive part in the cross-border local integration.

Borders are spaces where the internal structure of intervening forces is exposed to or exposes disjunction at these levels. Still within the religion and border perspective, comparison between the border policies of religious actors of the middle valley border regions, namely the Thillé Boubacar district borderlands and the cross-border Dagana zone, would permit to have a comparative insight into the modes of deployment of two branches of a brotherhood in a borderland context.

References

- Bayart, J. F. ed. 1993. *Religion et modernité politique en Afrique noire*. Paris : Karthala.
- Belvaude, C., 1989. *La Mauritanie*. Paris : Karthala.
- Dia, M. 1980. *Islam et civilisations négro-africaines*. Dakar: Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines.
- Donnan, H. and Wilson, T.N.1999. *Borders : Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Garcia, S. 1997. Al-Hajj Seydou Nourou Tall, «grand marabout» tijani: L'histoire d'une carrière (v. 1880-1980). In Robinson, D. and Triaud, J.L. eds. *Le temps des marabouts*. Paris : Karthala, pp. 247-275.
- Gomez, M. A. 1992. *Pragmatism in the Age of Jihad. The Precolonial State of Bundu*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haynes, J. 2001. Transnational Religious Actors and International Politics. *Third World Quarterly* 22 (2), pp. 143-158.
- Humery, M-E., 2010. L'écriture 'ajami en pular au Fuuta Tooro (Sénégal/Mauritanie) : une littérature délibérément restreinte. *Sociétés Politiques Comparées* 30. Available at : <http://www.fasopo.org>
- MacEwen, E., 2010. Voluntary repatriation and the participation of Mauritanian refugees. *Forced Migration Review* 34, pp. 72-74.

Marty, M., 2003. Sociologie politique d'un mouvement de réfugiés: les réfugiés halpulaaren mauritaniens au Sénégal. In Coquery V., Goerg, O., Mandé, I. and Rajaonah F. eds. *Etre étranger et migrant en Afrique au XXème Siècle. Enjeux identitaires et modes d'insertion*. (Vol 1 : Politiques migratoires et constructions des identités). Paris : L'Harmattan.

Meintel, D. et Leblanc, M. N. 2003. « Présentation : la mobilité du religieux à l'ère de la globalisation ». *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 27 (1), pp. 5-10.

Neveu, C., 2004. Les enjeux d'une approche anthropologique de la citoyenneté. *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* [e-journal] 20 (3), Available at : <http://remi.revues.org/2024> [Accessed 31 July 2011].

Parker, B. J. 2006. Toward an Understanding of Borderland Processes. *American Antiquity*, 71 (1), pp. 77-100.

Sall, I. A. 1997. Cerno Amadu Mukhar Sakho, Qadi Supérieur de Boghe (1905-1934), Futa Toro. In Robinson, D. and Triaud, J.L. eds. *Le temps des marabouts*. Paris : Karthala, pp. 222-245.

SANTOIR, C., 1998. Les naufragés du fleuve : le problème des réfugiés mauritaniens dans la vallée du fleuve Sénégal. *Autrepart* (5), pp. 95-119.

Schmitz, J., 1990. Islam, pastoralisme et fluctuations du peuplement. Présentation. *Cahiers des sciences humaines* 26 (4), pp. 499-504.

Tandia, A., 2011. 'Beyond the 'Genius of Suffering''. The paradox of an alienated border regime: Refugee Integration and social transformation in cross-border Dagana (Senegal-Mauritania). Paper presented at the ABORNE Fifth Annual Conference: *Crossing African Borders: Migration and Mobility*, Centro de Estudos Africanos, ISCTE, Lisbon University Institute, Portugal, September 21st-25th.

Triaud, J.L, 1997. « Introduction ». In Robinson, D. and Triaud, J.L. eds. *Le temps des marabouts*. Paris : Karthala

Ndiguël and Politics in Senegal

Amy Niang
University of the Witwatersrand

Senegalese Islam, a blend of Sufism infused with local values with traditional authority structure, is an important ingredient in the making of the postcolonial state and society. There has always been a close, almost perverse relationship, between politics and religion in Senegal, particularly between politicians and the marabout community. This has had tremendous implications for the development of a particular political culture entrenched into the principle of an unimpeded choice for citizens exercising a fundamental right in the democratic system: the vote. If French colonisers had ambiguous relations characterised by accommodation, collaboration as much as resistance, postcolonial Senegalese presidents and political leaders have more overtly sought, and built upon the moral basis of religious authority to expand their pool of supporters whilst turning their alliance with the marabout into a significant element of the legitimating process of their own rule. By and large, there has been a pronounced and dynamic relation of cooperation and inclusion, rather than competition, between the political and the religious classes.

The ndiguël¹ in particular has become an overrated and problematic incursion of the religious in the political. In postcolonial Senegal, the ndiguël has played a tremendous role in postcolonial politics, particularly during electoral periods. However, this paper argues that it has to be seen, primarily, as an attempt of the religious leadership to domesticate the *intemporal* nature of politics for the purpose of social, but also moral stability. Although there are clear material motivations to the ndiguël, this paper argues that its function is *stricto-sensu* ideological. In the competition between the religious and the political spheres for normative precedence and—both offer the promise of future perspectives in dealing with the brutality of life—it becomes a powerful tool. In this competition, the motivation of the political is always strategic and power-driven whilst the motivation of the religious is primarily ideological, but also power-driven. The production of norms thus becomes a field of tension, competition and experimentation whereby incursions of the religious in the political through the practice of ndiguël can be read as not only encroaching upon the rules of a modern democracy, but as compounding the very foundation of a particular form of secularism.



Wade in Touba: Subjecting politics to religion

¹ Also ndiguël or ndigueul: order, recommendation



Senghor and Serigne Abdul Lahat: rituals of accommodation



The Touba-Dakar Axis



Macky in Touba

(1) Senegalese laïcité in question:

Under the rule of Abdoulaye Wade, there has been growing public antagonism, criticism towards the use, misuse, and abuse of *ndiguel* in the electoral processes. More than any other president in postcolonial Senegal, Wade has relentlessly sought the intervention of *ndiguel* in his pursuit of both *talibé*'s votes. The Senegalese version of *laïcité* is not about the application of a rigid secular divide between the religious and the state. It is rather a combination of accommodation, respect and cooperation in a common purpose of state building and the preservation of social order. The Senegalese model of *laïcité* calls for a rethinking and a reinterpretation of the very idea of secularism in modern political systems. In its normative,

practical and democratic implications, the Senegalese model of *laïcité* is a far cry from the German, Scandinavian or French models of *laïcité* which tend to see virtue in a strict separation between politics and religions. Senegalese secularism explicitly makes room for religion as one of the sources of social governance. In fact, a positive appreciation of religion as important element in the building of social cohesion and social order entailed recognising the latter's capacity to shape, *inform and reinterpret the contours of public life*. This was best described by President Abdou Diouf:

“*laïcité* in itself is a manifestation of respect of others. It acts in this way if it is not to be antireligious, but neither if it is a true *laïcité* can it becomes an established religion. I would say further that such a laic state cannot ignore religious institutions. From the fact that Citizens embrace religion flows the obligation for the state to facilitate the practice of that religion, as it does for all other vital activities of citizens... Respect of religion does not only mean tolerance, it does not mean only to allow or to ignore, but to respect the beliefs and practices of the other. *Laïcité* is the consequence of this respect for the other, and the condition of our harmony.”² The ‘great contextuality of secularism’ in Senegal has a very long pedigree. Colonial expansion in rural Senegal was made possible by an extraordinary politics of accommodation between the colonial authority and the Sufi orders even when the latter resisted aspects of colonial rule that were repressive towards their practice of Islam. Abandoning the strict separation between church and the state in force under the 1905 law in Third Republic France, French authorities opted for a model of accommodation that made it possible for the marabouts to be valid social interlocutors in the colony's authority structure. Political confrontations, both symbolic and military, did not preclude mutual cooperation between the French and the brotherhoods in developing groundnut agriculture in rural Senegal. The French on the other hand supported, even funded the construction of Arabic language schools, mosques, the celebration of Sufi ceremonies, and the costs of pilgrimage for a number of marabouts.³ This support was however provided in a carrots-and-sticks model strategically deployed to make the French look like they were being respectful of local religious and traditional beliefs.

In postcolonial Senegal, *laïcité* has involves more than just a quest of balance between a healthy engagement with the religious and with the secular. The constitution legally shapes a civic community which, in many way, the brotherhood seeks to expand. In the name of *laïcité*, the marabout is to be treated as a mere citizen, on a par with ordinary taxpayers. However, when a marabout becomes involved in politics as a ‘mere citizen’, he still has the capacity to tap into his entourage and following as political capital. Politics in that sense becomes a dynamic field of discursive intervention for the religious authority structure. Critics argue that in this entanglement, the talibé becomes transmogrified into edict-respecting (responding) subject under the dictate of a marabout's will. The citizen as subject becomes a project that is shaped by the competitive normative perspectives and influence of political actors and religious leaders.

Another telling example of the complex nexus between state and politics in Senegal is the special status of Touba as a city-state within a state. Whereas Senegalese cities are for instance administered by a mayor, the city of Touba is headed by a council-president that is also a member of the mouride ruling family. The city of Touba is off-limits to the national

² Haldun Güllalp (1997) “Globalising postmodernism: Islamist and Western Social Theory” *Economy and society*, 6 (3): 431. See also David Robinson (2000). *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

³ Alfred Stepan (2011). “The Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democratic and Non-Democratic Regimes” in Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, eds. *Rethinking Secularism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 114-144.

police force except under exceptional situations and at the request of the council. Equally, there are no French-based schools in Touba but only daraas (Quranic schools).

(2) The manifestations of ndiguel

The ndiguël is the manifestation of a painstaking and difficult grappling with a polarised political sphere. It provides temporal orientation to the citizen-followers in a democratic, secular system. This poses a number of fundamental questions. Is socialisation into particular Sufi orders an impediment to the entrenchment of a democratic culture, and beyond a political cultural that is more in line with the constitutional, legal, and institutional fundamentals of the ‘republican’ model? To explore this particular question, it is crucial to examine the conceptual, political, religious and sociological resources, and the bases of Sufi brotherhoods in Senegal. What make brotherhoods a force to contend with is not so much the crowds they drain than the authority they command. The principle of one person one vote in a representative system has promoted, and enabled, individual participation in political governance since independence. At the same time, it has displaced, and weakened, traditional modes of authority and their distributional power. Citizen-voters’ behaviour is forged within a wider field of socialisation that is highly marked by religion, particularly having to do with the specific requirements of membership into particularly Sufi orders.⁴ Senegalese democracy has been, by and large, relatively well functioning partly because it is entrenched in indigenous values and practices—that might at times be at odds with democratic principles as we understand them in the liberal democratic model, and not despite of this. In order to understand how religious traditions and practices have shaped the emergence of Senegal’s brand of democracy, Stepan’s concept of “multiple secularisms of modern democracy[ies]” becomes very useful.⁵ In Senegal, political and religious leaders are locked in performative rituals that renew a social contract whose very foundations derive from the mutual obligations imposed upon by a common concern for consensus, political stability, religious tolerance and social order. The active participation of religion in state building, and the active support of the state to religious structures, rituals, and practices, constitutes different aspects of the same normative order that guide parallel and competing material and moral interests.

In a system whereby vote play a tremendous role in legitimating moral authority, elections become a crucial moment whereby incentives for reward and punishment, political investment and civil recognition find immediate and long-term expression in individual and collective choice informed by multiple allegiances. Does the talibé behave as a talibé (obedient to his marabout) first and a citizen (with political affiliation or affinities) or as a citizen first then a talibé, on the day of voting? This question of course is not peculiar to religious engagement in the sense that citizens are ‘composite’ social actors with multiple allegiances to the family, the kin, the linguistic and micro-cultural group, the patron or the party. These allegiances are activated and mobilised depending on circumstances. In the Senegalese context however, being a talibé is perhaps the most significant determinant/marker in individual and collective engagements with society and politics. It is thus important to try and understand the sort of relationship that ties a talibé to her/his marabout.

Taking the Mouride brotherhood for instance, the notion of ‘diebellu’ [literally make a gift of self] is the constitutive act of membership in the brotherhood. As such, it assumes complete allegiance of a talibé to the recommendations, the advice, and the edicts of a marabout. Some voters argue that the electoral ndiguel itself is an incursion of the marabout, the religious, in the ‘private’, an argument that contradicts the principle of complete and unquestioned

⁴ ‘Order’ and ‘brotherhood’ are used interchangeably throughout the paper to refer to the tarikya (path, way)

⁵ Alfred Stepan (2007). “Rituals of Respect: Sufis and Secularists in Senegal”, Columbia University, unpublished essay.

obedience and submission to one's marabout. Obedience itself is the psychological mechanism through which the talibe is eminently integrated in a total system of authority. "my relationship with a marabout is that he shows me the way to access God the Divine, but also how to live my life on this earth."⁶

In Senegal, the tendency for voters to follow the ndiguël has always been stronger amongst members of the Mouride brotherhood; it has been weaker and irregular amongst members of the tijania brotherhood. One of the explanations for this has to be found in the polyarchic nature of the tijania brotherhood whose authority is embodied in fragmented units, generally founding families with autonomous leadership and autonomous centres of decision making. In addition 'liberal' engagement of the tijane talibé as opposed to the 'embrigadement' engagement of the mouride.⁷ If Cheikh Ahmed Tijania is considered an erudite and a learned sheikh whose commitment to learning is an injunction, to tijani, to be equally committed to intellectual and moral tenets of Islam; Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba on the other hand occupies, in the mouride imaginary, the unique position of a sheikh, whose life and work embody the quintessential model of an African Islam. His writings are given similar prominence to the holy Quran and his city, Touba, the status of Mecca. Thus, whereas tijania marabouts tend to be seen as moral and spiritual guides with mortal attributes, respected for their extensive knowledge of the texts and traditions, Mouride marabouts tend to occupy, in the life of their talibé, a greater place as a moral and spiritual guide in Islam, and in social life generally speaking. It is common for tijania sheikh to insist, in their preaching, on their inability to do this. This difference is apparent in the weight that is typically attached to the ndigël of a mouride caliph as opposed to that of a tijani caliph. President Wade was for instance elected in 2000 despite the ndigël of the tijani caliph to vote otherwise, and despite the fact that the tijani community is the largest religious community in Senegal.

The historical and religious origins of ndiguel point to a broader definition that appeals to diverse theological interpretations within Islam. The ndiguel thus has to be understood as a form of recommendation that is meant to restore the basics of Islamic worship as obedience. It thus has to do with clarifying proper courses of 'muslim' behaviour whenever it is felt that there was a lack of clarity. Scholars refer, amongst other sources, to Islamic traditions or the Quranic verses such as the following, to justify interpretation as a form of recommendation as an element of moral authority:

"O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if ye are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end."

Mouride scholars in particular refer to this verse in order to explain the moral authority or ndigël.⁸ Equally in the field of social experience, ndigël becomes a contingent, an one-off order meant to address an urgent and critical issue. For instance when peace and social order are threatened, the marabouts may advise remedies in the form of prayers, fasting, alms-giving, etc. Ndigël thus allows holders of religious knowledge to mobilise texts and traditions in order to respond to pressing needs, moral interrogations and the anxieties of followers. As far as politics is a fundamentally uncertain and unstable sphere whereby values constantly change and are constantly being subverted for immediate material gains, the advice of a Marabout provides the sort of direct that cannot be derived from the programmatic propositions presented to voters by political contenders. The marabouts capacity to provide direction and inform choice becomes crucial in this particularly fleeting social field. The

⁶ Interview with a talibe

⁷ Maati Monjib (1998). "Comportement électoral, politique et socialisation confrérique au Sénégal" *Politique Africaine*, 69 (3): 54-6.

⁸ Par Abdoul Aziz Mbacké Majalis (2011). «Le Sénégal, au carrefour du Ndigël et de « Y en a marre ». 11 August 2011.

attractiveness of brotherhoods partly resides in their capacity to ground voters (religious tradition and sense of place, its politicising, rather than its depoliticising tendencies are thus valued by followers.

(3) The moral economy of authority

In the moral economy of authority, ndiguël becomes an active force, whether explicit or implicit, formulated by those in favour of marabout's active participation in the political debate. They argue that the immense power of marabouts in Senegal is the source of 'envy', and as such it is naturally subject to massive courting by politicians. But the ndiguël has come to corrupt a number of marabouts, thus discrediting their authority. More puritan marabouts argue that politicians do not need a ndiguël from the marabouts. On the contrary, by actively seeking to involve marabouts in the political competition, they have embarked on a smear campaign, to undermine and destabilise the latter's power and moral authority. One of them argues that "Serigne Touba has everything. Why would he want anything from somebody who is begging for support, and is unable to insure himself against defeats?"⁹

For the religious community, regardless of any specific brotherhood, the stakes of political engagement are very high. Ndiguël is a powerful underside institutionalised in the very functioning of the brotherhood as an ambiguous political actor on the one hand, and a "socio-symbolic institution" on the other.¹⁰ In many ways, membership to a brotherhood, as part of religious practice, does not belong to the realm of the private 'inconscious' of the individual 'but rather [to the realm] of the unconscious' of the institution itself. The brotherhood then is inherently political and political engagement thus becomes an instrument, and a condition of institutional self-reproduction. This points to a process of consolidation of institutional legitimacy as a continuous effort to subordinate the political as subaltern to the religious. *The religious message is distilled via subtle but also formidable mediatic mobilisation.* The brotherhood, as an institution, enhances members' capacity to stabilise their individual identity by inscribing themselves in the continuity of a stable tradition.

In 2007, unlike in precedent presidential elections, the general Calif of the Mouride brotherhood did not give explicit Ndiguël. Yet, a lot of mouride talibes interpreted this silence to mean a number of things. For the majority of mouride voters, the marabout's silence was an implicit endorsement of Abdoulaye Wade's candidacy. For what seemed a minority however, this was an indication that they were free to vote for whomever they wanted. If the absence of an explicit order to vote one way or another may leave a sense of ambiguity to some, for a great number of followers the picture of president Wade demurely perched next to the marabout during a visit in Touba is an image worth many an explicit declaration or edicts. For, again, many believe there is an explicit (*zahir*), but also implicit (*bateen*) dimension to a marabout's utterances, actions and behaviour. I elaborate below the distinction between *zahir* and *bateen*. There is always an aggressive media campaign that attempts to narrate a particular tale of the first talibe of the republic, a tale of a president as devoted talibe, etc. This tale was for a long time effective in broadening Wade's popular base as The First Mouride talibe, as the president who has at heart the particular concerns of a chosen brotherhood.

This poses a number of interesting questions for us, namely, what is the value of a marabout word? When is a marabout's utterance, let's call it 'edict', an implicit ndiguël? When does silence become an order? How do you settle the (irreducible) gap between the uttered content, and the act of utterance (enunciation) inherent in any human speech? This gap becomes even

⁹ The reference to Serigne Touba [Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba] here evokes the moral, material and ideological capital the Mouride brotherhood has accumulated over time thanks to the sacrifices and the work of Serigne Touba.

¹⁰ Slavoj Žižek (2009). *In Defense of Lost Causes*. London: Verso, p. 39.

bigger, more irreducible, in the case of a marabout. The act of enunciating something is never neutral, but silence is never neutral either. Even when he is not saying anything, the marabout is saying something. At least, this is the understanding that the talibe has. The ndigel as a discursive intervention can, and it does in this instance become harboured in the unconscious of the talibé as *what the marabout would have said, or thought*.

References:

Calhoun, Craig et al.(2011) (eds).Rethinking Secularism. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Cruise O'Brien, Donald (1973). The Mourid of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Cruise O'Brien, D., Diop, Momar Coumba and Diouf Mamadou (1994[2002]). La Construction de l'Etat au Senegal. Paris: Karthala.

Gülalp, Haldun (1997) "Globalising postmodernism: Islmist and Western Social Theory" *Economy and society*, 6 (3).

Monjib, Maati (1998). "Comportement électoral, politique et socialisation confrérique au Sénégal" *Politique Africaine*, 69 (3): 53-61.

Robinson, David (2000). *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Stepan, Alfred (2007). "Rituals of Respect: Sufis and Secularists in Senegal", Columbia University, unpublished manuscript.

Žižek, Slavoj (2009). *In Defense of Lost Causes*. London: Verso.

Religion and the (de)construction of cross-border regional integration in Western Senegambia

Aboubakr Tandia
PhD Research Candidate in Political Science
Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar
tandiaaboubakr@yahoo.com

Abstract

Although it is a cultural identity religion has not received as much concern as deserved in the way it cuts above the rest, notably in African politics, despite the role it has had in the socio-political transformations of the last two decades. It is this challenge among others that this paper was meant to tentatively address. In its various manifestations religion has proven to be determinant in structuring cross-border regional integration in two fundamental ways. First, as an ideological framework it provides the moral, technical and cultural repertoires to religious movements for their immersion and performance in the political economy. Second, as a set of material tools that connects various scales and socioeconomic spaces, religion decisively influence the structure and the elasticity of the regional integration process. If regional integration, whether regionalist or regionalising, is a fertile indication of the working and evolution of social contracts, it will probably take a different outlook in the short and medium term. Among challenges, the progressive urbanisation of the *turuq* and marabouts, contrasted with the rise the Imams, *Ustaz* and *Cheikh* raises serious questions about the prospects on the role of religious brotherhoods in regional integration and in the evolution of social contracts at both national and regional level.

Keywords: cross-border integration – religion – regional integration – (de)-construction – Western Senegambia.

Introduction

Culture has received fairly much attention in the study of international borders, first, as a determining factor in the arrangement of border regimes, second, as a leverage or realm through which local and regional cultures in borderlands shift from reactive to proactive attitudes affecting “policy formation, representation and reception at the borders” (Donnan and Wilson 1999: 11) and, third, as a material with which nations and states, governments and border communities, indulge in “local, national and international negotiations” (Ibid.: 12). Inscribed in this agenda, and focussing on border cultures, among which religion and religiosities, this study seeks to identify and analyse the religious imaginations and practices in how they relate to and mediate perceptions, structures, “networks of politics, economics and society which tie individuals and groups” (Ibid.) in the border regions of Senegambia.

Conceiving cross-border integration as a sort of system in which are crystallised such societal networks, this paper contributes to revisiting such hypotheses as the transcending of the cultural and political limits of the state and disclosing the lack of fit (or not) between national culture and state sovereignty. In the same vein, investigating religion as a symbolic construct and practice, this study returns to the notion that “partitioned Africans” use their cultural characteristics to define their membership or their citizenship preferences in local, national and supranational polities, (Ibid.: 13; Asiwaju 1984: 12). This aim is not only theoretically indebted to previous social science enquiry into borders, but it sets the stage for an approach of cross-border integration that favours neither the “bottom” nor the “top”, but one in which the analysis centres on borderlands while going back and forth between local, national, regional and global dynamics of regional integration in Western Senegambia.

The rare attempts dealing with religion in Africa in the field of border studies of religion examine the role it plays in the organisation and the working of regional or border-related political economies. Kate Meagher (2009) has described the dynamics of religious revivalism and informal economic governance and regulation in two regions of Nigeria. More specific than wider geographical and political approaches to the dynamics of regionalisation and cross-border cooperation, which retain religion as one, among many, symbolic moulders of (cross-)national and regional economies (Lambert and Egg 1994; Fanchette 2001, Meagher 2003, 1996; Sall 1992), Meagher demonstrates how “modernising tendencies fostered within the informal economy by popular religious revivalism are being stunted by the relentless pressures of liberalisation, globalisation and pseudo-democratisation”. (Ibid.: 397).

In another piece, David Coplan has analysed the spiritual strategies of the Basotho border community in its attempts to re-appropriate ‘ancestral’ lands in a racialised post-apartheid context of contestation over the land. This study pinpoints how faith-based mobilization for material or accumulative assets of local communities targets state discourses of rights to cult and rituals, while being itself challenged by its appeal to different spiritual or religious spaces. The situation which Coplan points to is one in which emerges “conflicting ideological discourses operating besides cooperative forms of practical coexistence between black and white on the [South Africa] Free State-Lesotho border” (Coplan 2003: 977). These two studies importantly highlight the potential of religion as an ideological force and an organizational tool in contestation, mobilization and negotiation around changing political economic issues such as accumulation, land, regulatory procedures or, in a nutshell, social contracts. Remindful of the “Bringing the state back in” agenda, these studies can be taken here as useful path-cleaning pieces through which to account for the reproduction of the operative modes of the negotiations of state institutions by peoples or communities from and across border areas.

This study is not merely intent for the sake of bordering. It is undertaken to contribute to an understanding of African politics from a border studies perspective that integrates social (border) dynamics in the analysis as a way of concentrating on (state and societal) institutions, resources and processes of control of the former on the latter. It contributes to this exhausting and ambitious agenda Paul Nugent (2012: 37) has delineated as the

study of political phenomena at different levels simultaneously – that is, local, regional, national and indeed trans-national (...), of the role of the state in mediating the production and reproduction of social relations (...) and a comparative approach that [lays out] experiences [instead of conflating them], (...) for understanding a range of phenomena across African countries as well as a (...) salient differences.

To that end, religion or faith¹ on which this study focuses is a pretext for engaging with a wider historically and politically “complex picture of how African states and peoples have engaged with one another” (Ibid.: 39) through regional integration. The first part of the paper provides an articulated theoretical framework of cross-border (dis)integration. The second part sets the religious spatiality of Western Senegambia. In the last section, concern is

¹ One limitation of this study is the focus on Islamic faith though it is dealing with secular states. This has to do with the poor literature available on Christianity which we did not furthermore get in our reach.

the extent and various ways in which religion serves to (de)construct cross-border regional integration. Of particular concern is whether or not this function is historically manifested and anchored and through which (dis)continuities, if any, this is revealed.

Cross-border regional integration

The recent and considerable literature on new regionalism has critically engaged with the lack of empirical grounds in many regional integration theories, which has blurred the line between institutional and social processes. Turning back to the central role of borders, perhaps the highest consensus arrived at in the study of regional integration, new perspectives within border studies and comparative politics have pointed to the important dynamics of integration on border areas (Berg and Van Houtoum 2003, Thomas Kramsch and Hooper 2004). Precisely, renewed approaches of the role and functions of borders and mostly, of the perceptions of the latter influence the ways in which they are negotiated by a variety of actors. The paradigm shift applies to West African regional processes in which Western Senegambia is a part. The poor records of intergovernmental regionalism in all its forms (diplomatic, voluntarism, institutional, liberal, etc.) contrast with the empirical dialectics of territorial integration and disintegration:

Fruit de l'agrégation de micro-stratégies, liées aux comportements d'acteurs non-étatiques, la montée des échanges, migrations et flux d'investissements, contribue, en Asie comme en Afrique, à façonner des espaces dynamiques fréquemment découplés des projets que les organisations intergouvernementales régionales ont vocation à promouvoir. (Bach 2009: 345)

What Daniel Bach suggests here, following other scholars (Oman 1996, Söderbaum and Taylor 2008), is that there are two different and, most of the time, conflicting dynamics of regional integration. One he calls *regionalism* as opposed to another he terms as *regionalization*. Charles Oman (Ibid.) on which Bach's distinction builds has differentiated between *de facto* regional integration which refers to the dynamics of order implied in the *formation of states*, as opposed to *de jure* integration which designates the type of order which derives from the *construction of states* (state-building). Thus, there is a *state formation process* of regional integration as opposed to a state construction process, or else, two different dynamics of political order making that have an historical depth. The former refers to an *institutional* process while the latter points to *social* dynamics inscribed in the (trans)formation of political order, in Africa and elsewhere.

Following Bach (Ibid.), stakes of regionalism are less about the construction of integrated spaces than on the construction and reconstruction of states or political order. Regionalisation on the other hand is the result of individual strategies from the immediate border space or from remoter places that are in many ways connected to the border area. They proceed from the attitudes and behaviours of agents or actors (religious and merchant networks, diasporas, multinational companies, individuals, communities) whose activities contribute to the formation of regional territories, no matter if they are motivated or not by regionalist projects or policies (Bach Op.cit.: 346). In other words, regionalisation develops on the resources of regionalism and wider opportunities scattered between local, national,

regional and global scales, in as much as regionalism is about the institutional reformation of political order (decentralisation and globalisation).

However, while processes of regionalisation can result from or be determined by regionalist projects, they are independent of any identified strategy of regionalism. Regionalisation is about transactions and synergies, linkages, bindings and networks, which develop across borders, and which can be, according to time, geographical location and circumstances, licit or illicit, formal or informal, morally and locally accepted but highly criminalized elsewhere (Ibid.).

The distinction between regionalism and regionalisation as two different and interrelated processes is important for understanding the situations marked by the dissociation of territories, those of states and intergovernmental organisations on the one hand, and the spaces of regionalisation processes (Ibid.: 347). While regionalisation builds on immediate and remote cross-border dynamics, it is associated to the penetration of political territories and (supra)national public policies implied in regionalism. Regionalisation is in effect nurtured by the dynamism of “trans-state” or trans-border” flows and networks (socio-ethnic, economic, religious) that operate autonomously from political territorialities and programs (Ibid.: 353).

In this regard, the distinction between *formation* and *construction* process actually contributes to accounting for social contracts as the result of the complex ways in which states and societies / communities negotiate their relationships in the appropriation of resources among which borders (as social spaces) and their imbedded resources. For in both processes are involved simultaneous productions of territorialities, that is “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (Sachs : 112). They do so according to the varied ways in which actors perceive and relate to borders.

As described in the important distinctions above, cross-border regional integration must be empirically conceived, as a varied or multidimensional process, in which the analysis reckons the distinct character and the interrelationships between regionalist processes and dynamics of regionalisation. Moreover, this coheres with the diversification of the levels, scales and sectors of governance that increasingly characterize regional integration processes in West Africa. Thus “regional” here refers to three types of regions: first, the immediate border region, second, the cross-border frontier which is unsteady and modular depending to the reach of networks and flows, and third, the institutional region delineated by the external borders of the Western Senegambia as a political space. Accordingly, by cross-border regional integration we mean the process involving three distinct and interrelated dynamics accounting for the making of political order, in different and concatenating ways, and involving each a peculiar pattern of imagination and practice of borders and territories.

Firstly, what we can call here *state-centred regionalism* refers to supra-national processes of state reconstruction through intergovernmental arrangements and programs. Its goals are to “reinforce interdependences between countries of a regional set, create convergences between different national social and economic systems, intensify interactions

between peoples, and improve the coherence in the management of common challenges”² (Laoual *et ali.*: 6).

Secondly, *long-range regionalisation* refers to unofficial or on-the-ground processes of order making, that can be either deconstructive or reconstructive of state and intergovernmental territorialities and political order, as long as they remain various sorts of cross-border or trans-border interactions and flows that are able to penetrate and expand in the whole territory of states (de-territorialisation) and its (sub and supra) national institutions (dis-institutionalisation). Long-range regionalisation implies the capacity of actors to encroach and appropriate the control and regulatory functions vested in political borders, state agents and institutions (Bach Op.cit.: 354).

Thirdly, *short-range regionalisation* or *society-centred regionalism* concerns the immediate cross-border interactions that develop around the exchanges and flows which are imbedded in the borderland dynamics. Usually referred to as cross-border governance in Europe, or “local integration” in Africa (ECOWAS 2006, 2005), it is built on the notion that in borderlands, border regions or “cross-border areas”, specific and localized interests and challenges can be addressed through corresponding initiatives by local actors (ECOWAS 2005: 5). This third type admits at once patterns of regionalism as an institutional process, and long-range regionalisation as a social one. This transpires through the political discourses of the AU and the ECOWAS regionalism wherein short-range regionalisation refers to

Cross-border cooperation, that is, any form of consultation aimed at reinforcing and developing relationships of neighbourliness between border constituencies and institutions of two or more member states as well as the conclusion of agreements and arrangements necessary to that end (ECOWAS 2007).

Through their different instruments, the AU, the ECOWAS and the WAEMU aim at institutionalising short-range regionalism by seeing at as a *society-centred regionalism*, emphasising this the political and institutional character, as a means of the (re)construction (intra and inter-state) of political order at all levels (decentralisation and regionalism). At the continental level this agenda is clearly framed in the African Union Border Programme (AU 2007: Preamble) in terms of “addressing the persistent issue of border disputes” and (b) “cross-border criminal activities”, as well as (c) the “consolidation of the gains made in the regional integration process” and (d) “the facilitation of the development of cross-border integration dynamics, which are sustained by local stakeholders”. At the regional level, the ECOWAS Convention of Cross-border Cooperation and Cross-Border Initiative Programme are the normative frameworks for “institutionalising” short-range regionalisation, and among other goals, the challenges of long-range regionalisation.

CONSIDERANT l'impact de la coopération transfrontalière dans le développement harmonieux des zones frontalières; CONSCIENTS que la prise en compte des zones frontalières dans les programmes de la CEDEAO nécessite une adaptation de la stratégie

² Western Senegambia does not form an institutional region like the WAEMU and the ECOWAS. However the countries it covers are members of the African Union, while four of them are all bound within the ECOWAS, and three belong to the WAEMU at the same time.

d'intégration; CONVAINCUS que la coopération transfrontalière peut contribuer à l'accélération de l'intégration régionale; DECIDONS d'adopter le concept de « Pays frontières » et de l'inclure dans la politique d'intégration régionale (ECOWAS 2007 : Preamble)

Article 2 of the Convention creates the institutions in charge of promoting and managing cross-border cooperation through the regional Cross-Border Initiative Program (ECOWAS 2006): the Regional Observatory and the Supportive Fund³ for Cross-Border Initiatives. This clearly exemplifies the regionalist appropriation of low-range regionalization.

The empirical overlaps of the three types of regional integration processes are first manifested in the permanent attempts of institutional agencies to control societal initiatives and the actors they mobilise. Secondly, while intertwined and simultaneously working on the ground, each of them proceeds from a special way of territorialisation, through a precise modulation of the barrier and bridging effects of borders and other regulatory institutions. Thirdly, instead of being marginal or peripheral dynamics, transactions across and along borders are part and parcel of merchant spaces widely open to the world through regionalism (Ibid.: 356). An additional sign of their overlap, both in principle (order making processes) and in character (multi-process, multi-scale, multi-actor, cross-border and trans-border, local and global), regionalisations and regionalisms are today inscribed in a globalised governance of trans-frontier repertoires and linkages.⁴ In this case, it is clear that, whether licit or illicit, the networks and flows of the two regionalisations are connected to the institutions and agents of regionalism.

Accordingly cross-border integration from the perspective of religion will be analysed here from a constructivist perspective that allows for an account of the imaginative flows, processes and policies implied in regional integration as order making through the interactions between regionalist and regionalising actors and repertoires, discourses and practices. **This methodology is indebted to a “cognitive psychological approach in border studies” (Dereje 2010: 314) in which are important the perceptions – the range of cultural meanings attributed to state borders (Ibid.).** To what extent does religion shape this meaning and the ensuing practices and possibly (de)legitimate them?

[Insert Map 1]

Western Senegambia as a ‘religious’ space

As exemplified by their ensuing syncretism, the encounters of the traditional religions with monotheistic religions, Islam as of the 13th century and Christianity in the 18th century, did not but increase the grip of religion in all spheres of social and political life. Before describing the various aspects of this religious territoriality, it is useful to delineate the Western Senegambia

³ Dedicated to the promotion of cooperation and cultural exchanges in the WAEMU-ECOWAS-Mauritania space, this fund itself defines a new territoriality by delimitating a precise regional zone.

⁴ Economic globalisation and the related erosion of fiscal, customary and monetary disparities between African states remains a powerful incentive as far as the character and the direction of these different flows are concerned (Ibid.).

as a geographical space. Spatial homogeneity in this regard does not mean the absence of difference or diversity within a space.

As part of the global social space of “historical Senegambia” or the “Great Senegambia” (Barry 1981, 1988), Western Senegambia is geographically, historically, economically, culturally and politically homogenous. Depending on the objects of their study, scholars have designed variable limits to the Western Senegambia space. Renner (1984) for example considered only the Gambia and Senegal, referring therefore to the political territory of the ancient Senegambian Federation that momentarily united the two countries between 1981 and 1989. Abdoul *et al.* (2007) refer to the Western Basin as the Western Senegambia, including Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. Others like Gailey (1964) extend it to the whole of West Africa. In other words, Western Senegambia is a modular space, adjustable to the scholarly object only because it is a social space.

Western Senegambia is thus a sub-space of the Senegambia. It is politically discontinuous as reveal the recurrent and intricate border crises between neighbouring territorial states (Sall and Hallifa 1991; Thioub 1994) which have inherited this spatial instability both from pre-colonial frontier suzerainties and from colonial empires whose political partition did not fit on the “partitioned Africans” (Asiwaju Op.cit.). Thus, despite European colonialism, cultural and historical ties bind the different peoples across the common boundaries (Renner Op.cit.: 70). Therefore, a dynamic definition of the social space of Western Senegambia would admit the interplay of disintegrative and integrative forces since pre-colonial times to avoid precluding the historical depth of regional integration processes.

From this perspective, Western Senegambia will encompass here the borderlands of the Senegal River Valley, from southern Mauritania in the north to western Mali in the east, and the borderlands between the Casamance and Upper Senegal regions and the two Guineas in the south. From the Atlantic coast it extends to the former Eastern Sudan (Western Mali today), and from the fluvial border region of the Senegalo-Mauritanian zone to the Upper Guinea. This usage of the term is not as arbitrary as it seems.

Countries	Religions	Christian	Muslim	Traditional/Other
Gambia		8%	90%	2%
Guinea-Bissau		10%	50%	40%
Guinea		, 8%	85%	7%
Mali		1%	75%	9%
Senegal		5%	94%	1%
Mauritania		-	99,4%	-
West. Senegambia		5,3%	82, 23	9 ,83%

Table 1. Religious affiliations in Western Senegambia

The religiosity of Western Senegambia region is manifested historically through the effects of Islam and Christianity as well as the survival of traditional religions in every country, except in Mauritania (See Table 1). The syncretism exemplified in the notion of “black Islam” testifies to the persistence of traditional spiritualities. Religion has also

penetrated politics, class and ethnic relations, and the economy through ideological and material activism. Western Senegambia is constantly irradiated by religious identities and invested by religious movements, not to mention the practices they construct, legitimise and sustain through time, in all spheres of life. According to Jean-Louis Triaud, a religious axis going from the Trarza to Kankan in the Republic of Guinea interconnects the Senegalo-Mauritanian bloc with the Upper Senegal River (Triaud 1997: 23). Religious leaders and the movements and networks they created or inspired indeed crystallise and project a considerable religious identity that maintains a political culture of submissiveness amongst the peoples. These movements and networks are actually built on many religiously defined practices or activities which reflect the recognition of their sacredness as vouchers of social order and political stability (Triaud Op.cit.: 26).

Ethnic, linguistic, and social differences have not been obstacles to religious encounters and intermingling which networks perpetuate beyond borders. Actually, ethnic mixing was very common through several waves of migration. For example, Joola and Mandinka migrations in the Casamance and the Portuguese Guinea, as the 13th century for the former, and between that period and the 19th century for the latter, have been the cause of the cultural assimilation of the Baniuns and other groups like the Mandjago (Mettas 1984: 61-65; Niane 1989: 8-9, 12-13; Nugent 2007, 2008).

The peoples of Western Senegambia have shared past their history, the pagan rituals of age-grade societies that exist till today, the shrines, irrespective of their ethnic origins; and a ethnic cohabitation (*morikundas* and *zawiyas*). They would fight religious wars with the support of coreligionists from other ethnic groups (Renner Op.cit.: 72-73). However, violent islamisation as in the Casamance and the Kaabu in the 19th centuries (Nugent 2008: 223-4) suggest that religion has had and may still have a disintegrative potential. .

In the field of migration, labourers (*talibonkas* or *navétanes*) and itinerant Juula Muslim traders or clerics settled down temporarily or permanently in many parts of the region. The Julla traders' actually formed a multiethnic and multinational network from the Sudanese hinterland to the coastal areas. The expansion of Islam through trade and wars alike contributed to this religious geography (Mettas Op.cit.: 67). Today cross-border weekly markets are legacies of the merchant space that emerged in the region since the 13th century (Renner Op.cit.: 73).

Colonial experiences brought in or sharpened many divisive or disintegrative factors some of which had been in play since pre-colonial times. The allocation of divergent entitlements in terms of citizenship, rights, taxation and education tuned up ethnic and social boundaries, while partition through fixed colonial boundaries (administrative and political) disintegrated the regional coherence of Western Senegambia. If ever this seems paradoxical, the colonial rulers tolerated and even resorted to the symbolic capital of Muslim religious leaders to alternate socialisation with domination in its hegemonic project (Robinson 2004). As a matter of fact cultural ties have survived between those "co-operative societies", despite divergent politicisation and socialisation during colonialism (Renner Op.cit.: 81).

Postcolonial states in Western Senegambia, as it is well known, have forced their hegemony upon their societies. As such, they mastered and improved to the caricature the tools of their predecessors in the form of messianic and military dictatorships. Violence has

been alternatively handled with ideological or symbolic manipulation. Religion has even more gained receptivity amongst political leaders as their societies have grown “religious” and eager to be ruled through moral standards. While democratisation may have favoured more secularism in the public realm through time, it has in many instances drawn from religious movements and charisma. As for globalisation, it has been an ambivalent process of de-secularisation and revivalism through which reformist movements and religious diasporas, building on the global digital infrastructure, connect local and regional economies to the global politics and economy. These dynamics impact on regionalism in terms of the commercial policies and the diplomatic choices of the Western Senegambia states, amongst them and in relation to Western and Middle-East countries.

Indubitably, the religious territoriality of the Western Senegambia denotes important *continuities* in the way religion, and faith-inspired or faith-based activities influence the perception and usage of borders by communities and states on borderlands, along and across national borders (or frontiers, as in pre-colonial and at some point in colonial times). Through historical moments peoples or civil societies of Western Senegambia have always negotiated wealth, security and protection, while rulers and states linger after authority, legitimacy, wealth, sovereignty and order, which equated to using frontiers (pre-colonial and colonial) or borders (colonial and postcolonial). To put it simply, religion has never been in itself the sole operable device. It has always interplayed with *political authority* building, *accumulation*, *violence*, and *migration*, to influence the (dis)integration of (border) regions in the Western Senegambia.

The religious (de)construction of cross-border regional integration

In this section, it will be basically argued that if *disintegration* and *integration* were respectively preponderant during the pre-colonial and colonial sequences, they tend to be simultaneous in the postcolonial moment because of the more complex interplay of the different types of social contracts that emerged in the previous polities (Nugent 2010).

Pre-colonial and colonial precedents

The pre-colonial sequence corresponds roughly to that of the islamisation of politics in Western Senegambia. In the context of the political economy of the the trans-Saharan and Atlantic trades, religion, namely Islam, was used by suzerainties in their hegemonic projects that were facing tremendous challenges related to order making.

One of the main challenges came from the endemic insecurity caused by the violent model of state building based on the permanent need to wage wars as the best way of securing territories which were unsteadily delineated by frontiers or interstitial borders in the sense of Kopytoff (1987) for the sustenance of internal boundaries between ruling classes, warlords, middle and lower classes as well as dependants such as exiles and slaves (Ould Ahmed Salem 2004: 18). In Western Senegambia, Paganism and Islam had been used as ideological and mystical frames by kings, warlords and emirs. Religious ideas and services in the form of counsels from clerics (traditional priests and marabouts) and devices such as amulets

augmented the power and prestige of these rulers.⁵ This has been the case in the proto-States of the Senegal River Valley where the Hassan emirs and Warlords of the Moors emirates were having as counsellors and mediators the Zwaya marabouts and Muslim traders since the early 17th century (Robinson 2004; Marchesin 2004).

As for Islam, it consolidated the political authority of the rulers through the dogma and charisma of marabouts-warlords in the northern emirates and marabouts-traders in the River Valley and the Kaabu. From an Islam of the courtyards that comforted emirates and monarchies, Islam became an imperial ideology for justifying wars in the framework of the jihads launched by reformist leaders of the River Valley.⁶ Islam was presented as an egalitarian system capable of uniting peoples and leading them to a larger form of political community which transcends fragmented tribe-systems and creates more united and greater political states ruled by a more consensual political leadership (Marchesin 2004: 50-54, 69). Though Islamic dogma and charisma had been efficient legitimating bases for political order, and effectively built larger and more stable states such as the Futa Toro Kingdom, the Macina Fulbe of Alaji Umar, these remained unstable and weak (Gaudio 1988: 71-78). The strength of these polities was at the same time their weakness.

Like other states, Muslim empires were evolving in the political economy of raids and conquests that characterised the Trans-Saharan and Atlantic trade economies. The political hegemony of suzerainties was based, through the use of military force, on the control of land (pioneer fronts) and tributes levied from harvests, trade routes and dependents (slaves and new settlers) against their protection. Violent fiscal extraction as the best way to maintain and expand frontiers led to an escalation of wars and thus to more instability (Ould Ahmed Salem Op.cit.: 19). If the predatory violence of many jihadist states was able to secure frontiers and resources on these margins and confines and stabilise the trade economy, it finally led to the disintegration of political order. Many waves of forced migration and enslavement ensued, though Islamic reformism promised the end of slavery and protection for communities and dependents. This paradox also undermined the ideological basis of pre-colonial states which was inevitable given the interdependency between violent hegemony, predatory accumulation and servile labour.

Expectedly, colonial political order making or integration was going to face the challenge of the ideological decline, the political instability and the endemic insecurity of the falling Muslim states. At the social and economic level, there were tremendous consequences on these on the equilibrium and complementarity of the Trans-Saharan and Atlantic trade economies. The challenge was as much heavier as the reformist movements succeeded in religiously homogenising the whole Western Senegambia despite the demystification of the

⁵ Prior to the jihadist movements, the Jahankas were specialized as Muslim traders who propagated Islam through pacific means, which granted them the trust of both communities and rulers of the Futa Jallon and the Kaabu empires (Niane Op.cit.: 13).

⁶ Known as “maraboutic revolution” or the “wars of the marabouts” the first reformist movement was incepted by Nasr Al Din (1644-1674) a Berber or *Zwaya* leader who had not been successful in his rebellion against the Hassan Arabs who were reigning in Mauritania and the river Valley. This movement inspired the following reformism in the Senegalo-Mauritanian Zone such as the “Torobe revolution” of the 18th century (Marchesin Op.cit.: 68-70; Barry 1985: 193-196; Belvaude 1989: 16-18).

Torodo revolution in Futa Toro and the persistence of inegalitarian political systems in the whole region.

Actually, Islam remained a vigorous political and socioeconomic normative and system for the Western Senegambia communities. For example, concerning the Senegal River Valley, as notes Ahmed Ould Salem (Op.cit.: 23),

networks, influences and cultural references were strongly integrated and were prevailing in a unified space symbolised by the border town of Saint-Louis (...) It exists in the [Senegal River Valley] region similar social stratifications, intermingled mythologies, shared experiences and a number of common cultural flows which give the frontier its peculiar unity.

Islam was not declining, neither are the political entities that were shrouded in it. But, they were in transition as suggested by the wars of succession that were raging within the Moors emirates of River Valley, just as were doing the new wave of islamisation from Eastern Sudan and the Futa Jallon in the early 19th century towards the poorly converted Kaabu (Niane Op.cit.: 178-181). At the same time, new religious leaders were emerging at the head of new religious movements, the Sufi brotherhoods, which Tidiana and Hamalliyah tendencies still favour violent jihad as a means to fight White Christian settlers (Marchesin Op.cit. 68-70). Religious leaders of Western Senegambia were divided as colonial political hegemony was unfolding, following an economic phase during which fiscal boundaries were used to integrate the economy of the empire which would be thus better controlled and exploited. While devotees of traditional religions were rather impervious to colonisation and suspicious of its ulterior evangelical motives, a bulk of Muslim leaders finally embraced colonialism after a brief sequence of hesitation at the beginning of the 19th century. Through their symbolic capital and various religious strategies and practices, Moors and Black leaders such as Saad Buh, Siddiya Baba, Amadu Bamba and Malick Sy developed a new ideological grid that would serve the normative framework for the political colonisation of West Africa (Robinson 2004: 232-366).

This was going to unfold through a new social contract of permissiveness and productivity based on the ideological and socioeconomic accommodation of Muslim societies and their leaders. On the contrary, the Tijanya leader Alaji Umar and the Hamalliya movement in the Middle Senegal River Valley opposed the project. The colonial empire will totally pacify the Western Senegambia, and later on the whole of West Africa, thanks to the ideological and economic support of Sufi leaders whose role of organic intellectuals and civil society leaders will overcome the last resistances in Mauritania, and the Upper Senegal River and the Casamance in the 1930s (Robinson Op.cit.: 277-1). The colonial powers, with slight variations, had to gain this by restraining for a long time the progress of Christianity (Robinson Op.cit.). This is a perfect indication of a politicisation of religion contrary to the reverse islamisation of politics during the pre-colonial era.

The regional integration of the region was more economic than political and social, even though new stable states were created through fixed boundaries and military warfare alternatively handled with symbolic mediation by religious movements. Wealth accumulation and distribution became decentralised and governed with a mixed system of colonial and

indigenous legislatures and rights. Though they were fixed, borders were actually porous and disintegrative of the former national ethnies, while state violence remained an important ordering mechanism, though relatively monopolised. Loose and late abolition of slavery, forced labour migrations and state predation and violence were signs of a continuity and tempting nostalgia of former regimes. As a matter of fact, the colonial empire was only integrated at the institutional level, as the administrative system of extraction was running smoothly, whereas the Muslim merchants in the civil society encroached the fluvial trade in border towns (Saint-Louis, Rosso, Dagana, Bogué, Kidira, etc.) On the contrary, like the former frontier states, its borders were porous margins and sometimes landlocked confines depending on the resources they contained; its territories were thus open to indifferent cross-border flows, to political dissent and economic subversion, as suggested by the permanent difficulty to subdue the Casamance and the Upper Guinea regions.

The postcolonial state was then that in which violence would be firmly implemented to maintain the weak order, especially as nationalisms were sometimes conflicting, and their ideologies somehow symbolically overloaded, if not strange to the great many. Resulting from discordant nationalisms, authoritarianism and underdevelopment, the growing inter-state wars and intrastate insurgencies are emblematic of the border curse legacy, meaning the lack of fit between the social spaces of the cultural communities and the political spaces of the territorial states. Because it challenged the new states' capacity to deliver, awkward and hastened decolonisation aggravated the territorial handicap. From decolonisation to globalisation through democratisation, religion has kept its ideological and normative function of legitimating political authority by investing the imaginaries and narratives of order and socio-political organisations and regimes of governance. As such it has been useful to dampen insurrectionary propensities and supplement the poor social and economic delivery of the state.

However, religion was fundamentally affected to the mediation of the relationships between communities and political institutions, whereby the latter has tended to be more organisational and ritualised. By way of consequence, the question arises about the effect of political reforms, notably decentralisation at the sub-national level and regionalism at the supra-national level (Tandia 2007). Both reforms are positioned as pleas for the reconstruction of state order at two interrelated institutional levels and territorial scales. Both also provide grounds and institutional pathways for greater openness of (intra/inter)state institutions to civil society or non-state actors in the renegotiation of legitimacy between state and society. Given that such reforms claim the inclusion of traditional powers and institutions into decentralised and regional governance, the likelihood that religion and religious institutions and organisations will be decisively represented in the future can be examined by now through the issue of cross-border regional integration.

Religion and regional integration: continuities and ambivalence

As we have been able to highlight it, though hastily at times, religion in general had not been operating without the decisive links it has with mechanism of order making or state formation / building. *Violence, migration and accumulation* have remained closely related to each other

and altogether drawing from the ideological and material structures and functions provided in the religious script of power, order and social life. Interplaying with them, religion has been playing in both processes of disintegration and integration in the history of political orders in Western Senegambia.

Most importantly, the fundamental challenge still remains the need to maintain order, with less legitimacy and high territorial virtuality, both at the level of inputs and outputs, which permanently confronts political authority with societal groups who always needed and constantly looked for protection and welfare. Seemingly, it is this dilemma that puts religion in the permanent position of a symbolic and ideological resource for order making, and therefore for integration, on whatever scale it is. It is on the basis of this continuity that we are going to assess the role of religion in the current process of cross-border regional integration in Western Senegambia.

Religious diplomacy in inter-state regionalism

Regionalism as we defined it earlier concerns the highest scale of the region, meaning the intergovernmental level. The entry point from which religion shapes regionalism is the national politics. Given that regionalism is a diplomatic arena, one can expect religious leaders and networks to influence the politics of regionalism, especially as in many Western Senegambia countries, religious authorities – Sufi guides, imams, priests, or the Ustaz⁷ – are often solicited by their governments in their international politics. Western Senegambia religious authorities are important representatives and lobbyists for their respective governments in international organisations such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference or the International Episcopal Conference. Two important examples will be picked here to illustrate the role of religious authorities and networks in inter-state regionalism.

Beforehand a few words on the regionalist potential of religious authorities and institutions will help better understand their importance as regional actors. Firstly, the Western Senegambia space can be seen as unique home for religious authorities, notably Muslim leaders, given that Islam is the first religion of the region (See Table 1). **The north-south movement of religious brotherhoods interconnects *zawiyas*⁸, religious towns, regional kuranic and Arabic schools, and economic basins such as border towns. In the Senegalo-Mauritanian zone, the trans-border unity of the religious space building on economic complementarities explains and rests on the duration and the amplitude of the relationships between Mouridiya, Faddiliya, Qadiriya and Tijannya families⁹, through matrimonial alliances stricken beyond ethnic differences. All religious brotherhoods and families share the same genealogies and have been trained in the same schools just as their descendants are doing today from the Trarza and Brakna Schools to the Kuranic villages of Fuladu in Casamance and Pirada, Farim and Bafata in the Gabu regula, and those of Labe in the**

⁷ Arabo-Islamic literates who are trained in mixed schools where they receive western and Arabo-Islamic training. They become often kuranic schools, preachers or imams.

⁸ The *zawiya* is the religious, social and administrative headquarters of a religious brotherhood. It is a compound with a mosque and sometimes with a kuranic school.

⁹ Such relationships date back to the 19th century leaders of the *turuq* namely Cheikh Al Saad Buh, Cheikh Al Siddiya Baba, Alaji Malick Sy, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and Cheikh Al Ibrahim Niass, who built their strong ties through matrimonial alliances using between their offspring and disciples.

Republic of Guinea (Mettas Op.cit.: 68). This genealogical and intellectual foundation is sustained by a common spiritual culture basically inspired by the Moors in the Senegal River Valley.

Secondly the *turuq* and religious authorities in Western Senegambia usually belong to the same schools of thought. The common ideological attachment of these religious movements to neutrality towards politics and the centrality of labour and wealth accumulation in their philosophy endow them with a considerable capacity to endorse civil society leadership and developmental roles and regulatory functions in the public sphere.

Thirdly, besides these symbolic patterns, religious practices are also somehow uniform among Muslim religious communities, as the *turuq* which all belong to the Sunnite school and have adopted the Malekite rite. In the field of education the practices of itinerant scholarship and multiple affiliations segments the region at the ideological and intellectual level, by linking religious centres and towns beyond borders. Practices such as pilgrimages – *gamou*, *magal*, *ziara* – and collect-tours for the *hadiya*¹⁰ and inter-personal courtesy visits among religious leaders, during which reciprocal donations importantly strengthen loyalties amongst leaders and with their followers, also contribute to segmenting the region and uniting it at the religious level (Wedoud Ould Cheikh 2004: 123-130; Robinson 2004).

Fourthly, this symbolic and practical background gives Muslim religious authorities and networks the capacity to orient politics but also influence the economic and social attitudes of both states and communities of followers and believers. The economic activity of marabouts and their followers in cross-border trade and (agricultural) migrations precisely derives from the fact that they generate a lot of mobility. The ideology of submissiveness and compliance deriving from the Sufi philosophy which religious leaders and networks promoted in national politics has given them the recognised ability to intervene in conflicts and to contribute to peace-building. Obviously, it appears that religious authorities and the movements they dynamise do not only integrate the different national communities. They can play as well in regionalist projects.

Since the 1989 crisis between Senegal and Mauritania took people by surprise, on the grounds that their peoples are the same and that there were strong religious ties between them, due to their age-old ties, it would be legitimate to claim or expect religious authorities to intervene in the crisis, which did happen on the ground. Actually religious leaders in Senegal and Mauritania have been useful in the resolution of the conflict. The then calife of the Tijanya brotherhood in Senegal, Abdou Aziz Sy Dabbakh, convened a meeting of religious leaders, in the mausoleum of Saidou Nourou Tall in Dakar where a public address had been made on the basis of the “sameness” of the two peoples of the neighbouring countries. Of importance was the inter-religious and cross-national character of their intervention. In effect, Serigne Abdou Aziz was joined by the Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum then leader of the Senegalese Catholic Church. Along with the other brotherhood leaders and the *Association des Musulmans du Sénégal*, they appealed to governments and impassioned communities to appease the tensions (Biaya 1999: 21-22). On the other hand, they organised the protection of citizens of both countries using their kinship networks on either side of the border. Through

¹⁰ The *hadiya* is a donation which disciples give to their religious guide most of the time in cash.

the Tijanya branch of the Nyassene, many Moors were gathered in zawiyas and mosques in Kaolack before being channelled to Mauritania (Stone 1994: 55). According to Stone (Ibid.), “the ten days of courtesy visit by Hadj Abdallahi Niass, the calife in 1990 attracted masses, at a moment when officially relationships were broke between Mauritania and Senegal. Senegalese disciples were likewise protected in Mauritania”. As well, other leaders of the Qadiriya made attempts for the reconciliation of the two governments (Ibid.: 56).

Indicative of the fact that these efforts were well received by national states and had an international echo, not only was the appeal of religious leaders broadcast at the national television station in Senegal, but they called on the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to offer its good offices to solve the crisis. But in a less philanthropic tone, the intervention in this conflict was much crucial for the marabouts and religious movements in Senegal as the state propaganda in Mauritania was aimed at isolating Senegal by straining the diplomatic relationships it had developed with the Middle East Muslim countries (Diop 2002: 212-13). No doubt that this would have been terribly detrimental to the symbolic and economic capital the marabouts have built as “diplomatic intermediaries” between Arab and Senegalese political elites (Ibid.: 214). The probability that the meeting of the Islamic Conference Organisation could be displaced to another country, with important economic losses for both government and religious spheres, was an additional reason to the involvement of the marabouts. This is a clear indication of the political significance of religion in regionalism in Western Senegambia.

Another example of the role of religious leaders and networks in inter-state regionalism was the post 1963 crisis between Mali and Senegal, at a time when neither the ECOWAS nor its securitarian paradigm of regionalism were born. Following the disintegration of the Federation of Mali in 1962, Senegal and Mali violently and suddenly broke ties. A few months ago, a meeting was held in the border town of Kidira to which under the leadership of Alaji Saidou Nourou Tall, son of the former emperor of the Fulbe Macina Alaji Umar, in order to help end the dispute. The representatives of religious brotherhoods travelled by train to attend the Kidira meeting at which were present some Malian religious leaders. Both delegation significantly contributed to further concrete agreements that sealed for good the reconciliation between the two countries and their leaders (Thiouba 1994: 104-105).

An Increasing role in Long-range regionalisation

These records contrast to some extent with the economic outlook of the involvement of religious leaders and movements to regional integration. At this level, the influence of domestic national social contracts is once again very important. The permissive and productive types of social contracts that exist almost in all countries, except perhaps the two Guineas, from the most recent past till today have prospered in the national scenes only because they have an important regional anchorage. For instance the tremendous accumulation capacity of many religious leaders in the region owes much to the low taxes that preside over the re-exportation economy of the Gambia (Abdoul et al. Op.cit.; Sall 1992). Actually, the role of religious leaders and movements, such as Muslim brotherhoods in the regional economy of Western Senegambia must be appreciated from a nuanced perspective. It

is a widely shared view that economic activism of religious leaders and movements is to be included in long-range regionalisation due to its pervading effects on the deterritorialisation and dis-institutionalisation of regional integration.

Due to their strongly and widely diffused ideology of accumulation, in which labour becomes a pillar of worshiping, of worldly success as well as of spiritual achievement and a promise of heaven, Muslim brotherhoods cannot be overlooked in the regional economy which they tend to dominate as civil society organisations.¹¹ From Mauritania to the Republic of Guinea, from Dakar to Kayes, they have built strong networks of spiritual recruitment, political mobilisation and economic entrepreneurship. The harvest from cultivation are commercialised through the cross-border networks and markets to raise funds that will be invested in the towns of origin of the marabouts and their disciples.

The organisation of this marabout business is first based on the ideological notion of the *Ummah* in Islam as a borderless community and belief-system. As a result religious movements share the same “indifference to (post)colonial boundaries and the same pattern of circulation from north to south and south-north of doctrinal influences and economic flows” (Abdoul *et al.* Op.cit.: 129). Commonly shared practices like the *hijra*, itinerant scholarship, the *khalwa*¹² and collect-tours also are not mere spiritual and ritual displacements. They are also occasions for economic accumulation and even new settlements in new places.¹³ Thanks to the *khalwa* and the itinerant scholarship of Muslim marabouts, the groundnut basin in Senegal and the pioneer front constituted by the fertile forest soils of Pata and Madina Yoro Fula in Upper Casamance, are important production centres that segment the Senegalo-Gambian space and economy (Fanchette 1999; Sidibe 2003, 2002).

Many of these new settlements in the Senegal-Gambia border and the borderlands between Casamance and the two Guineas are actually multi-ethnic and multi-confessionnal. They are not only from the Senegalese groundnut basin and are not always farm cultivators. Among them many are migrant merchants and *mussafirs*,¹⁴ others are coming to seek little jobs to do from the new settlers. Many follow their marabouts or are ordered by them to establish there. Coming from villages located in the East-centre and the South of Saloum, from northern Gambia and regions of the Republic of Guinea (Labé, Boké et Lélouma) (Sidibe 2003: 6). The Fulbe Gabunke in Madina Elhadj coexist with their co-ethnic and co-religionist Fulakundas in the southwest of Upper Casamance where they gather in a punch of villages around their marabouts who have decided to settle their during their *khalwa*, following a *hijra*¹⁵ in the early 20th century to flee the colonial wars in the Fouta.¹⁶ The

¹¹ We can extend to other brotherhoods what Donal Cruise O’Brien wrote about the Mourides (see Cruise O’Brien 2002: 184-5)

¹² A spiritual retreat of the marabout done in the bush or in an isolated compound.

¹³ The *daara* of the coloniser-clerics between the Saloum and the Middle and Upper Casamance effectively obey the same principle as with the *khaima* (camp) of the *zwaya* marabouts of the 19th and 20th centuries.

¹⁴ An Arabic term meaning “travelers”. These are called by local as the genuine “border crossers” because of the number of times they can cross the border as permanently residing in the roundabouts.

¹⁵ A migratory form that can be voluntary or forced and which is associated to religion in the Muslim history. In the context of pre-colonial and colonial wars it was frequent as forced migration of marabouts or converts fleeing persecution.

¹⁶ Reminiscent of Cheikh Mahfouz, a Moors Qadiriya marabout, nephew of Cheikh Saad Buh who founded Darsilam (House of peace) in Fogy (Casamance) in 1902, (Nugent 2007), these settlement are very old

connection of these hetero-topical production centres, at once religious and agricultural, to the exportation centres in capital cities (Dakar, Banjul, and Nouakchott) is based on the networks of disciples and patrons among which administrative and political authorities in sectors such as harbour and customs.

While the marabout agrarian and trade economy can be regionalised and basically harmful to the economic balances of states and to the development of a formal regional economy (Meagher 1996), it is an important incentive to the economic stability and integration of individuals and societies, as well as a social safety valve. This appears through the rapid urbanisation of most religious towns such as Touba and Madina Gonasse in Senegal, Touba in Guinea, Farim in Guinea-Bissau, where religious leaders have invested a lot in urban planning and social services. The economic potential of religion at a regional level also appears in the spiritual sacralisation and economic vocation of religious towns. Many celebrations are occasions for the accumulation and redistribution of wealth as well as for the development and sustainance of commercial networks. Abdoul et al (Op.cit.: 106) explain how

The considerable influence of the marabouts of the communauté rurale of Ndorna goes beyond the borders. The village of Soboulde welcomes an international pilgrimage every year which is very well sponsored by local and central authorities in the Gambia and Senegal. This pilgrimage is that of Alaji Diallo who polarises talibés from the Gambia, Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal”

The economic capital of marabouts and religious movements finally pertains to their political power in the national and local scene. The insertion of marabouts and their disciples in cross-border trade is even easier than the former draw concurrently from political authority as chiefs of the villages which they are very often the founders. The coexistence of different religious authorities and confessions is an intensifier to this economic activity which yet, very often, proves to be illicit (Fanchette 1999: 27).

Since the 1970s, when it actually started, cleric colonization of pioneer fronts has been structuring the exchanges between Pata: Madina Yoro Fula and Gambian border areas such as Basse, Serekunda. The same can be said of the southern triangle between Madina-Gonasse, Madina Elhadj and Farim. On both border areas, farming materials (mechanics, fertilizers, seeds, cattle) and crops are channelled through borders thanks to migrant networks. These are secured by the formal and informal interactions of religious leaders, marabouts and administrative authorities in the national constituencies. Of much longer range, probably global now, the rice market is segmented by a religious network from Mauritania to the Upper Guinea: Lebanese and Gambian business men control the importations while Moors big holders handle the distribution in the southern border comptoirs of Gambia before the stocks are ventilated by Mouride traders across the border with the help of their coreligionist kin in Kaolock Touba and Kolda, wherefrom the product expands in urban centers and rural markets, including the *loumos* (Ibid.: 94). Likewise, the Janhanka network, which is basically religious-based manages its business from France and Spain through the Gambian NGO

practices sometimes related to force migration (*hijra*) after or during pre-colonial and colonial wars of conquest, or to environmental changes (Tandia 2011).

Fodde, in charge of administrative negotiations and deals with Gambian harbour Customs, and with traders in Kolda and Pata in Guinea-Bissau. The traders in Kolda count on the financial company which the Jahancas have created there to fund the conveying of containers in Guinea through the Pata border post where compliant customs officers facilitate the transactions (Ibid.: 106). This having been said, the inputs of religious entrepreneurship in the region are not to be exaggerated. While it is very limited with regard to the formal economy, because of the important part of smuggling, it can freeze the course of regional politics, overwhelming national policies by the same token.

This explains why the Senegalese State has always been unable to keep the Casamance conflict out of the reach of Gambia and ensure its economic equilibrium has to do with the weight of the interests of religious networks in the formal and informal economy in the region (Diop Op.cit.: 218). As well, the Gambia has never been able to sustainably respond with sudden restrictions and price increases because of the need to spare the interests of the merchant networks in which religious leaders and movements are important players.

If religious / labour recruitment and agrarian colonisation reinforced the capacity of religion to integrate new peoples and insert those in a new (post)colonial economic system, the ideology and its material manifestation (spiritual superiority, colonisation, preference of deregulations) show how it can be a disintegrative factor, in terms ethnic and inter-faith conflicts. While being potentially able to drive conflicts and reinforce ethnic tensions, the feeling of “spiritual superiority” among the disciples of the *turuq* reinforces agrarian colonisation in the Casamance and informal cross-border trade (Ibid.). This is how many intra and community conflicts are aggravated between co-religionists from different affiliations in the *turuq* (Dia 2006; Fanchette 2002, 1999; Tandia 2011). Regionalisation from the religious perspective may be however taking a different outlook.

A new role in Short-range regionalisation: imams and kuranic masters as emerging actors

The immediate cross-border local scene which is the borderland scale or border region has gained much importance in the relationship between religious activism and process of legitimation and production of regional integration. This situation owes much to the changes internal to the religious landscape itself even though traditional political economic patterns are no less significant.

Connected to the globalised diasporas (Adogambe and Spickard 2010), religious movements¹⁷, have increasingly urbanised their economic networks and investments. Related to their incorporation within the state (Hamès Op.cit.:49), or the politicization of religion, this has resulted in the decline of their capacity to mobilise at the trans-ethnic and transnational level. At the same time, the individualization and the decrease of religious affiliations and contacts between disciples and marabouts, more visible in Mauritania than in other countries, reduces the economic assets and social capital of religious movements (Stone Op.cit.: 55-56). As a consequence, because of the concurrent breakthrough of reformist movements (Kane and Triaud 1998) who have gained more legitimacy in the face of increasingly politicised and demystified marabouts, the *Wali* in Mauritania as well as the

¹⁷ The Mouride and the Tijanya *turuq* in Senegal (Coulon 2003; Ebin 1995) are mostly concerned.

Imams and *Ustaz* in other places are the new repositories of charisma (Stone Op.cit.). Their propensity to deal with more practical issues (employment, reproduction, love, etc.) and their cheap tariffs, contrasting with the expensive and inaccessible marabouts, position them as new “integrators”. Below I will pick a few examples to link these political economic shifts and the new dynamics of religion in short-range regionalisation.

In the Senegalo-Mauritanian zone the increasing decline of some of the *turuq*¹⁸, namely the Qadiriya and some branches of the Tidianya, mainly in Mauritania (Hamès Op.cit.:48-49) and Senegal (Ebin Op.cit.; Coulon Op.cit.) should also be correlated the increasingly rigid border regime that has resulted from the 1989 intergovernmental crisis is an additional explanation to the fading of the religious leaders and networks in cross-border regional integration. The situation that is prevailing in the Senegalo-Mauritanian border zone can be encapsulated in the sole case of Gaé, 13 km to the north from Dagana, one of the most important religious towns in the River Valley on the south bank. Place of birth of Haji Malik Sy, founder of the Senegalese Tidianya branch, Gaé is still a well known religious border town with its annualgamou that attracts people from up to Nouadibu. However, it is not certain that the 1989 crisis has spared much of this legacy:

We still are in good terms with our fellow Tijanes in Gani, but none with the Moors Tijanes of Mauritania even if a few are still willing to benefit from our religious heritage. Sometimes they show up with presents to magnify the quality and descent of our relationships. Yet the flows of people, Moors or Negro-Africans, who used to cross the river, in the quest of knowledge or schools, have nearly disappeared. The world has changed a lot. People have a wide range of technologies to acquire knowledge without going any further. Moreover, we don't have these technologies in here. What is lingering today is kuranic memorisation and other affiliated sciences, such as calligraphy and the *fikh*.¹⁹

Indicative of the globalisation of the regional economy (Meagher 2003) these trends must not however hide a new situation. The imams and or Kuranic teachers, the *Wali* and the *Cheik* or *Ustaz* articulate an ideology of local cross-border integration evolving around notions of *solidarity*, *brotherhood* and *sameness* beyond political and cultural differences. The duty of solidarity constructed out of local syncretism that is open to Islamic revelation conveys an ethos of palaver and tolerance. In this vein, as noted by the Sous-prefet of Madina Sabakh, “the legitimacy of cross-border governance rests upon the common will of border peoples to live together”²⁰. The tradition of brotherhood sanctified in the imaginaries of neighbourliness erases foreignness in favour of a kind of “borderland nationalism”. Ordinary syncretic discourses designate the stranger as a *doomu ndey*²¹, invoking thus the immemorial African maternity (Yinda-Yinda 2004: 341) in order to nullify the difference conveyed in the nationally endowed otherness. A good example is given by the Wolof community of the Gambia-Senegal borderland community of Madina Sabakh and Farafeni, when they reject the

¹⁸ The decline also owes to the disappearance of most charismatic leaders whose movements are now led by their grand-sons, grand-daughters and their numerous, urbanised and concurrently interacting disciples who have become the new *cheikhs*.

¹⁹ Mokhtar Fall, Member of the Executive Committee of the Federation des dahiras tijanes of Gaé. 14 May 2012.

²⁰ M. Drame, Interviewed in Madina Sabakh, 9 August 2009.

²¹ Wolof word used in Gambia-Senegal borderland communities that means a brother of the same mother who is different from the half-brother, that is in traditional maternity, the brother with whom we share a father.

stato-national image of the Gambia as an “annoying peanut in the belly of Senegal”²², preferring the image of the “milk and couscous” mixture that cannot be parted but only drunk naturally.

In the minds of borderlanders, the inter/supra-national framework is not the appropriate scene for cross-border cooperation and integration activities. While states seek their interests in economic and infrastructural regionalism, the impression in border regions is that the will to preserve relationships of neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence, above all, presides over the inception of cross-border integration initiatives. They strongly believe that there are equilibriums already in place, pre-existing regulations that only need to be preserved in order to avoid ruptures and unwanted changes through sparse and egoistic actions and conflicts of interests that will only widens the gap between advantageous regions and those that are disfavoured.

A first important outcome of the cross-border agrarian economy developed by religious authorities in their settlements and in the networks of their disciples is the borderland trade. Not forgetting its subversive character as a pattern of the permissive social contracts prevailing in the national settings, this low scale cross-border trade of survival enables borderland populations to negotiate their daily livelihood needs, notably in the southern border regions between the Gambia, Casamance and the Upper Guinea, where the ongoing conflict and the instability of the Guinean states has aggravated the effects of agricultural recession.

In Salikegni a rural commune of more than 5000 inhabitants on the border between Kolda and Gabu regions, the Imam Talibo Kontan is a reputed cultivator and a Kuranic master who is also an appreciated counsellor for the mayor of the commune. His charismatic authority owes him to be consulted by local government authorities and by individuals for various services rewarded according to the means of his visitors.²³ This symbolic and social capital yields an economic potential which consists of mediating the interactions between the border-police, the customs and the local council on the one hand, and populations on the other.

Building on the cross-border range of his reputation, Talibo Kontan has contributed to the cultivation of land on either side of the border, thus communalising land resources between Salikeni and Bissau-Guinean villages of Cambaju, Sare Bakary and Sare Waly for example. In the same logic, the SODEFITEX and the CNCR based in Kolda concede flexible arrangements to the Fulbe and Mandinka cashew-nut farmers in Salikegni and to other local merchants who buy and sell to Indian and Egyptian traders in Kolda or wholesalers in Basse (Gambia). Basing on our fieldwork we will add that this business network is probably bread by religious civilities: the permanent and strong courteous relationships developed between the imam and kuranic teacher of the rural Commune plays as an incentive and a legitimising basis to the facilities.

In the field of social communication another border region is illustrative of the symbolic capital and the moral authority of religious leaders, notably the imams. Their voice

²² An expression attributed to former President Abdou Diouf of Senegal by Ebrima Sall (Sall 1991)

²³ Talibo Kontan. Interview in Salikeni on 17 May 2010.

and moral sponsorship during cultural celebrations such as marriages, and religious events such as the *ziara*, the *gamou* and the pilgrimages, are powerful ‘institutions’ necessary for an effective mobilisation of the border communities. On the border area between Dioulou (Senegal) and Brikama (Gambia) a cross-border festival have been the occasion to define a common agenda in as various domains as resource management of forests, community development and peace building and crime prevention. It is thanks to the patronage and their handling of political authorities that energies and means have been mobilized around a permanent cross-border community agenda starting with the repairs of the road that links the neighbouring localities.

Religious authorities are important actors of what I have called elsewhere “local diplomacy”, a cross-border system of initiatives undertaken by borderland modern and traditional authorities and communities in any domain in which challenges may jeopardize neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence amongst them (Tandia 2007, 2010). Joining efforts with customary chiefs, when they are not the same, religious authorities have been the moral directors of the inter-village peace committees set up to fight against trans-boundary criminality along the border between the region of Kolda and those of Gabu and Oio in Guinea-Bissau. Everywhere these committees are subdivided into vigilante committees spread in every village to prevent cattle-rustling, road-cutting and other banditry activities. Organisations like these have been as well set up on the Gambia-Fogny border in Diouloulou and Brikama.

As modern judicial systems are not always appropriate or operating efficiently and their procedures are undesirable, religious authorities are often entrusted with litigations, with the consent of administrative institutions. Many inter-community conflicts arise over the exploitation of wetlands, ponds, and forestry materials for house-building, or else the tracing of the itineraries of cattle and grazing pastures. The smooth and discrete intervention of religious authorities in the management of these issues ultimately contributes to the reinvention of the modern and traditional judicial prevention and resolution of conflicts that often prove to be more adapted to the cross-border context. This confirms that “the *de facto* respect for chiefly autonomy (...) for distinct religious spaces in Senegal, (...) which was not written into constitutional documents (...), underlines the importance of seeing institutions not as abstract things, but as the product of social practice” (Nugent 2010: 54).

One place in which the commitment of religious leaders in peace building has been remarked is Madina Alaji, a *communaute rurale* founded by the marabout Alaji Ali Caam from Gabu (Guinea-Bissau), the recurrent conflicts over the wetlands and pasture graze between the local Fuladu Fulbe and the Gabunke Fulbe (new settlers from neighbouring Sanka in Gabu) have been considerably reduced by the building of dikes in the contentiously coveted valley of Leeba in 2005. If ever they occur once again or when tensions threaten, the local committee in which the marabout and imam of both localities are notabilities.

Initiatives like these and the cross-border fora that serve as public spaces in which community affairs are discussed and policies planned, are common along the border between Kolda and Salikegne, Bignona and the Gambian Western Division, Kolda and Basse in Gambia and many other places. Testifying to the increasing role of religious leaders in border

regions and short-range regionalisation, these initiatives must be seen as the minimum share of the daily localised challenges for the marabouts and imams. Although it is primarily oriented to the maintenance of their *daara* and economic capital, the maraboutic agrarian economy is as well relieving for the poverty stricken communities who must face increasing poverty and insecurity resulting from the Casamance conflict and the instability of Guinean neighbours of the Casamance.

Conclusion

Although it is a cultural identity religion has not received as much concern as required by the way it cuts above the rest, notably in African politics where it has outclassed ethnicity, at least its racialised form, in the socio-political transformations of the last two decades. The fact that the African partition agenda has been rather enduring without an adequate concern to religion is also an additional to the study of religion in the bordering processes in Africa.

The main objective in this paper was to identify and analyse the instances in which religion as a symbolic construct and a group identity could function as an ideological framework and a device for mobilisation and collective action in cross-border regional integration. At a more theoretical level, the conception of religion from a constructivist perspective was intent to find a template from which regional integration as a correlate could be as well theorised from a similar approach of borders and regional integration. This binary theoretical option has been commanded by a couple of notions. On the one hand, a wider understanding of cross-border regional integration from a border studies perspective would have help distinguish different types of scales and therefore, on the other hand, various ways of its (de)construction through religious phenomena.

Religion in its various manifestations, an ideological grid, a material resource, in the form of organisations and movements, and a cultural sphere (religious celebrations and other practices), has proven to be determinant in structuring cross-border regional integration in two fundamental ways. First, religious ideas, beliefs and discourses (including mythologies carved in genealogies and epical accounts of the marabouts) form an ideological framework that can set disciples on the tracks of their marabouts into the political economy. Second, religious phenomena can yield a wide range of material tools that segment the different (local, national and supranational) regions and even connect it to other spaces, and decisively influence the structure and the elasticity of the regional economic system. The economic outcomes of these dynamics, notably as a lever for political regulation, as they are duly measured and encouraged by nation-states through regionalism (institutionalisation of short-range regionalisation) have been possible through the organisations (turuq, zawiyas, daara, camps), movements (jihads, Sufi brotherhoods, new reformist) and strategies (migration, colonisation, nomadism, economic specialisation, social immersion, political networking and mobilisation, etc.).

Religious ideas, discourses and practices, like movements and borderland and trans-boundary networks, which are in any case not totally religious, do not only legitimise or construct regional integration. In other words, they have the same potential of preventing or hindering regional integration. The best example of this is the way in which the agrarian economy which is remarkably manifested in long-range regionalisation can freeze the

regional and national commercial and even diplomatic policies, though its relieving effects are undeniable at the local and trans-local levels for communities.

Despite the multi-level scale analysis, thanks to a three-tiered conceptualisation of cross-border regional integration, the variations in the ways in which religious phenomena construct or deconstruct regional integration produce the same result. They all demonstrate the robustness of prevailing social contracts. This is as much the case as despite significant differences in their political economies, the colonial and postcolonial orders could alternatively and very furtively fluctuate between productive and permissive social contracts. The fact that integration and disintegration occur at the same time throughout history also exemplify the homogeneity of both religion and regional integration as informative and dynamic correlates of African politics, at least in Western Senegambia.

This no less important result of this study allows ambivalent prospects. As we have noted, the religious sphere itself is caught in changing and ambivalent dynamics of secularisation on both the social and economic levels. Not forgetting the progressive urbanisation of the *turuq* and marabouts, which are the historically most significant, the declining affiliations and contacts of communities and their increasing interest for the Imams, *Ustaz* and *Cheikh* raises questions above the prospects on the role of religious brotherhoods in regional integration and thus, on the future of social contracts at both national and regional level. The rise of new a religious personnel and its emergence in local and ruralised border regions is as well challenging. Although they cumulate various functions and by the same token play in various scenes, it is not likely that they will be able to play the same role as the marabout and *turuq*, namely at the national and regional levels. Their being localised actors for most of them, in almost all countries of the region, can be a limitation while the urbanisation of national and regional economies do not play in favour of the emergence of local religiosity and religious leaders in wider and higher regional integration scales. To be more or less nuanced let us look into such prospects for the short and medium term. What will come out of the increasing political incorporation of marabouts in national-state politics, whether voluntary (as marabouts are political party leaders and local governors) or not (new political institutions for religious training and service allow states to increase control and dependency of religious personnel and organisations./.

References

- Adogame, Afe and Spickard, James V. (dirs.) 2010. *Religion Crossing Boundaries. Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora*. Leiden. Boston : Brill, coll. « Religion and the Social Order », 18, , 280 p.
- Asiwaju, Anthony I. (ed). 1984. *Partitioned Africans*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- African Union. 2007. Declaration of the African Union Border Program and its Implementation. Addis Ababa: African Union.
- Barry, Boubacar. 1988. La Grande SÉNÉGAMBIE au XX^{ème} siècle, in : M-C. Diop (ed.) *Le Sénégal et ses voisins*, (Dakar: Sociétés-Espaces-Temps) : 293-298.
- Barry, Boubacar. 1985. *Le Royaume du Waalo*. Paris : Karthala.
- Barry, Boubacar. 1981. "Émission politique et dépendance économique dans l'espace géopolitique sénégalais du XV^e au XVII^e siècle." *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* 68 : 250-253
- Belvaude, Catherine. 1989. *La Mauritanie*. Paris : Karthala.
- Bowen, John R. n.d. "Beyond Migration: Islam as a Transnational Public Space."

- Berg, Eiki and Van Houtum, Henk. 2003. *Mapping Borders Between Territories, Discourses and Practices*. London: Ashgate Publishing, 299 pages.
- Bach, Daniel. "Régionalisme et mondialisation en Afrique subsaharienne: le retournement d'un paradigme." In Daniel Bach, (dir), *régionalisation, mondialisation et fragmentation en Afrique subsaharienne* : 13-24. Paris: Karthala.
- Biaya, Tshikala. K. 1999. *Acteurs et médiations dans la résolution et la prévention des conflits en Afrique de l'Ouest*. Dakar : CODESRIA.
- Coulon, Christian. 2003. « Que sont devenus les marabouts de l'arachide ? » (Paper presented at the conference of the Congrès Internacional d'Estudis Africans, Barcelona, 12-16 janvier, 6 p).
- Cruise O'Brien, Donal. 2002. "Don divin, don terrestre: l'économie de la confrérie mouride." In Cruise O'Brien, D., Diop M-C. and Diouf, M. 2002. (eds) *La construction de l'Etat au Sénégal*. Paris : Karthala : 169-186.
- Dia, Ibrahima. 2006. *Dynamiques foncières, conflits et négociations autour des ressources naturelles renouvelables: le cas de la Haute Casamance*. Colloque international "Les frontières de la question foncière – At the frontier of land issues", Montpellier.
- Feyissa, Dereje. 2010. "The cultural construction of state borders: the view from Gambella." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 4(2): 314-330. DOI:10.1080/17531055.2010.487341. URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2010.487341>
- Diop, Momar-Coumba. 1992. "Le Sénégal et ses voisins." In D. C. O'Brien, M-C. Diop, & M. Diouf. (eds) *La Construction de l'Etat au Sénégal* : 203-228. Paris: Kartala.
- Donnan, Hastings and Wilson, Thomas M. 1999. *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*. Oxford: Berg.
- Dow, James W. 2007. A Scientific Definition of Religion. Anper.net...
- Ebin, V. (1995), « International Networks of a trading diaspora: the Mourides of Senegal abroad. » In *La ville à guichets fermés. Itinéraires, Réseaux et insertion urbaine*, Sous la direction de Philippe Antoine et Abdoulaye Bara Diop. Dakar: IFAN-ORSTOM. 232-338.
- Englebert, Pierre. 2000. *State Legitimacy and Development in Africa*. London.
- ECOWAS. 2007. Cross-Border Cooperation Convention (Pilot study). Abuja, October 2006. Memorandum. Cross Border Initiative Program. Ouagadougou, 18–19 December.
2005. *The 'Cross-Border' Concept of Local Integration*. Accra, 18 January.
- Fanchette, Sylvie. 2002. "La Haute Casamance à l'heure de la régionalisation. Enjeux fonciers et territoriaux." In M-C. Diop. (dir). *La société sénégalaise entre le local et le global* : 307-355. Paris: Karthala.
2001. "Désengagement de l'État et recomposition d'un espace d'échange transfrontalier : la Haute-Casamance et ses voisins." *Autrepart* (19) : 91-113.
1999. *Colonisation des terres sylvo-pastorales et conflits fonciers en Haute-Casamance*. International Institute for Environment and Development Drylands Programme. Collection tenures foncières pastorales, No. 13. November 1999.
- Gailey, Herbert. 1964. *A History of Gambia*. London: Routledges and Keagan Paul.
- Gaudio, Attilio. 1988. *Le Mali*. Paris : Karthala.
- Hames, Constant. Le rôle de l'islam dans la société mauritanienne contemporaine. *Politique Africaine* (55) 46-51.
- Kane, Ousmane et Triaud, Jean Louis. 1998. *Islam et islamismes au Sud du Sahara*. Paris: Karthala.
- Karaman, M. Lutfullah. Religion, Politics, and Mobilisation; A Theoretical Perspective with A Special Note on 'the Indian Khalifat Movement'. *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Affairs* 3(1); 36-55.
- Laoual, Sayabou, Lebret, Marie-Christine, Levard, Laurent, Raven, Tete Benissan, Edu et Aho, Guy. 2011. *Comprendre et participer au processus d'intégration régionale. Manuel pédagogique sur l'intégration régionale à destination des acteurs non gouvernementaux*. REPAOC, GRET, CEDEAO, UE.
- Lambert, Agnès and Egg, Johny. 1994. "Commerce, réseaux et marchés : l'approvisionnement en riz dans les pays de l'espace sénégalais." *Cahiers des Sciences Humaines* 30 (1-2): 229-254.
- Lambert, Agnès. 1989. "Espaces et réseaux marchands au Sénégal : Les échanges céréaliers avec la Gambie et la Mauritanie." Programme échanges régionaux, commerce frontaliers et sécurité

- alimentaire en Afrique de l'Ouest, Tnra-UNBIRam. Club du Sahel-ministère de la Coopération-CILSS, 42 p.
- M. van der Velde, Henk van Houtum. 2000. *Borders, regions and people*. Pion, 246 pages
- Marchesin, Philippe. 2004. *Tribus, ethnies et pouvoir en Mauritanie*. Paris : Karthala.
- Mardin, Serif. 1983. *Din ve İdeoloji*. Istanbul: İletisim Yayınları. 2nd ed.
- Meagher, Kate. 2009. "Trading on faith: religious movements and informal economic governance in Nigeria." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 47(3): 397–423. Cambridge University Press. DOI:10.1017/S0022278X0900398X
- Meagher, Kate. 2003. "A Back Door to Globalisation? Structural Adjustment, Globalisation and Trans-Border Trade in West Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 95: 57-75.
- Meagher, Kate. 1996. "Le commerce parallèle en Afrique de l'Ouest. Intégration informelle ou subversion économique ?," in Réal Lavergne (ed.) *Intégration et coopération régionales en Afrique de l'Ouest*. Paris : Karthala-CRDI. 197-218.
- Niane, Djibril T. 1989. *Histoire des Mandingues de l'Ouest*. Paris : Karthala.
- Nugent, Paul. 2010. "States and Social Contracts in Africa." *New Left Review* 63 (May-June): 35-68.
- Nugent, Paul. 2008. "Putting the History Back into Ethnicity: Enslavement, Religion, and Cultural Brokerage in the Construction of Mandinka/Jola and Ewe/Agotime Identities in West Africa, c. 1650–1930." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50(4):920–948.
- Oman, Charles. 1996. *The Policy Challenges of Globalisation and Regionalisation*. OECD Development Centre Policy Briefs (11). OECD Development Centre.
- Ould Ahmed Salem, Zekeria. 2004. "Les marges d'un Etat-frontière. Histoire régionale, clôture nationale et enjeux locaux." In Ould Ahmed Salem, Zekeria. (dir.) 2004. *Les trajectoires d'un Etat-frontière*. Dakar : CODESRIA : 9-45.
- Ould Ahmed Salem, Zekeria. (dir.) 2004. *Les trajectoires d'un Etat frontière*. Dakar : CODESRIA.
- Ould Cheikh, Abdel Wedoud. 2004. Espace confrérique, espace étatique : le mouridisme, le confrérisme et la frontière mauritano-sénégalaise. In Ould Ahmed Salem, Zekeria. 2004. (dir.) *Les trajectoires d'un Etat frontière*. Dakar : CODESRIA : 113-140.
- Robinson, David. 2004. *Sociétés musulmanes et pouvoir colonial français au Sénégal et en Mauritanie*. Paris : Karthala.
- Saint-Martin, Yves-Jean. 1989. *Le Sénégal sous le second empire*. Paris : Karthala.
- Sachs, Jeffrey. 2000. "Notes on a New Sociology of Economic Development." In Harrison, Lawrence E. and Samuel P. Huntington (eds.) *Culture Matters. How Values Shape Human Progress*. Basic Books, 2000.
- Sall E. 1992. *Sénégal : Territoires, frontières, espaces et réseaux sociaux*. Centre d'Etudes d'Afrique Noire. Bordeaux: IEP Bordeaux. Documents et travaux (36).
- Sall, E. 1991. "La Gambie : un Etat petit et enclavé." In J.F. Médard (ed). *Etats d'Afrique noire : mécanismes, dynamiques et crises* : 15-52. Paris: Karthala.
- Stone, Diane. 1994. Aspects du paysage religieux : marabouts et confréries. *Politique Africaine* (55): 52-56.
- Sidibé, Mamady. 2003. Les migrants saloum-saloum de la forêt classée de Pata (Sénégal). De l'installation différentielle au redéploiement spatio-économique. In Lesourd, M. (dir.) *L'Afrique. Vulnérabilité et défis*. Collection Questions de géographie, Nantes : Éditions du Temps: 199-218.
- Sidibé, Mamady. 2002. « Entre le Saloum et la forêt de Pata : mobilité des migrants, intégration des espaces », *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* [En ligne], vol. 18 - n°2 | 2002, mis en ligne le 09 juin 2006. URL : [http:// remi.revues.org/2640](http://remi.revues.org/2640). DOI : en cours d'attribution.
- Söderbaum, Frederic and Taylor Ian. 2008. (Eds) *Afro-Regions: the Dynamics of cross border micro-regionalism in Africa*. Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Tandia, Aboubakr. 2011. *Changement climatique, Genre et Stratégies d'adaptation*. Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis. 26 July 2011.
- Tandia, Aboubakr. 2010. "Borders and Borderland Identity in Western Senegambia: A Comparative Perspective of Cross-Border Governance in the Neighbourhoods of Senegal, Gambia and Guinea Bissau." *African Nebula* 2 (August): 18-42.
- Tandia, Aboubakr. 2007. "Diplomatie locale et sécurité transfrontalière : quelle pertinence pour la gouvernance sécuritaire régionale de la CEDEAO ?." Seminar Paper, Governance Institute, *Security Governance in Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA. August 2007.

Thiouh, Ibrahima. 1994. "Le Sénégal et le Mali." In Diop, Momar-Coumba (dir.) *Le Sénégal et ses voisins*. Paris: Karthala (Série. Sociétés-Espaces-Temps) : 95-116.

Thomas Kramsch, Olivier and Hooper, Barbara. 2004. *Cross-Border Governance in the European Union*. London: Routledge, 236 pages

Triaud, Jean-Louis. 1997. "Introduction." In Robinson, David et Triaud, Jean-ouis (dir.) *Le temps des marabouts*. Paris : Karthala : 10-29.

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

Two Sides to the ‘Resource Curse’: Historicising mineral extraction and contested modernities in the Zambian Copperbelt and Katanga

Paper for CAS@50 Conference, ABORNE panels

African Borderlands - Regional Integration from Above and Below

University of Edinburgh, 5-8 June 2012

Dr Miles Larmer (University of Sheffield)

Introduction

The relationship between enclave-based mining activities and the colonial or nation-states in which they are located has long been a major issue – economic, political and social – in much of Africa. Mineral resources provided a significant motivation for the exploration and exploitation of significant parts of the continent by western companies closely linked to the colonial project. Nationalist visions of post-colonial modernisation often rested on plans to exploit those same resources for developmental purposes. Colonial and post-colonial states frequently clashed with sections of their population, geographically or socially defined, with competing visions for the utilisation of that wealth – and in extreme cases, such wealth fuelled secessionism and even civil war. In more positive respects, however, some (but not all) minerals generate new industrial centres and communities, in which (in some cases) new multi-ethnic societies with their own distinct cultural identities have developed.

At times, the capacity of state-based elites to generate wealth via external mineral markets has arguably undermined their accountability to domestic constituencies, voters and taxpayers, and (in circumstances of constrained democracy or dictatorship) enabled the acquisition of vast personal fortunes for some African rulers, achieved with the complicity of western states and mining companies. Their capacity to do this has however been limited by

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

fluctuations in the global price of these minerals, beyond the control of African nation-states, notwithstanding their attempts to establish some control of production or marketing via nationalisation or other initiatives.

The complexity of these relationships is, unfortunately, often lost in popular or political discourses concerning mining booms or slumps. On the one hand, African states and their economic advisors, at times of high mineral prices, optimistically emphasise the need to use mineral revenue for diversification, without learning from the continent's historical failure to do precisely that. On the other hand, dire warnings about the 'resource curse', or even more considered analyses of 'Dutch disease', not only unhelpfully homogenise varied experiences across the continent, but also tend to a fatalistic pessimism in which the best that Africa can expect is to be less poor or more efficiently exploited. In fact the continent's experience of mineral production and its socio-political consequences is enormously diverse, both historically and today: we need only to contrast the horrific circumstances in which Zimbabwe's Marange diamond fields are being exploited, to the debates surrounding the utilisation of Ghana's new oilfields, to grasp this. By adopting a comparative, historically and empirically informed approach to Africa's mining regions, it may be possible to draw some broader lessons by examining the specific circumstances in which various outcomes have resulted from the exploitation of mineral possessions.

In examining the Central African Copperbelt in historical and comparative perspective, this paper seeks to shed new light on the relationship between mineral extraction and the development of African nation-states and societies. The paper will therefore analyse both the commonalities and differences between a range of factors that have shaped the two Copperbelts, examining how the development of these distinct but linked regions has shaped

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

political ideas, consciousness, movements and organisations. This forms part of a wider new project, which seeks to both historicise and compare the contrasting intellectual study (within a range of disciplinary approaches) of the two Copperbelts, which have been shaped by the distinct knowledge production practices of the Anglo-American and Belgian academics that have studied and shaped our understanding of the Zambian Copperbelt and Haut Katanga. The study of these national European traditions, which have been sustained from the colonial to the post-colonial period, tends towards an inward-looking and nationally specific framework of analysis which militates against a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences. However, this paper provides only some initial thoughts as to how these distinct intellectual traditions have shaped our understanding – and by ‘our’, I not only mean western academics, but post-colonial politicians, African civic leaders and organic intellectuals on both sides of the border, who I want to suggest are themselves also influenced by the forms of discourse and representation of the two Copperbelts’ mining and modernity, partially replicating them in their own ideas, writings and activities.

1. Mine companies and relations with African states and societies

The central African ‘copperbelt’ has been mined for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years by African societies; indeed, it provided an important basis for the rise of major centralised societies, most notably the Luba and Lunda empires in the 17th and 18th centuries, which exported copper ingots (along with other commodities) via Portuguese traders to the Atlantic coast. Even at this time, it may be noted, the Lunda controlled the mines but utilised subject peoples to provide unfree mine labour, an important distinction between ‘owners’ and ‘workers’ which partly shaped long-term attitudes to the relationship between these societies and mineral-based wealth.

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

This wealth was central to Africa's desirability to non-African explorers and colonists. Known and imagined mineral deposits were a primary impetus for the European 'Scramble' for Africa. The colonisation of Africa was partly shaped by competing colonial projects to secure mineral-rich areas: indeed, the peculiar border between Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was the direct result of such competition between Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company and the agents of the Belgian King Leopold II. The subsequent stark contrast between the Africa's mineral wealth and the poverty of its peoples; the political and economic power of colonially connected mining corporations and the African societies resident in these areas; and between the dramatic urbanisation and cutting edge technology of mining areas and the 'untouched' African wilderness into which these companies intervened: binaries and bifurcations such as these shaped analyses and imaginings of African mining and its consequences throughout the twentieth century.

African mining regions were historically understood as places where 'bush' was turned into industry; where rural societies (characterised as static, superstitious and backward places) were transformed into urban (rational, dynamic, forward-looking) ones; where tribalism was displaced by cosmopolitanism; superstition replaced by enlightened Christianity, rural migrant labour upgraded to stable working-class respectability; and extended kinship relationships supplanted by domesticated nuclear families. This supposed transformative capacity was identified by mining companies, colonial and post-colonial states, mining unions, and academic observers. Mineral extraction had, these actors variously believed, the potential to bring modernisation and civilisation to Africa, providing the platform for economic and social development and ultimately nation-building along western lines. Its critics however attacked mining companies' forcible recruitment of labour; the undermining of 'traditional' African society by the loss of male migrants and the creation of rural 'under-

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

development’; and, via the introduction of cash and consumerism, sowing materialism and division in supposedly idyllic African communities. Both perspectives tended to take for granted the untrammelled power of mining interventions in Africa and their capacity for driving historically significant change, whether for good or ill.

Such analysts usually reckoned without the considerable capacity of Africa and Africans (some with, as noted, a pre-colonial history of mining or of trading mined commodities) to limit or shape the hegemonic power of mining capital and the colonial societies to which it was linked. Turning deposits of gold, copper or diamonds into profit necessitated (among other things) altering both the legal ownership and the cultural meaning of land, replacing forest and savannah with industry and urban systems, and converting ‘Africans’ into ‘workers’. Each of these processes required economic, political and cultural investment of various types, each of which had to be negotiated and each of which was contested in unpredictable ways that ultimately shaped the outcome. Primary variants influencing these outcomes included: the type of mineral to be exploited; the type of mining company involved and its relationship to the colonial state; and the social composition and cultural perspectives of African communities, both in the areas where the mines were located and those induced or attracted to migrate to work in the mines (these were rarely the same). In Central Africa, copper and cobalt mining necessitated the importation of large-scale industrial plant for refining, and railways to bring inputs and to transport the finished product to international markets. Thus, colonial-era mining was from the start dominated by large companies, multinational in some respects but ‘colonially connected’ in others: Roan Selection Trust, Anglo-American and (in Haut Katanga) *Union Minière*. These companies were themselves linked across the colonial border by their overlapping capital composition, shared infrastructure and labour practices. They were also connected, technically and culturally, to

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

the mining nexus of southern Africa; Haut Katanga, which *Union Minière* governed until 1933 as a company territory practically independent from the rest of Belgian Congo, was, with the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, linked by rail to the southern African ports of Lobito, Lourenco Marques and Durban.

In the early twentieth century, the minimal colonial state in both territories restricted its role to facilitate company operations, helping ensure the timely delivery of necessary infrastructure (for example railways) and inputs (in particular, labour), and received minimal direct revenue from such corporations. The vast majority of mine company profits flowed directly out of these territories, with little or no benefit to that state. This began to change in the late colonial era, when the need to justify continued colonial possession to a sceptical world required new investment in social welfare and development; but the decisions regarding this were taken largely by a metropolitan civil service rather than local administrators. New African political activists, increasingly organised into nationalist political parties, now sought to convert mineral wealth into socio-economic development and political power. However, nationalists were themselves divided about how to convert apparently abundant mineral wealth into sustainable development, economic diversification, and increased living standards, divisions that would shape both Copperbelt and national politics in the run-up to and aftermath of political independence.

2. New urban communities, migrancy and stabilisation, indigenes and strangers

In the creation of the modern copperbelts, a central role has been played by those societies which migrated, temporarily and then on a more permanent basis, to provide the new labour force in areas of mining activity. As a general rule, mining companies have been unable or

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

unwilling to recruit the majority of their workers from the geographical location of their mines. The ability of such populations to prosper from the sale of agricultural goods to the mines enabled them to avoid unpleasant, dangerous and low status mining labour. Indeed, one of the most important legacies that mining has had in both the Copperbelt and Haut Katanga has been in shaping the composition of the population, both in their areas of activity and in the ‘sending’ areas of origin. These factors, coupled with the racialised division of labour pioneered on South African mines, stimulated what became a system of organised migrant labour from relatively remote areas. The agricultural poverty of Bemba-speaking areas of northern Northern Rhodesia meant that it emerged as an early labour sending area, first to the pioneering mines of Haut Katanga, and then to the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt from the mid 1930s onwards. Labour stabilisation from the 1940s meant that a new Bemba-speaking but relatively cosmopolitan urban African community began to establish itself on the Copperbelt. A vast amount has of course been written on these ‘urban Africans’, from the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute’s assertion of a modernist non-tribal identity, to the critique of this school by Ferguson, who emphasised the continued rural linkages of Bemba-speaking mineworkers. Meanwhile, with the hardening of colonial borders in the 1930s and the opening of the railway linking Katanga to Port Francqui in 1936, a new group of Kasai Baluba migrants flocked to work in the Katangese mines.

Migrant labour systems, shaped both by company demands and by African agency, brought ‘strangers’ into mining areas, whose indigenous communities generally resisted mining labour. African migrants, paternalistically regarded by missionaries and ethnographers as child-like victims of damaging processes of exploitation, brought their own ideas regarding the mining process and the organisation of labour to bear in ways that mining companies could not simply ignore. By the 1930s, African mineworkers, drawing on both their cultural

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

perspectives and the labour traditions brought to the mines by white skilled mineworkers, were initiating industrial action that was in the short-term repressed but which could not simply be ignored. As a result, male African mineworkers, previously essentialised as rural people on brief sojourns into short-term paid employment, were ‘stabilised’ (allowing them to bring their immediate family to reside permanently with them in what were becoming mining towns) and ‘unionised’ (allowing them to form ‘non-political’ industrial trade unions). In the late-colonial context, these processes attempted to create respectable modern citizens who would ultimately lead their nations to modernist economic ‘take-off’ and to political independence. Such determinations were however consistently challenged by Africans themselves, who sought control over their urban spaces, trade unions and political movements.

Mining companies not only administered mines, they housed their white and African workers and provided services not available via the state. This provision of social and recreational services expanded to the point where mining towns and townships were regarded as places apart, distinct from the quintessentially ‘rural’ and undeveloped Africa that surrounded it. Yet the mass industrial nature of copper mining, compared for example to diamond mining, meant that these could not operate simply as enclaves – secondary industry and a wider urban population grew up around the mines, leading to new forms of urban African society.

In the Zambian Copperbelt, Bemba migrants established cultural hegemony in the new mining towns, with *ciBemba* language and political leadership becoming predominant in this cosmopolitan political milieu and playing a leading role in Zambian nationalism; indigenous Lamba were stereotyped as lazy and ill-suited to modern urban life and were politically and economically marginalised. Katangese mines experienced an ostensibly similar dynamic,

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

with the largest group of incoming mineworkers from the Kasai-Baluba ethnicity, ethnically stereotyped (like the Bemba) as culturally receptive to ‘modern’ wage labour by modernising Belgian officials and, in particular, Catholic missions – it is perhaps significant that both Bemba and Kasai Baluba were the subject of Catholic missionary activity. However, the potential for the latter to play a leading modernising role in Katanga’s towns was, belatedly but powerfully, resisted by primarily southern Katangese societies – Lunda, BaYeke and others – who (unlike the Lamba, and notwithstanding their considerable reconstruction via colonialism) mobilised their historical memory of prosperity and authority achieved in part via their own exploitation of the region’s mineral wealth to resist their marginalisation in the emerging projects of nationalism in the 1950s. As independence approached, ‘authentic’ Katangese leaders from amongst indigenous ethnicities such as the Lunda asserted themselves politically, demanding that the fruits of southern Katanga’s mineral wealth should flow to its autochthons. Such dynamics played a vital role in the secession of Katanga from Congo in July 1960 and have shaped Katanga’s problematic relationship with the Congolese state until today. Thus, a striking contrast can be drawn between the experience of the migrant communities in the two regions: whereas the Bemba achieved political hegemony in the Copperbelt, the indigenous communities of Haut Katanga, using a powerful autochthon political discourse linked to their own pre-colonial exploitation of mineral wealth, resisted the conversion of Kasai Baluba migrant labour into the dominant political grouping in Haut Katanga.

As Ferguson has demonstrated, many of our ideas regarding the quintessential urbanity of the Copperbelts owe more to the notions of social scientists than to any underlying reality. But even here, there is a difference marked by the border between colonial/linguistic academics. Whilst Belgian observers of Congolese mining towns found widespread acceptance of

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

notions of respectability and gendered domesticity amongst mineworkers and their families, Copperbelt mineworkers studied by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute were, in contrast, notoriously undisciplined, rampantly consumerist and politically militant. An as yet unanswered question at the heart of my new research is whether these mining communities were as different as these dominant discourses suggest, or whether the distinct culture of these observers led them to see different things and contextualise them in strikingly contrasting ways. Whatever is the case, the binary transition from rural tradition to urban modernity imagined by social scientists was never realised on the ground: people, goods, wealth and culture continued to flow between villages and mining towns, creating hybrid cultures that reflected both reconstructed ethnic identities and self-conscious ‘modernist’ materialism.

With the downturn in mining fortunes from the mid-1970s until the end of the 20th century, the assumptions of modernisation narratives were exposed as hollow and unsustainable. It is evident however, that the endurance of such narratives owes more to political culture than political economy: Zambian mineworkers, notwithstanding the decline in living standards they have experienced over the last 30 years and their consequent inability to reproduce themselves as a stable skilled urban workforce, continue to express expectations of a better life, and to assert their political identity in relation to this. This reflects, it is suggested, the ‘half life’ of mid-twentieth century modernisation narratives which still allow them to position themselves as the political leaders of the Copperbelt. In contrast, the distinct urban culture of Haut Katanga (Dibwe, 2008; Jewsiwicki et al, 2010) appears to divide former mineworkers from the urban crowd. Katanga’s mineworkers, longer established but apparently experiencing a far longer and more profound process of de-proletarianisation, cling to their identity as respectable workers in a context of chaos and protest their

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

redundancy not through party political and mass action but via polite entreaties to Belgian and international authorities. Meanwhile, as new Zambian mines open further west in North-Western Province, Kaonde chiefs have apparently learned the lesson of the Lamba's marginalisation and are seeking to ensure that both mining revenues and job opportunities are partly reserved on a kith and kin basis for their subjects.

3. Nationalism and regionalism in comparative perspective: Populist politics and urban-rural linkages

When considering the particular relationship between nation and mineral region, it is necessary to bear in mind that these regions were in effect created by the mining companies and were administered for decades as their personal fiefdoms. The particular vision of African nationalists for an independent state was framed in an assumed context of mine profitability, mobilising support specifically around the idea of capturing a significant share of the revenue generated by mining and utilizing it for “national development.” It was thus no accident that the linked urban-rural communities unifying the Zambian Copperbelt and Bemba-speaking areas of northern Zambia emerged in the 1950s as the heartlands of the nationalist movement and the vanguard of UNIP's struggle for self-rule in the early 1960s. Arguments over how to precisely to convert control of mineral wealth into development dominated political discourse in the first decade of Zambian independence.

Leaders of the central Congolese nationalist project shared this aim, but whereas in Zambia, rural and urban Bembas were initially in the vanguard of UNIP's centralising nationalism, Congolese nationalism was profoundly divided. The aristocratic and political leaders of Haut Katanga feared both the influx of Kasai migrant labour in the 1950s, and the acquisition of control over the region's mines by a centralising political leadership in Congo's distant

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

capital Leopoldville. They therefore made common cause with Belgian settler and military interests and *Union Minière*, which underwrote and partly directed the Katangese secession of 1960-63. The violence against the Baluba population of Katanga during the secession must be understood in this context.

Discontent amongst political elites and the wider population of mining regions with central government control and distribution of wealth generated by those regions has been a common theme in post-colonial Africa. Having once been in the UNIP vanguard, the subsequent marginalization of Bemba interests in the run-up to and during the declaration of Zambia's one-party state in 1972 – sparked by the breakaway of UNIP's senior Bemba leadership to found the short-lived opposition United Progressive Party (UPP) - was perceived as part of a wider project of unjust exploitation of the Copperbelt by the UNIP-dominated state, whose unaccountable leaders based in the capital Lusaka 'ate' the wealth generated by the region's mineral and labour resources. The resulting tension was arguably however mitigated by the relatively low copper and cobalt price from the mid-1970s onwards. UNIP leaders nevertheless profited from the foreign exchange, via prestige projects that benefited themselves rather than ordinary Zambians; the nationalized mines were in many respects milked to enable UNIP to retain power and buy off dissent, although this never reached the extent of looting under Mobutu in Zaire.

The regionally-based discontent that resulted was however an important element of the successful pro-democracy movement that emerged in Zambia at the start of the 1990s; it was no accident that the Copperbelt-based labour unions played such a prominent role in the opposition, nor that Bemba speakers were an increasingly important element in the resultant government of former union leader Frederick Chiluba, Zambia's second president. These

interests resisted the privatization of the mines, but were ultimately unable to do so because of unprofitability and donor-imposed conditionality. Following Chiluba's fall from power in 2001, a new ethno-populism was articulated by Michael Sata's Patriotic Front party, which established itself as the country's main opposition and won the Zambian elections in 2011. Sata was elected as president as a result of articulating popular discontent with foreign mining companies in both northern Zambia and the Copperbelt, regions which retain a common political culture forged by mining and migrant labour.

Although the context is in many respects very different, we can also see how Katangese regionalism has never gone away. The radical decline of Gécamines in the last years of Mobutu's rule, combined with the historically low copper price and the international consensus around economic liberalisation, led to a highly corrupt process of semi-privatisation of Katanga's mining assets to foreign elites prepared to support Kabila politically.¹ The appointment of Billy Rautenbach as Managing Director of Gécamines in November 1998 specifically reflected the close relationship between Rautenbach and Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, and more generally the extent to which Laurent Kabila retained Congolese state power solely by mortgaging Katanga's assets to overseas interests, as (in different ways) his colonial and post-colonial predecessors had done.

The recent mining boom (2004-present) has fuelled widespread discontent arising from the fact that the current high value of the Copperbelt's minerals continue to result in little material benefit for the vast majority of its residents. In Zambia there is still popular pressure for higher taxes on mining companies, but also debate over how to ensure resultant additional revenue is distributed to benefit particular constituencies. In the DRC today, a degree of

¹ J. Hönke, 'Extractive Orders: Transnational Mining Companies in the Nineteenth and Twenty-First Centuries in the Central African Copperbelt' in R. Southall & H. Melber (eds.), *A New Scramble for Africa?: Imperialism, Investment and Development* (Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), pp. 274-298, p. 281.

provincial political autonomy masks a system which, under the singular figure of Governor Moïse Katumbi, still channels the vast majority of state mining revenue to the Congolese capital Kinshasa. Katumbi has sought to place some controls on mining companies, by for example banning the export of unrefined ore and protecting wages and job security, but this has arguably simply moved the DRC from a free-for-all of the war period to a more efficient form of looting by companies allied to the central government.

4. National minerals, global markets

The Copperbelts have always existed in problematic and usually subordinate relationship to the fluctuations of international markets for its output, providing a primary example of peripheral globalisation. As has already been stated, the political and economic relationship between African nations and their mineral-rich regions has been shaped in significant part by the relationship between often relatively weak states and the large companies that develop or exploit those minerals. This is of course not a new problem – colonial states were commonly junior and relatively powerless partners in mining projects that generated vast profits for what we might term ‘colonially connected’ companies, such as Anglo American or Union Minière – corporations that raised revenue on global markets and whose shareholders were multinational, but with a monopolistic or preferential status bound up with their relationship with the colonial metropole.

The discontent surrounding that unaccountable exploitation first manifested itself in white settler attempts to redistribute mining revenue towards themselves, via political projects such as the Central African Federation. Whereas Federation directed mining revenue to support the agricultural activities and living standards of white farmers, mostly in Southern Rhodesia,

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

Zambian nationalists envisaged utilizing the same revenue to construct a state designed to achieve “development” for their supporters. However, nationalists were themselves divided about how to convert apparently abundant mineral wealth into sustainable development, economic diversification, and increased living standards.

UNIP, having observed with alarm the active role played by mining capital in the Katangese secession on Northern Rhodesia’s border, sought to integrate its mining companies into the central nationalist project. On the eve of Zambian independence, UNIP (assisted by the outgoing British colonial authorities) successfully negotiated the transfer of mining royalties, still being paid to the remnants of the British South Africa Company, to the new Zambian state. This cemented what became an effective alliance between the UNIP government and the international mining companies that would ensure expansion of the industry, with both the companies and the government taking their carefully negotiated share of what was assumed would be an ever-increasing cake of mining revenue. This however necessitated denying the demands of Zambian mineworkers for improved wages and conditions, demands that they defined as a reward for their role in the anti-colonial struggle and in relation to high international mineral prices. This led to major clashes between the UNIP government and mining unions in the years following independence, and to attempts by the state to end the autonomy of the country’s union movement.

In both Zambia and Congo/Zaire, governments attempted to respond to popular expectations of post-colonial transformation by part-nationalising the mining sector. Such interventionism was unable to overcome the marginalization of African states in the context of an increasingly unstable global economy. In Zambia, the introduction of a one-party state in 1972 was followed by international recession and a slump in global mineral prices that

endured until the end of the twentieth century. In Zaire, nationalisation provided the basis for President Mobutu's looting of the country's mineral resources. His control of internationally strategic mineral interests, in the context of the Cold War, minimised international condemnation of his predatory rule; his control of Katanga's mining regions was underwritten by western military intervention e.g. in the late 1970s.

Both countries, under pressure from international donors, reluctantly privatised their copper mining conglomerates in the 1990s. Though this took a different form in each case, both processes were characterised by significant corruption and political manipulation. In Congo however, the process was also profoundly affected by the overthrow of Mobutu, the ascent to power of Laurent Kabila and then the devastating Congo wars. These are of course known to have revolved around the country's mineral resources, but the focus on the looting of eastern Congo's minerals has arguably led to a neglect of the ways in which control of Katanga's minerals was in some respects vital to the unfolding of the conflict.

The contemporary mining boom has once again transformed the relationship between nation states and global commodity markets and mining corporations. In Zambia there is widespread discontent arising from the fact that the current high value of the Copperbelt's minerals continue to result in little material benefit for the vast majority of Copperbelt residents. The Mwanawasa government introduced a new higher tax regime in 2007, but political pressure and the global recession led to its removal. New mining companies, of differing origins and capital composition, present different challenges for local populations and African states. All are less willing than their predecessors to pay the reproduction costs of the mining communities in which their activities take place, but there are substantive variations in their approach – for example Lumwana has deliberately sought a long-term relationship with

Solwezi communities, whilst others, such as the recent operators of Luanshya have been notoriously corrupt and short-sighted. Overall however, I would suggest that the differences between e.g. Chinese and Western investors over the last five years have been less important than the different political context in each country. Zambia has, notwithstanding its difficulties in ensuring that mining companies pay what is regarded as a ‘fair’ level of tax (see for example the current controversy surrounding Glencore’s miniscule tax payments for its Mopani operations), developed relatively long-term relationships with most mining investors which feel obliged to at least pay lip service to notions of corporate social responsibility. This has been influenced by Zambia’s recent debt relief, which has made it somewhat less craven in its attitude towards foreign investment; and by an increasingly vocal civil society and independent media, which provides some degree of local accountability. The contrast with the DRC in this context is fairly stark, and helps demonstrate the inadequacy of sweeping claims regarding mining booms and curses, necessitating the empirical analysis of very different contexts in which mining activities have taken and are taking place. Whilst Zambia’s mineworkers frequently bemoan their exploitation and declining living standards, compared to the supposedly halcyon days of nationalisation, mining union leaders across the border gaze longingly at the superior working and political conditions of the Zambian Copperbelt.

5. Conclusions

I haven’t had a chance to talk about some less overtly political themes of comparative analysis. For example, to what extent do the mining towns of both regions share a common cultural experience? AND to what extent does a single regional Copperbelt exist? In the past the Copperbelt/Katanga border was a relatively open one, with international capital and both

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

Africa and white skilled workers taking advantage of opportunities on both sides of the border; Belgian white settlers crossed the border to take political refuge during the Congo crisis of 1960. The border officially hardened at independence, but in practice many Africans continued cross-border activities. As the economic situation declined in the late 1970s and 1980s, cross-border smuggling undermined the state's efforts to control the Zambian economy, and Zairians were often scapegoated for the region's problems of crime and insecurity, including the smuggling of other forms of minerals such as emeralds. More recently, mining companies such as First Quantum sought to administer their activities in both countries as a single operation, and in the early 2000s ore was transported across the border for refining. On the ground, however, the border is a highly problematic barrier to open trade, with the movement of people and goods slowed by bureaucratic and corrupt procedures.

This brief survey of the recent history of the Copperbelt and Haut Katanga has suggested both similarities and powerful differences in the interaction between the region's minerals, peoples, and politics. In both regions, the existence of internationally valuable minerals provided the basis for powerful but competing imaginings of modernity, development and personal advancement – by white settlers, African nationalists and various more localised polities and communities. Turning mine revenue into improved standards of living and national development was, however, never a straightforward process. High mineral prices in certain periods did not inevitably result in higher tax revenues or higher wages; political action of varying kinds was necessary to make any such gains, which were always conditional and never permanent. The limitations of assumptions regarding the benefits to be accrued from mineral wealth were cruelly exposed in periods of low mineral prices. Nationalisation did not enable effective control over minerals whose value was fixed in

Work in progress – not to be quoted or cited without the permission of the author

international markets beyond the control of African nations, but did provide rulers with a source of patronage and (in Mobutu's case) vast personal wealth.

This does not mean, however, that these Copperbelts necessarily reflect James Ferguson's depiction of globalised capital as hopping from African locale to locale, leaving little or no mark on the wider continent. The scale of mining in these regions has meant that even those companies seeking to operate in this way often experience the unintended consequences of their investments; despite the best efforts of today's mining giants to refute any social responsibility, mineworkers, their communities and their political representatives continue to insist that mining investment comes with social and even moral responsibilities. This is of course, influenced by the different histories of these regions and the collective memory of those histories, accounting for some of the significant variation between the two regions.

These variations should at the very least demonstrate that sweeping claims of either amazing opportunities or resource curses should be dismissed. The potential for economic development, in circumstances where a level of democratic governance and local political accountability has been established, should not be denied, but nor should the challenges in achieving it. Whilst there is no straightforward path to converting mineral wealth into improved lives and living standards, learning from the history of both regions can provide some guidance regarding what is possible and in identifying pitfalls that African states and communities may seek to avoid.

TRANSBORDER GAME

Re-spatialization and Resource Management in Southern-African Transfrontier Areas

(draft only, not to be cited without permission of the authors)

Manuela Zips-Mairitsch und Werner Zips

University of Vienna, Austria

Introduction

Game has become big business in South Africa over the last half century. Game farms soared from just four in 1965 to well over 5000 today. So-called 'recreational' and trophy hunting including related industries generate almost 5 billion Rand per annum or roughly 500 million Euro (du Toit and van Schalkwyk 2011). While this consumptive sector of the wildlife industry is responsible for a considerable turnover, its benefits are unequally enjoyed. After all, hunting always was and still is a game of and for the privileged few (not only) in Southern Africa. In contrast, the wildlife tourism industry, as one of the fastest growing sectors in the South African economy, has been designed as a means of social transformation through Black Economic Empowerment, employment equity, community-based development, co-management and individual skills training schemes, among other governance measures. This specifically economic conceptualization behind the fusion of decolonization and conservation has stimulated a wide debate about the ideological and epistemic gaps between global, regional, national and local ideas of landscapes, environment, resource use, and indeed, nature (cf. Adams and Mulligan 2004: 5-10).

Conservation once thought of as a self-evident category has proven a quite slippery paradigm when actually applied in the political agenda of social change. Conflicting views of various stakeholders on conservation range from benign concepts of an ultimate global saviour to a neo-colonial land-grabber. Arguably, far-ranging plans for Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) have further contributed to a 'bewildering kaleidoscope' of multi-legal fields and intertwined legalities within and across national boundaries (cf. F. von Benda-Beckmann 2001: 129). Environmental policy initiatives that target the joint goal of transboundary global biodiversity protection and regional integration through peace building and the creation of mutual trust have to consider a sometimes radical divergence in local histories and interests of local communities across the border(s). The political transborder game may be flawed from the very beginning if it is played at the expense of one or more parties affected by the opening of boundaries for game only. This paper will discuss how preconceived notions of decolonization and conservation are doomed to fail without an adequate involvement of local communities. We will explore how a procedural paradigm of an equitable participation of all concerned in the governance of nature (conservation) may explain some severe setbacks experienced in the foundation of TFCAs and Peace Parks in Southern Africa.

Breaking down the barriers in the interest of peace

Celebrated as an 'international model for conservation' (National Geographic 1996) the establishment of the *Peace Park Foundation* in South Africa in 1997 promised indeed a new vision for the protection of wildlife and biodiversity, and a political healing of the 'scars of colonial history', i.e. the national borders dissecting Africa

according to European design.¹ With its core idea and overall aim to promote and implement the concept of Transfrontier Conservation Areas within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region the Peace Parks model grabbed the imagination of the political elites, many development agencies, the tourism industry, conservationists, and wildlife managers as no other initiative had achieved before. Given the scarcity of peace in global relations, this imaginative agenda may well deserve its advanced praises, if it keeps to its promises in helping to lift the livelihoods of people on the ground. Such livelihood goals are not just about the trickle-down of visible economic benefits to the broader constituency, but also about the recognition of local identities, the respect for divergent histories and cultural concepts of authority and of due process in opinion- and will-formation. Effective participation, and, perhaps most importantly, legal guarantees to secure land rights and natural resources are thus to be seen as key elements for a sound basis of conservation governance (cf. Magome and Murombedzi 2004: 108; and Metcalfe 2003: 1).

A main concern in this regard is the inclusion and adequate participation of local communities, including indigenous peoples, who lived on many of these territories from time immemorial and used their resources for their livelihood. It appears important to emphasise that in most if not all concerned cases, this resource use appears to have been sustainable, since otherwise there would be nothing to conserve. If the peace afforded at the international level comes at a price to be paid by local resource users who are left out of the bilateral or multilateral agreements on huge conservation areas, negative consequences of non-compliance and alienation are to be expected. One of the key questions dealt with in this paper will be, if the morally loaded normative discourse on the re-spatialization of large areas of the entire Southern African borderlands (see map) – the proclaimed ‘healing of colonial scars’ – will live up to the anticipated win-win situation. Most commonly projected

¹ At the Berlin Conference 1884 African territories were further sliced up without their consent and without regard to people(s), homogeneous or not, or to their cultures, their lands or their identities.

rewards of the peace parks initiative emphasize the enhancement of peace-building, the creation of regional stability and mutual empowerment through joint resource management plans of development on the one hand and empowerment, social transformation, decolonization and the potential solution of global environmental concerns over a rapidly degenerating biodiversity on the other hand. Or, if the more negative prospects predicted by some local players involved have empirical evidence: i.e. a tacit re-nationalization of lands, a concealed land-grabbing in the name of conservation and natural resource protection, a cut off from local accesses to formerly owned lands, a reversal of community-based natural resource management schemes or an increasing control of newly invented parastatal institutions over the lives of local people?



Many border zones in Southern Africa boast a huge biodiversity potential because of their high concentration of peculiar types of natural resources, such as wild plants and wildlife species. This fact has less to do with ecological conditions but with the reduced human impact in borderlands because of political tensions and warfare in colonial and postcolonial times. In this historical context the turnaround from violent exchange or at least political tensions and mistrust to amicable cooperation becomes even more compelling. Due to a high level of poverty in the rural areas adjacent to boundary conservation zones such plans need a strong economic bottom line in order to convince transboundary communities to buy in the grand vision. It has been stated that ecotourism as the predominant strategy of land use outperforms agriculture in the economic sense. Beyond doubt wildlife tourism emerged as a booming industry in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia, thus turning border zones into economically highly viable areas. What remains to be seen is, if its benefits are equally shared or if the power-divide between states, the private sector, environmental NGOs and local communities proves too adamant to overcome by existing initiatives for poverty alleviation and regional integration. One may only speculate that the window of opportunity may close rapidly if the first experiences with the newly implemented large transfrontier conservation areas are to the detriment of local communities. Great hopes created by fly-in architects of the bright future for all through wildlife tourism may quickly vanish, if their realization becomes postponed year after year. Complex governance schemes and elaborate management plans have been negotiated in the context of SADC over a period of more than a decade to avoid such outcomes.

However, some big dreams for an extensive unmaking of borders as the conceived “scars of colonization” as well as the offshoot for an “African Renaissance” under the ambitious brand of “Peace Parks” have not yet fully materialized. One of the key test cases for such aims may be found in the participation and inclusion of local communities, some of which claim older land rights for many areas that have come under transborder land use regimes. Representatives of indigenous or local

communities sued for access to resources and revenue share in transfrontier parks. In the following chapters we will discuss some potential emerging forms of participatory governance of resource utilization in contrast to other alleged denials of land rights, criticised to undermine livelihoods of border adjacent communities. Some of these coined as “remote area dwellers” reproach their national governments for playing a “transborder game” of conservation in the name of wildlife protection through the free transborder movement of game. The most strident question therefore remains the distribution of all possible benefits from transfrontier conservation areas through ecotourism and its employment opportunities, as Ross Kettle, biologist on the Garonga Private Game Reserve in the vicinity of the Kruger Park asserts (in an interview on 23 February 2011).

„Eco-tourism is very important for South Africa’s economy. I think most tourists coming to South Africa will want to include some kind of eco-adventure in their trip. Whether they are going to see a national park or a private game reserve. Most people still associate Africa with wildlife. What happened in recent years with private conservation there has been a big boom since 1994 when South Africa became a democratic country. Tourism has exploded and a lot of former farmers were converting their agricultural land to private game reserves because they find out that it's more economically viable. The positive effect of this is that it's much better for the environment because you don't have internal fences, you use less pesticide and herbicides and it's just a lot better for the environment in general. What's also very important about this development is, if you compare game ranging for example to cattle farming on average, it will employ five times as many people as conventional cattle ranging. So it does create a lot more employment.”

Parks against People?

For many indigenous peoples and local communities the notion of a transfrontier park as a bi- or multi-lateral transnational conservation area appears as threatening

as the legal institution of a national park. According to earlier concepts of nature protection, aptly coined 'fortress conservation' (Adams and Hulme (2001: 10), the foundation of a national park almost always meant the practical dispossession and often displacement of people living on its land and of its resources. This was based on a presumed biological necessity of non-human interference. Forced removals were substantiated with the professed naturalist explanations of positive impacts on conservation such as the expansion of the country's conservation estate and the reduced consumptive use and decreased land deterioration, especially in high-biodiversity areas from which people were relocated. No evidence of negative impacts on conservation prior to people's relocation could however be found in any of the cases studied, and no lasting impacts are evident (Fabrizio and de Wet 2002: 144). For those affected in almost all cases of national park declaration in Southern Africa (and beyond) the involuntary eviction meant not only profound symbolic losses, but their entire economic deprivation: "Conservation displacement, like other forms of displacement, compromise two processes (i) the forced removal of people from the homes; and (ii) economic displacement, the exclusion of people from particular areas in their pursuit of a livelihood" (Brockington/Igoe 2006: 425).

Today, those potentially affected are therefore quite immune against the 'sweet talk' of community participation and empowerment or joint management, which they suspect as a rhetorical strategy to disguise its main agenda of wildlife protection geared to attract tourists with the myth of 'wild Africa'. Many of those aware of the dramatic consequences of a long history of displacement and forced denial of resource access associate the idea of wildlife reserves with being forced off their land and deprived of their way of life (Metcalf 2003: 10). Such appealing terms of economic community empowerment through ecotourism do not necessarily allure many communities concerned into believing that exclusive game lodges include their well-being. There is rather a clear understanding that wildlife tourism and hunting for food exclude each other, as for instance most San communities in Southern Africa painfully experienced. That their own relationships with nature were declared by many governmental institutions as backward or archaic and therefore an unwanted

survival of an anachronistic past aggravated such sentiments against the lure of conservation and development initiatives promises of an unconditional mutual advantage and sure improvement of their livelihood (cf. Magome and Murombedzi 2004: 116). A statement by the Botswana NGO Kuru Family of Organizations trying to protect the interests of San communities dispossessed of their lands in various national park sites of the Kalahari (including what is today the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park) provides a telling example:

“For thousands of years people have been practicing [Community-based natural resource management] CBNRM by using their natural resources in a sustainable way. But, when National Parks and Game Reserves were set up, hunting for subsistence became poaching and local people were alienated from managing the resources on which they had previously depended” (Kuru Family of Organizations 2004: 2).

Therefore, perhaps the most difficult task for the reconciliation of biodiversity conservation and a self-determined form of development suggested by the notion of Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is to overcome fears (well-grounded in historical experiences) of falling again victim to a colonial imperative of nature protection against local people: „(T)he colonial relationship (...) allowed Europeans to impose their image of Africa upon the reality of the African landscape. Much of the emotional as distinct from the economic investment which Europe made in Africa has manifested itself in a wish to protect the natural environment as a special kind of ‚Eden‘, for the purposes of the European psyche, rather than as a complex and changing environment in which people have actually had to live (Anderson/Grove 1987: 4).“

Activist groups and local interest NGOs rally for a rights based approach that particularly secures the land rights of people finding themselves on projected conservation zones. The global agenda of biodiversity protection has increasingly

come under their fierce critique to expect local people to "... trade off their short-term livelihood needs against long-term survival of wildlife to tolerate their conflict with wildlife, and, in the extreme form, to endorse Western conservation ideals" (Magome and Murombedzi 2004: 116). Affected communities often accuse national and transnational environmentalist actors as tacitly following their age-long programme of silencing their voices in the interest of the most noble marriage of conservation and peace in the form of parks. Transboundary parks are no exception in this regard. The grand vision allows for playing down all other concerns and facilitates the dismissal of legitimate objections against local resource restrictions. Some conservation argumentations sanctimoniously employ even the myth of the 'noble savage' to debilitate claims of local communities and indigenous peoples (often ousted into border regions) to their well-established traditions of sustainable resource exploitation (Kenrick 2011: 15-21). In this regard such reversals of human-wildlife relationships find their precursor in colonial models of conservation and their justification of nature parks fending off people:

"It is significant that pre-colonial conservation, based as it was on the unity of humanity and nature, did not create separate categories for conservation, but rather devised strategies for conserving nature while at the same time guaranteeing access to it. Although this access and use may have been mitigated by policy, religion, custom and practice to reflect existing stratification and other imbalances in pre-colonial society, the motivation for conservation was to guarantee human access to nature. This was in direct contrast with the colonial model of conservation, which has led to the development of nature conservation areas as areas cleared of all human influence and settlement (e.g., parks, game reserves and hunting blocks), with highly restricted access to resources" (Murombedzi, 2003).

Land restitution as a means of the decolonization of nature

Soon after the birth of democratic South Africa the first elected government

legislated its Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994. It aimed to undo at least some of the injustices committed by the earlier dispossession of (black) people through the Natives Land Act of 1913 and 1936 as well as the following monstrous apartheid legislations. These legal acts restricted the black majority to land ownership of a mere 13 per cent of the country's total land area. Even though national parks are conventionally viewed as sacred in global conservation circles – spaces where human habitation and resource use is prohibited – the South African government abstained from restricting its land restitution to non-protected areas. National parks were therefore not sacrosanct from land claims (Magome and Murombedzi 2004: 111).

In 1995, on the basis of this new South African land legislation, the Land Claims Committee of the #Khomani San community submitted a claim to the government for the restitution of land in the former Kalahari Gemsbok National Park (now part of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park) asserting that its members had been illegally alienated from their ancestral lands following the proclamation of the Park in 1931. While initially, in the 1930s, the #Khomani San group had been allowed to live in the Park, these rights were retracted soon after. Their dispossession was falsely based on the premise that the #Khomani San were deemed having acquired a 'western life style and habits' (Bosch/Hirschfeld 2002: 164). After three years of negotiations and deliberations, an out-of-court settlement between the government and the #Khomani San community was reached. The agreement dealt with the transfer of 37.000 ha of land outside the park (consisting of six farms) as well as access to further 25.000 ha of land on the South African section inside the park (Chennells 2002: 52).

In the year 2000 the first post-colonial TFCA, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, brought down the fences between the South African and Botswana protection areas of the South-Western Kalahari. The joint conservation management and planning agreements arguably produced winners on all possible sides, from the political elite to other stakeholders in natural resource management and eco-tourism. Reviewed on the basis of the two dimensions of ecological sustainability and improvement of bilateral international relations, this achievement is indeed remarkable. Furthermore, it has set an example for the installation of comparable transfrontier conservancies in

Southern Africa (foremost the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park/Conservation Area prospected to cover almost 100,000 square kilometres in its most optimistic scenario) and beyond. The usual extensive inter-state negotiations and joint preparations clearly helped to build mutual trust, as a precondition for peaceful, constructive and stable relations. If it were not for the possible adverse side effects of such agreements for local and indigenous communities, the two-tiered vision of peace and ecological conservation would deserve little, if any critical attention.

But the legal record and empirical data in both states indicate that the agreements on conservation issues may not stretch far enough to accommodate the vital interests of local and/or indigenous communities in relation to full participation, self-determined development and resource use. A comparative analysis of governance in the field of indigenous-state relations in Botswana and South Africa reveals quite divergent choices of options. Both states clearly consider the development of indigenous populations to be their own internal affairs and have not involved the people originally inhabiting the areas in question in these negotiated arrangements. This neglect of what many indigenous communities (and not only in Southern Africa) consider their older historical rights to land and resources became the target of criticism made public through the attention of world media and through their respective legal struggles (cf. Zips-Mairitsch 2009). For the late legendary master tracker and long serving South African National (SAN) Parks Ranger Karel Vet Piet Kleinman the Peace Park establishment did not mean 'peace' in the fullest for himself and the community of #Khomani San², whose ancestors are buried inside the park, but whose graves cannot be visited except by applying for a special permit to visit the park without subjection to the regular entrance fee:

² There is no uniform set of names for some of the larger ethnic divisions. The terms 'San', 'Bushmen', 'Basarwa', 'Khwé' etc. have all been used to refer to peoples with hunting and gathering practices in Southern Africa. Compare discussions inter alia: Hohmann (2003), Hitchcock and Biesele (2004), Saugestad (2004), Zips-Mairitsch (2009).

“I could only say, all our people are there in the park, the late Regopstaan Kruiper is buried there and our whole heritage, our life is there; the graves of our ancestors are in the park. So what I can say actually is that it’s our life, the park is our life, it’s our history, it’s our heritage. It’s our people’s land, we don’t want to be treated like tourist people, when we are in the park, we don’t want to be treated like strangers, but what we would like to be treated as is the real and true owners of that land, so we would like to be treated fairly as the true owners of that land” (Karel Vet Piet Kleinman, interview on 12 February 2004).

It may be read as a highly symbolic sign that the South African government through SANParks authorities provided a burial site just behind the staff camp at the Twee Rivieren entrance for Karel Vet Piet Kleinman after he tragically passed away in a car accident a few days after the above-quoted interview was taken. He has thus become the first San buried inside the park boundaries since a few decades in recognition for his achievements to nature protection and perhaps as a signal for the entire community of #Khomani San of a renewed and changing relationship. With the opening of the desert Lodge !Xaus, San for the first time since their eviction, directly benefit from revenues generated by ecotourism. However, empirical research will have to establish, if such economic ventures reflect new forms of community involvement to alleviate poverty and offer employment possibilities. First preliminary studies may rather show that schemes of community-based development strategies are perhaps mere forms of window-dressing for state-private co-operations that fail to live up to the standards of true development partnerships with local communities.

Another much better researched case is the land restitution to the Makuleke community in a transboundary conservation area, the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park/Conservation Area opened in 2002. It encompasses the South African Kruger National Park, which covers 20.000 km² of land – an area the size of Scotland – and was initially established as a game reserve in 1898 in order to rebuild wildlife

numbers following overhunting in the area. Through forced removals of local people and the consolidation of various state game reserves, Kruger grew to its current size during the 1970s (Magome/Murombedzi 2003: 114). In coherence with the then universal model of 'fortress conservation' for protected areas and national parks the nationalised landscape became transformed from a consumptive multi-use area to an exclusive tourist destination: "The reserve gained popularity as 'a hunting ground' for a limited number of privileged white South Africans; and when it gained the national park status, it became 'a playing ground' for local and international tourists" (Magome/Murombedzi 2003: 115).

Soon after the formal end of Apartheid and the legal transformation towards a democratic South Africa, the Makuleke community, forcefully evicted in 1969, lodged a land claim on about 250 km² against the northern section of Kruger. Their 1995 restitution claim was confirmed by the land restitution commission and thus became a test case for the decolonization of nature through a new complementary vision of conservation and participatory community development. Influential officials of SANParks, in at least partial accordance with the old conservation regime wanted to fight the case through, but were 'convinced' by much political pressure to settle amicably with a compromise (Magome/Murombedzi 2003: 115). The agreement finally achieved between the government (SANParks) and the Makuleke community in 1998 restored the latter with full ownership of the land, but the exercise of their rights was limited to commercial developments on their land in continuity with its current use designed for biodiversity conservation (De Villiers 1999: 59f.).

Instead of emerging as a new form of conservation governance with true community involvements in the management of the lands won back, the agreement foresaw an elaborate list of 'project law' conditionalities. Among other well-understandable restrictions concerning mining or prospecting, harvesting of wildlife species, agricultural activities, residential development, and so forth, SANParks received a

formal servitude that allows it exclusively to perform its rights according to the National Parks Act and thereby the supreme management authority and control over wildlife (Magome/Murombedzi 2003: 115-116). What looks from one angle as a major achievement for community participation in the struggle for shares in the profitable business of nature conservation and eco-tourism, appears from another perspective as a sincere setback in the search for alternative models of joint governance with co-operative methods of steering diverse interests into a consensual management plan. This may be particularly true for a National Park, which is seen internationally as one of the most important models for enhanced economic exploitation under a sustainable conservation regime:

„The Kruger National Park is South Africa’s second most significant destination for tourists, the first being the Cape Peninsula National Park. Kruger is the National Park that generates most revenue for South African National Parks, it cross-subsidizes other parks, so it’s very important for the wider system of conservation areas and conservation management. In terms of local economies it’s absolutely critical, there are towns that are entirely reliant on the trade from tourists coming to the Kruger National Park. It’s been like that for a long time. There are many rural communities who live in the shadow of Kruger, who find employment in the Kruger National Park. But it is also the case that the most rural of those communities alongside the fence are not yet seeing enough benefit still from the conservation wind“ (Interview David Bunn on 15 March 2011).

Top-down modes of governance still dominate for many private game reserves adjacent to Kruger, where clear-cut boundaries settle local communities at the other side of fences in a waiting position for the trickling down of revenues in one form or the other. This is not to say that such benefits do not come through at all, but that communities formally evicted from the lands under today’s private ownership remain on the passive side of management efforts for the improvement of local livelihoods. Another severe problem in this regard beyond the scope of this paper is

the unequal distribution of values in communities. Only some, mostly the well-educated segments of a community take the lion share of selective partnerships with state or private investors. One of the most problematic fictions behind the overall community-based natural resource management schemes may be identified in the presupposition of existing homogenous communities. But these are rather exceptions in an age of cooption and preferential outsourcing of public services. We therefore agree with an observation that failures in the development of community management capacities have worked as a self-fulfilling prophecy that CBNRM does not work and the state should re-assert control (Metcalf 2003: 5):

“Although southern Africa has been a leader in community-based natural resource management (CBNMR), communities have generally struggled to secure and manage fully devolved resource use rights ... Governance problems also exist through competition within community leadership and interference by external elites. Communities have also faced management problems related to lack of relevant knowledge, administration, accountability, transparency, reporting, and monitoring both ecological and socio-economic impact.”

Patronage and cooption determine reactive modes of participation by communities. This reflects the lack in receiving full ownership of rights, thus leading to the neglect in taking ‘full ownership’, which is often required from local recipients by development imperatives. The paradox of demanding to “take ownership” for projects dependent on material assets for which a (re-)transfer of ownership has been formerly denied seems to go unnoticed in too many cases. Land restitution in border zones and the devolution of authority to communities is further complicated in transboundary collaboration that touches upon questions of sovereignty and national integrity. Many governmental agencies fear the loss of central control in the borderlands and therefore prefer higher levels of coordination. Local communities are often only involved in the implementation phase of transfrontier biodiversity conservation, when they are informed about expectations rather than consulted.

Many of these governance processes are conceived by local communities as lacking legitimacy and are hence not granted the local support needed for an ultimate success (cf. Metcalfe 2003: 6). The promising peaceful management of transboundary resources appears vulnerable for shortcomings in the adequate realization of empowerment of rural communities out-fenced from their former resources by a unilateral nature protection regime. It may be identified as one of the key reasons why long-term conservation goals have been hampered by local resentment, obstruction and resistance. Non-compliance of excluded communities may be traced in many cases to the preponderance of a traditional conservation paradigm based on natural science and its positivist notion of an untamed and untouched wilderness only to be maintained without (local) people:

„This approach reduces the complex aspects of a problem into discrete parts that can be analysed, so that predictions can be made on these discrete parts. It is then assumed that knowledge can be summarized into universal laws or generalizations. Conservation science is firmly set within this paradigm, and so too are the inherently ethnocentric basic values and assumptions of its professionals. This has produced a body of work and industry based on a top-down transfer of technology model of conservation that has consistently ignored the complexity of ecological and social relationships at the local level” (Chatty/Colchester 2002: 7f.).

Peace for all?

Bilateral or Multilateral Transborder Conservation Initiatives and Unilateral Ideas of Development

Border zones are often chosen for conservation for a variety of purposes. Almost 40 percent of African national parks are located at international borders. Almost one-

third of all African borders have a national park on one or both sides (Griffiths 1995: 357). Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA) are conceived of as relatively large areas of land within one or more protected areas that straddle boundaries between two or more countries and allow the protection of large-scale ecosystems. Important reasons for establishing TFCA include improved biodiversity conservation (particularly free movement of wildlife); ameliorated political cooperation (ideally leading to stability and peace in the region); and economic growth based upon increased economies of scale (Magome/Murombedzi 2003: 122):

“The inventors of TFCAs, business people, politicians, ecologists and NGOs, eager to be counted as facilitators and ‘dream-makers’, are preoccupied with biodiversity conservation and promoting peace in the region under the banner of improved economic growth. However, they are often far removed from the realities on the ground, and cannot imagine the potential negative impacts that TFCAs can impose upon the lives of local people” (Magome/Murombedzi 2003: 123).

In the past decades a great wealth of multi-disciplinary research, including development policies, legal anthropology and governance in comparison may have contributed to a better understanding of the reasons for obvious earlier failures in the implementation of even benevolent, but still paternalistic CBNRM schemes. Perhaps some members of the private sector in the privately owned game reserves adjacent to Kruger have learned their lessons from overtly top-down approaches and are now moving to the forefront of emerging alternative supportive partnerships. Some of the interviews that we conducted (over the past few years) with a great variety of stakeholders in the Greater Kruger area in the context of our own empirical research on this topic seem to support such an optimistic view on the subject:

„‘Parks with people’ is focusing on how we can integrate people’s lifestyle within the natural environment as well. When a lot of the national parks first developed, there

was a strong effect to move people out of the parks and put the fence up to keep people out, rather than to keep people in. And we started to realize that without the people the parks don't see a future – they don't generate enough income for conservation. In a lot of African countries especially where money for conservation is hard to come by without attracting people to the area to invest, you are going to find it very difficult. And so there has been a strong push to generate a foundation within the surrounding communities to increase productivity, to attract businesses to the local area. So that, when people come to the parks, they are not just coming to see the animals, they are coming to see different things, the local culture and how people live within the area. Then they can support themselves in that respect” (Interview William Lawson on 15 February 2011).

The former Head Ranger of the upmarket Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve, biologist William Lawson, attributed the change in conservation policies to a possible solution for the major problem of illegal hunting in boundary areas that are difficult to control. Community involvement in the protection of these areas appears of ultimate importance for the effective reduction of poaching activities:

“It helps the parks in a big way because poaching is still an issue. Within national parks it always will be, poaching is not a problem you can get rid of, it's a problem that you just have to make sustainable and if you provide employment for locals within the parks themselves then there is a mutual respect and there is a non-verbal agreement for the prosperity of those parks. And as a result, it usually reduces the amount of poaching or illegal hunting that takes place” (Interview William Lawson on 15 February 2011).

Due to the fact that the illegal trade in animal products attracts investments on other levels of the value chain of crime-related business activities, cooperation and supportive partnerships in this regard tend to strengthen other sectors of social

security and peace. Based on the premises that peace involves not only governments but also people, the exclusion of those stakeholders with perhaps the strongest ties at all to the lands in question may prove an obstacle to achieve the environmental aims of conservation. Such considerations point to the tensions between conservationists, development agencies and local actors, particularly in the contested arena of natural resource control, use and management. As mentioned before, communities do not take the peace parks rhetoric at face value, due to a long history of alienation from their lands. Some may interpret the initiative as a more benevolent, but no less harmful policy of community and indigenous expropriation, access restriction and pretexts for internal displacement than experienced before. In their view it requires concrete works more than mere words to prove that there is indeed a difference between earlier forms of land and resource nationalization in the name of conservation and the new form of resource centralization or 'transnationalization' of transfrontier conservation areas in the interest of two or more states. Whereas the first approach used the strategy of a unilateral declaration of national parks and monuments, or game and other reserves, whereby the land authorities involved with wildlife and natural resources ultimately retained control over the land and resources (Hitchcock 2004: 226), the more recent approach attempted the conservation of large transboundary areas through a bi- or multilateral declaration of 'peace or transfrontier parks', which were later to be acknowledged and ratified by national legislation. Both conservation regimes are suspected by local actors as means to dispossess and disenfranchise local communities from lands and resources as well as from their territorial and resource rights.

Conclusion

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programs have gained considerable momentum since the 1990s in Southern Africa, including Botswana and South Africa. Against the grain of much idealistic rhetoric, political promises and

peace talk, management and control of transborder game may still reflect the hierarchical arrangements introduced by earlier conservation legislation and governance. The answer, if there is indeed a shift in paradigm from top-down governance to development in partnership should in our view thus remain virtually undecided: 'it depends'. It depends on actual procedural progress regarding the inclusion of all concerned and affected in joint governance efforts. The constant ignorance of procedural requirements may count as one of the key factors in the failure of some CBNRM programs set in motion to resolve the significant conflicts between conservation and development in Southern Africa. If the power relations between landholders stay skewed then the hegemonic utilization of environmental protection likely tend to follow anachronistic schemes of exclusion: "Tourism development and conservation were used as justifications for the removal of people from some of the best-known protected areas in Southern Africa" (Hitchcock 2004: 224).

According to this critical view, the rhetoric of conservation thus continues to provide discursive strategies for effectively restricting the access of local and indigenous resource users. Such a shortfall accounts for political costs, in the areas of internal and external relations, political stability, empowerment of local communities, and even broad-based economic development. In which way may top-down ordained CBNRM programs suffer from the democratic deficiencies of centralized and unilateral forms of development, resource governance and conservation regimes? What has been subsumed under the well-known dependency syndrome on government or the private sector patronage appears but one obstacles for the envisioned re-spatialization and new, more efficient, effective, sustainable and satisfactory modes of resource management (not only) in transfrontier conservation areas. Civil unrest induced through broken promises of poverty alleviation, democratization and improved livelihoods has in the past taken violent forms and may in the future affect the core agenda of all conservation, i.e. the protection of global biodiversity. Some argue quite convincingly that it is in the best interests of community-based natural resource management, "(...) if the state and other agencies

recognize those communities officially as proprietary units with de jure rights for land, wildlife, veld (bush) products, minerals, and other natural resources over which they maintain legal control in perpetuity" (Hitchcock 2004: 226).

There is of course hope that the rights-based approach sought by the post-Apartheid South African Government may spread to its neighbouring countries, some of which still adhere to the principle of 'fortress conservation' and treat communities – whether indigenous or not – living in game reserves as mere threats to the environment. It is telling that the profound irony cast in such a verdict goes so far quite unnoticed: without the foresight of these communities in sustainable resource use practices there would likely be no biodiversity to protect. South Africa's recognition of communities' rights even in so-called national parks or transfrontier conservation areas owes its origin to the need of a corrective to past expropriations, relocations and internal displacements from such landscapes. In line with this political agenda an official brochure on transboundary peace parks in Southern Africa, compiled for the *Southern Africa Initiative of German Business* (SAFRI), one of the major donor agencies, states that the peace parks model will undo the strict conservation regimes. These imposed restrictions robbed indigenous and other local communities of their lands, resource rights and even access to their historical burial grounds all over Southern Africa. The peace park model is therefore supposed to repair those injustices by returning at least part of the formerly derogated rights, and aims to reconcile environmental protection with ideas of community-based natural resource management. It remains to be seen to what extent concrete procedures of participatory environmental governance promote the empowerment of local communities and indigenous peoples by allowing their self-determined collaboration in co-management schemes and by increasing their land tenure security (Pabst 2002: 17).

To sum up, the ambitious and creative dissolution of (colonial) borders and internal boundaries, as embodied in the vision of transfrontier cooperative resource

utilisation of cross-border conservation areas, deserves the supportive interest of African borderlands research. However, we believe that it also merits a critical attention to its modes of governance; in particular, if justice in the sense of procedural and communicative access is granted to all affected by its grand design. It is about time that the transborder game of nature conservation brings all players to the table. South Africa's rights-based approach with its intention of reconciliation may then indeed provide a model to dissolve the old and false contradiction that those responsible for the preservation of large biologically diverse tracts of land are a potential threat for sustainability today. In fact the contrary may be true: conservation and supportive partnerships with communities may depend on each other, if they are based on equitable procedures of opinion- and will-formation. Such new forms of governance that abstain from the top-down hegemony of earlier times could prove the prerequisite for a sound search of best practices and general guidelines for co-management. Only then may the grand vision of ever-increasing transfrontier conservation areas not merely stay confined to wild animals, but refer to all players with reasonable stakes in this viable political, social and economic resource magnitude.

References

ADAMS, William and David HULME

2001 'Conservation and Community. Changing Narratives, Policies and Practices in African Conservation.' Pp. 9-23 in David Hulme and Marshall Murphree (eds.), *African Wildlife and Livelihoods. The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation*. Oxford: Heinemann.

ADAMS AND MULLIGAN

2004 'Introduction.' Pp. 1-15 in William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan (eds.), *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-Colonial Era*. London: Earthscan Publications.

ANDERSON, David and Richard GROVE

1987 'Introduction: The scramble for Eden: past, present and future in African conservation.' Pp. 1-12 in Anderson, David and Richard Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa. People, Policies and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BENDA-BECKMANN, von Franz

2001 'On the reproduction of law: Micro and macro in the time-space geography of law.' Pp. 119-131 in: Fikentscher, Wolfgang (ed.), *Begegnung und Konflikt – eine kulturanthropologische Bestandsaufnahme*, München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

BOSCH D. and HIRSCHFELD E.

2002 'The!Ae!Hai Heritage Park bundle - including the agreement whereby the land claims of the #Khomani San community and the Mier community are finalized and associated documents.' Pretoria: Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights.

BROCKINGTON, Daniel and James IGOE

2006 'Eviction for Conservation. A global overview.' Pp. 424-470 in: *Conservation and Society*, Vol. 4, No. 3.

CHATTY, Dawn and Marcus COLCHESTER

2002 'Introduction.' Pp. 1-20 in: Chatty, Dawn and Marcus Colchester (eds.): *Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples. Displacement, forced settlement, and sustainable development*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

CHENNELLS, Roger

2002 'The #Khomani San Land Claim.' Pp. 51-53 in: *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 26 (1).

DE VILLIERS, Bertus

1999 'Land Claims and National Parks – the Makuleke Experience.' Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

DU TOIT, J.G. and VAN SCHALKWYK O.L.

2011 'How to improve wildlife production in South Africa.' Paper presented at OIE Global Conference on Wildlife, Animal Health and Biodiversity – Preparing for the future. Paris, 23-25 February.

FABRICIUS, Christo and Chris de WET

2002 'The Influence of Forced Removals and Land Restitution on Conservation in South Africa.' Pp. 142-157 in: Chatty, Dawn and Marcus Colchester (eds.), Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples. Displacement, forced settlement, and sustainable development. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

GRIFFITHS, Ieuan Ll.

1995 'African Boundaries and National Parks.' Pp. 357-370 in Gerald H Blake et al. (eds.), The Peaceful Management of Transboundary Resources. London: Graham & Trotman.

HITCHCOCK, Robert

2004 'Natural Resource Management among the Kalahari San: Conflict and Cooperation.' Pp. 202-227 in Robert Hitchcock and Diana Vinding (eds.), Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Southern Africa. Copenhagen: IWGIA.

HITCHCOCK, Robert and Megan BIESELE

2004 'San, Khwe, Basarwa or Bushmen?: Terminology, Identity and Empowerment in Southern Africa.' Online: [www..kalaharipeoples.org/documents/San-term.htm](http://www.kalaharipeoples.org/documents/San-term.htm)

HOHMANN, Thekla

2003 'San and the State: An Introduction.' In: San and the State, Hohmann (ed.). Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag

KENRICK, Justin

2011 'Unthinking Eurocentrism: The political writing of Adam Kuper and Tim Ingold. In: Anthropological Notebooks 17 (2), pp. 11-36.

KURU FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS

2004 'What is CBNRM?' Newsletter October 2004: 2.

MAGOME, Hector and MUROMBEDZI, James

2003 'Sharing South African National Parks: Community land and conservation in a democratic South Africa.' Pp. 109-133 in: William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan (eds.), Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-Colonial Era. London: Earthscan Publications.

METCALFE, Simon

2003 'Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in Three Southern African Initiatives.' Paper presented at the 5th World Parks Congress, Durban, 12-13 September.

MUROMBEDZI, James

2003 'Pre-colonial and colonial conservation practices in southern Africa and their legacy today.' IUCN.

www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/Publications/TILCEPA/CCAJMuumbedzi.pdf

PABST, Martin

2002 'Grenzüberschreitende Peace Parks im südlichen Afrika.' München:

Südliches Afrika Initiative der Deutschen Wirtschaft (SAFRI).

SAUGESTAD, Sidsel

2004 'The Indigenous Peoples of Southern Africa: An Overview.' Pp. 22–41 in: Hitchcock, Robert and Diane Vinding (eds.): Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Southern Africa. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, „

ZIPS-MAIRITSCH, Manuela

2009 'Verlorenes Land? Indigene (Land)Rechte der San in Botswana.' Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag

Bridging the Congo River: Governmental interests versus disabled traders' niche

Clara Devlieger

Abstract

Kinshasa and Brazzaville, self proclaimed “sister cities” since the 1980s, long ago agreed to build a bridge over the Congo River to connect these two capitals, the closest in the world. Such a construction, optimistic governmental authorities believe, will bring them closer economically, culturally and politically. Decades of inactivity have passed and the actualisation of the project has slowly begun to take shape. Both countries recently signed a protocol agreeing to materialise the project; in 2008 the African Development Bank (AfDB) freed up over 7 million USD for a feasibility study. However, local traders see the coming of the bridge as a substantial threat to their own functioning form of bottom-up integration. Between the capitals, disabled traders have built a niche in international trade and smuggling thanks to reductions in passage fees and customs taxes. Given their limited mobility, the ferry that goes between the cities is an essential part of their fragile niche, a form of integration ironically based on the obstacle of the river border. With the coming of the bridge, the strong position and international ties these usually weak individuals have built up over past decades risk disintegration; diverging interests from top-down integration projects threaten the existing and functioning bottom-up initiatives that depend on the absence of higher level interconnections.

Introduction

Flowing between the two capitals that are the closest in the world, the Congo River marks the international border between Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo (RC), and hosts the scene of a special niche in trade dominated by disabled traders. The niche originated almost by chance, and owes its existence and viability to the law that allows disabled to cross the border with a discounted passage on the ferry. The traders can thus afford to sell their goods at a slightly lower rate, often becoming *passeurs*, people who “pass” or transport goods over the border for other traders who work between in the markets on both sides of the river (cf. e.g. Wrong 2002: 152). This slight competitive advantage has allowed the disabled to create their niche over the past decades centred at the two Beaches, the borderspaces on either side. Reliant on the specific circumstances present, they have adapted to the situation by developing specific technologies like the *vélo*, a cargo tricycle with which they can transport goods, and by heavily depending on the *bac*, the ferry that goes between the cities. The traders look to the trade to support their families, transporting goods from one city to the other according to the principles of supply and demand.

At the moment, traffic and trade between Kinshasa and Brazzaville is limited and expensive, which is to the advantage of the disabled traders. The average cost of a return trip across Malebo Pool is around 40 dollars, which is “equivalent to between 40 and 80 percent of the average monthly income earned by Kinshasa residents” (Isik 2011). Formally shipping goods to the sister city is also exorbitant; the high prices are due among other reasons to lack of competition in river crossing services, lack of investment in transport capacity, and cumbersome time consuming customs procedures (Isik 2011). Comparatively, San Francisco and Oakland are separated by a similar distance; if the same costs were to apply to cross the Bay Bridge as to cross the Malebo Pool, residents of San Francisco would pay between 1200 and 2400 dollars for a return trip. The amount of trade is also five times less than the number of passengers recorded between East and West Berlin in 1998, well before the fall of the Berlin Wall (Herderschee et al. 2012). Because the disabled pay half price to cross the river and have reductions in customs taxes, they have a competitive advantage over others who trade between the cities.

However, their niche is not set in stone; plans to build a bridge across the Congo River threaten to eradicate it. In Kinshasa and Brazzaville, two “villes miroirs” (Gondola 1997) or “sister cities”, the idea to build a road-rail bridge emerged during the colonial era but was never

conceived due to lack of funds and various reciprocal internal problems. Optimistic governmental authorities believe that such a construction will bring Kinshasa and Brazzaville closer economically, culturally and politically, strengthening the process of economic regional integration and trade while facilitating road and railway networks by physically connecting the cities. The governments of DRC and RC decided on implementing the project in cooperation within the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)¹; the project is enrolled in the framework of regional integration advocated by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)² to promote development and investment on the African continent.

In developing these projects and ideals for the future, however, developing agencies haven't considered those whose livelihood depends on the present system. Diverging interests from top-down integration projects threaten the existing and functioning bottom-up initiatives that depend on the absence of higher level interconnections. Indeed, the disabled traders work their way through, and play their own vital role in, a chain of relations that forms their own form of regional integration and increases the reward of their goods much as the "value chain" model of business management suggests a low-cost good can be amplified in worth by passing through a coordinated sequence of activities that increase its desirability (Porter 1985). In their particular context of physical disability and cross-border movement, technology is a persistent presence facilitating or allowing each link in the chain to function, from the technology of the tricycle that enables them to move and carry goods, to the technology of the border, the governmental gate-keeping that creates the disparity of costs and benefits to trade in either city and the ferry that permits transport between them. The value of being a link in a chain goes beyond the monetary, offering social and psychological benefits to the disabled person partaking in the system. In the following, we explore preliminary observations as part of a larger research project of how the planned bridge may affect the disabled niche and their chain of value and technology, primarily through the voices of those engaged in these activities as recorded by a range of documentary film-makers and journalists who have been attracted to the peculiar situation and based on personal experiences. As we follow one trader through her daily routine, we begin to see how these questions of technology and value are exploited and enrich her life; we also glimpse the fragility that they entail.

¹ In French, Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale, (CEEAC)

² In French, Nouveau Partenariat pour le Développement de l'Afrique (NEPAD). NEPAD is a programme of the

Caro

For a disabled trader, the day could very much look like that of Caro, a poliomyelitis patient who crosses the border on a daily basis. In *D'une rive à l'autre*, a documentary about the crossborder disabled trade, we follow her throughout a day of work (Kifouani 2009). Caro lives in a centre for disabled people in Kinshasa where she cares for her younger brothers and the children of her sisters. They do her laundry, they go to the market and they do the cooking while she trades between the capitals.

In the morning, she leaves her home very early with the youngest of her family, a boy who pushes her on a small tricycle. Without them she couldn't go to the Beach, she says, stressing that her family helps her as well, "it isn't just me who helps them". He pushes her tricycle to the Beach, where we see her two younger sisters selling *pagnes*, African cloth. Caro exchanges money at a small exchange stand while still using the small wheelchair.

Later we see her getting ready to embark the *bac*, the ferry that crosses the Congo River, at the Kinshasa Beach. In the meantime she has exchanged her smaller wheelchair for an enormous cargo tricycle that she and her husband steer, a construction designed to take heavy loads and that is well adapted to fit on the ferry. The large basket of the *vélo* has been loaded up with many different goods to sell in Brazzaville, such as biscuits or "Hippo" and "Saba" soap. Caro and her husband sit on top of the goods, controlling the vehicle and instructing young family members who push the heavy cargo onto the *bac*.

Disabled traders and their cargo tricycles are allowed to board the *bac* first; once completely laden with the disabled and other traders, the *bac* leaves Kinshasa for Brazzaville. Caro and her husband shield themselves from the burning sun with an umbrella while talking to their colleagues; half an hour later, they arrive at the Beach in Brazzaville. There, Caro goes to the international market of Poto-poto to sell the goods bought in Kinshasa and to buy *pagnes*. At the end of the day, she and her husband return to Kinshasa with the *vélo* reloaded with *pagnes* to sell in Kinshasa.

The Congo River Bridge: a top-down decision

While Caro and other disabled traders have spent decades building up a niche in small-scale trading, the actualisation of the bridge has slowly begun to take shape. On the 3rd of December

African Union (AU) adopted in Lusaka, Zambia in 2001.

2008, the African Development Bank (AfDB)³ approved a 7.45 million USD donation for a feasibility study and final design of the road-railway bridge including access roads to existing road and rail infrastructure and a feasibility study of a 1,015 km railway to connect the Kinshasa and Ilebo in the DRC (cf. e.g. African Development Bank 2008; Anon 2008b, Anon 2011; Gampaka 2011). The 24th of June 2009, the minister of Planning of the DRC, Olivier Kamitatu, and his counterpart from Congo-Brazzaville, Justin Balemgo, the minister of Regional Integration and Nepad, signed a protocol of understanding during a meeting of the ministers of the ECCAS, where plans were made to finish the bridge by 2014 (cf. e.g. Kambale 2009). The feasibility study started in September 2011 and was foreseen to last two years (cf. e.g. Anon 2011; Gampaka 2011). It is jointly financed by the African Development Fund (ADF)⁴ and the governments of the DRC and RC; the ADF finances up to 92% of the estimated cost, the DRC and RC finance 5%.

Authorities and developing agencies see many advantages of the bridge. According to the AfDB, “the existing state of infrastructure constitutes a serious handicap to African productivity and competitiveness. Addressing Africa’s regional infrastructure needs is therefore a prerequisite to its development” (cf. e.g. Anon 2008b). In this sense, the AfDB believes that this bridge will accelerate and promote trade between the two countries in “improv[ing] regional transport and trade systems and ensur[ing] the smooth flow of railway traffic from Matadi and Pointe-Noire to the eastern border of the DRC and, beyond that, towards the eastern and southern parts of Africa (Zambia, Tanzania, SAR, Uganda, Rwanda...)” (African Development Bank 2008). In the longer term, “the infrastructure would facilitate railway network connections in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa” (African Development Bank 2008). The transport infrastructure would “improve road and rail transport flows through the Cameroon-Gabon-RC-DRC corridor, and strengthen regional integration and trade within Central African and with the Southern African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa regions.” On an even larger scale, “the project will help ensure flow of goods and people along the Tripoli-Windhoek Corridor, adopted under the NEPAD Short-Term Action Plan” (African Development Bank 2008).⁵ Locally, the bridge would not only increase goods traffic between

³ In French, Groupe de la Banque Africaine de Développement (BAD)

⁴ In French, Fonds Africaine de Développement. The African Development Fund is the concessional window of the African Development Bank (AfDB).

⁵ Linking the Tripoli-Windhoek Corridor is reminiscent of British colonial dreams of a telegraphic link from Cape

the Atlantic port of Pointe Noire in RC and Kinshasa, but also significantly shorten the distance between Kinshasa and the Atlantic Ocean by about 200 km. In Kinshasa itself, the bridge would “reduce the time taken to cross the River Congo, strengthen and increase the free movement of people and goods within the region; eliminate disruptions in the road and rail transport, improve the efficiency of transport services and reduce associated costs.” By improving the infrastructure necessary for trade and regional economic integration, developers believe it will improve the quality of life of people of the neighbouring countries.

Despite the expected advantages and the enthusiasm for it, as the possibility of the bridge comes closer to being a reality, there has been much controversy concerning the project. In both countries, those who depend on river activities fear losing their livelihoods; in the south-west Bas-Congo province of the DRC especially, the signing of the memorandum of understanding in June 2009 raised concerns for the economic future of their province and of the DRC. The political class and civil society rejected the project for fear that its implementation will have a negative impact on the ports of Matadi and Boma (cf. e.g. Anon 2005, Anon 2009; Kanzi 2009; Lubindi 2011). In building the bridge, Congolese from DRC dread that goods will be shipped more often to the port of Pointe-Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, a deep-water port, rather than from the shallower ports in Congo-Kinshasa. Large ships that have difficulties accessing these ports because of the silting of the Congo River will use the port of Pointe-Noire. Indeed, the ports of Matadi and Boma create livelihood for many people, while also representing 60% of customs revenues in DRC; officials in the Bas-Congo especially have urged that the DRC will be the loser in building the bridge.

For those opposed to building the bridge because of these concerns, it could be considered on the condition of the construction of a deep water port at Banana in the south-west of DRC (Gampaka 2011), a port that would create competition with Pointe-Noire. In 2009, the DRC gave priority to the construction of this port at Banana over the proposed construction of the road-rail bridge between Kinshasa and Brazzaville in considering the competitive economy in which it is in. The following year, the DRC signed an agreement with South Korea to build the deep-water port at Banana in the Bas-Congo.

Town to Cairo.

The disabled trade chain and adapted technology in the transfrontier trade

While the controversy concerning privileging the port of Pointe Noire over those in the Bas-Congo appears to be softened with the compromise of the port at Banana, the problem for small-scale traders along the river in a weak social position such as the disabled still has not been solved. With no other social benefits, the traders' niche depends on the current system. As Caro's example illustrates, the international trade between Kinshasa and Brazzaville is a chain of actions depending on technologies such as the *vélo* and *bac* for its success. Every element interlocks into a network through which the traders create their own form of social security and regional integration through the trade networks they set up.

In general, it is the existence of the border, the obstructions of an international frontier and the vehicles created to traverse them, that makes the trade attractive as well as possible. Like other small-scale traders, the disabled make a living by transporting goods that are rare and/or preferred in one country to the other. For example, when there is a shortage of powdered milk in one country, the traders react by importing it from the other. The existence of the institution and technology of the border ensures that traders can apply the rule of supply and demand in different currencies to their benefit; crossing the border makes something that is essentially low-priced rise in value. Further, the process the goods go through is comparable to that of the value chain, in which products rise in value as they traverse through several activities. Similarly, the goods the traders sell are cheap, but traversing an international boundary and passing through several stages before reaching an end destination makes goods rise in literal and symbolic value; a product that traverses an international boundary instantly rises in value by assuming the identity of "foreign".

In making these transformations possible in the international chain of trade, specific technologies play an essential part. In relying on and adapting to river transportation of the *bac*, the traders have developed cargo-tricycles, called *vélo*, which prove to be the most visible creative and essential adaptation of the technology at hand on the part of the disabled in the trade value-chain. Through local disabled trader organisations such as the *Union des Personnes avec Handicap pour les Actions de Développement* (UPHAD), traders attempt to function at a maximum capacity in order to transport the heavy merchandise. The organisations work with blacksmiths who create tricycles with baskets large enough to transport large amounts of goods from one port to the other. The hand-pedalled tricycles are manufactured in Kinshasa and come

in a wide range of shapes and styles. Some successful disabled traders have even invested in motorised vehicles for personal transportation.

Several times daily, the disabled traders cross the border with their “long-haul” tricycles (Wrong 2002: 153) which are usually overloaded with tens of kilogrammes of merchandise. Such a tricycle becomes an essential investment for the adaptation and survival of a disabled trader; the traders’ business is dependent on its technology. As one trader from Brazzaville says, “With this tricycle, you go out, you go to Kinshasa, you do everything with the same tricycle”⁶ (Kifouani 2009).

Thanks to their niche and the technology that has come out of it, disabled at the Beach become “more able” than non-disabled persons by using their tricycles to expand the limits of their bodies. As one disabled trader remarks in a documentary on the trade, “This tricycle that I used to go out has become [like] a car. I only buy tires. To say that I buy fuel would be a lie. It is for this reason we call it “tricycle without motor”⁷ (Kifouani 2009). For this trader, the tricycle serves as an extension of his legs in so far that he compares it to an automobile, but its utility surpasses such an expensive vehicle; without needing to invest in petrol, his profit margins increase along with his mobility.

In becoming “more able”, the extra mobility a *vélo* provides also gives the disabled the capacity to take their lives into their own hands. In *Mères Chefs*, Blanchard Mackosso, the general secretary of the Union Nationale des Handicapés du Congo, remarks that many projects that are aimed at integrating disabled fail to do so because they are often initiated without the opinion or participation of disabled persons:

People made programmes that they imposed on disabled persons and that failed because the disabled person wants to take part ... the disabled persons wants to be an actor, even in making decisions. They want that the decisions made are done so with their consent.⁸ (Haidara-Yoka 2009).

In contrast to other attempts at socially integrating the disabled into life in Kinshasa, the disabled trade has been successful for the precise reason that disabled are able to control it themselves. The technology of the *vélo* in conjunction with reliance on the *bac* for river transport gives them

⁶ « Avec ce vélo, tu fais des sorties, tu vas à Kinshasa, tu fais tout avec le même vélo. » My translation

⁷ « Ce vélo qui me servait à me promener est devenu une voiture. Je n'achète que des pneus. Dire que j'achète de l'essence serait un mensonge. C'est pour ça qu'on l'appelle « vélo sans moteur ». » My translation.

⁸ On a fait des programmes qu'on a imposé aux personnes handicapés et ça a échoué parce que la personne handicapé veut prendre part... la personne handicapé veut être acteur, même dans l'espèce des décisions. On veut que les décisions pris sont pris avec leur consentement. My translation.

access to their niche, giving them mobility, participation and control that they often will not find in programmes that are organised by outsiders.

A fragile niche

As has become clear, thanks to the technology of the *vélo* and the current infrastructure of the border, the disabled have more possibilities than other people. Their disability becomes invisible and they even become “more able” than able-bodied traders. Even with this advantage, however, crossing the border of the Congo River is dependent on firm infrastructure. The borderspace of the Beaches on either side of the river along with the ferry itself, are essential elements in the chain of disabled trade; when any of these elements ceases to exist, a link in the chain disappears and the trade the disabled rely on is menaced. When technology works, it is transparent, “absent”; however, it becomes an object only when a mechanical or social problem pushes it obtrusively in to the foreground. Indeed, technologies make the value chain function, but the dependency on it also makes the system fragile. Every element of the chain must be in place for the niche to function; a full chain is necessary to create the value of the merchandise sold.

As in every niche, several parts are menaced. A common everyday problem is the malfunctioning or breaking down of a *vélo*. When a trader’s *vélo* breaks, they lose their employment and it urgently requires repairing. Welding of broken parts is commonly done at Ngobila Beach. For the production of tricycles that are being used for the trade, use is made of expert welders, who are recruited from different parts of the city, but are usually not part of the rehabilitation centres.

Not only can a *vélo* break down, in the past the *bac* Matadi, the ferry that crosses the Congo and that is sometimes called the “cathedral of the disabled”, has frequently broken down or been taken out of circulation for other reasons, leaving physically disabled and others partly having to reorient their activities. The capacity of the *bac* is 120 tons and is able to take aboard more than a thousand people as well as several large vehicles; in periods when it is out of order it seriously diminishes contact between the cities and puts traders out of work, thus creating serious problems for travellers and their merchandise (cf. e.g. Anon 2008a). However, the Matadi has been in service at the Pool Malebo since 1973 and needs to be kept up regularly. It is rumoured that the the Matadi has but one functioning motor of the four that are installed; in this sense, it presents a danger for passengers. Normally, it takes 15 minutes to cross the River, when the *bac*

is not working well it can take up to half an hour (cf. e.g. Anon 2008a). Because of the frequent breakdowns, the Matadi was substituted for a smaller vessel named the Itumine in 2010. For the disabled and their large tricycles, however, the *bac* Matadi is important because of its much larger size than the Itumine.

In these situations, disabled have in the past resorted to smaller boats to cross the river, or organised their activities in a different way, sometimes giving rise to their image as *Mafioso*, individuals associated with mafia-like practices. In that respect, in the past the government hasn't been too hurried in up-keeping the *bac* or bringing it back into service quickly because they earn very little from it due to the ubiquitous presence of smuggling and fraud.

The breakdown of a *vélo* or the *bac* regularly constitutes a setback; the coming of the bridge however forms the greatest threat yet, possibly permanently disintegrating the niche they have built up over the decades. For the disabled it isn't difficult to understand why they dread the coming of the bridge. Given their limited mobility, the ferry that goes between the cities is an essential part of their niche, a form of integration ironically based on the obstacle of the river border. Without the technology of the *bac*, which is well adapted to wheelchairs, crossing by bridge will mean much more physical exertion for disabled to cross the border and more competition from able-bodied traders who are physically more capable of crossing several times a day. More importantly, disabled traders and others fear that small scale trading will diminish or disappear entirely. In building the bridge, they fear that ships that dock at Pointe Noire will transport goods from Brazzaville to Kinshasa directly by truck in large quantities rather than in small quantities by *bac*. In a documentary made by a French television station, two disabled comment on the situation:

At the moment, ships dock at Point Noire; how does this bridge serve the Congo, our country? What does it bring us? What do we win from this ? ... It doesn't help us, because with this bridge, will I have to go with my tricycle to Brazzaville?⁹ (Zajtman and Renaud 2010).

In considering plans for the bridge, developers have considered those with a precarious position who practice small scale commerce for sustenance. In considering women who rely on the informal sector, they note that "The small-scale traders who cross the river on a daily basis are

⁹ « Pour le moment comme les paquebots accostent à Point Noire, à quoi sert ce pont pour le Congo, notre pays ? Ca nous rapport quoi ? Ca nous fait gagner quoi ? ... ça nous arrange pas, parce qu'avec ce pont, est-ce que je serai obligé de partir avec mon tricycle à Brazzaville? » My translation.

objected to being hassled by the authorities, a situation exacerbated because of the lack of established procedures for the crossing and the practice of corruption and rights of passage.” (African Development Bank n.d.: 8).¹⁰ In this sense, they suggest that the bridge would be an improvement for them.

Concerning the disabled niche however, they write “This activity, however interesting as it is in terms of mitigation of the precarious position of vulnerable persons, doesn’t hide an institutionalised practice of customs fraud and illicit traffic. (African Development Bank n.d.: 8)¹¹ Thus, while recognising the disabled niche and their precarious social position in plans to build the bridge, developers focus on the fact that the disabled are involved in smuggling, suggesting that eradicating this practice would diminish smuggling, without suggesting an alternative form of sustenance for the disabled.

Disabled identity and the creation of legitimacy

While in a situation where their livelihood is constantly under threat, one way the traders react is by visibly embodying the technology of the *vélo* and socially asserting their position at the Beach through organisations such as UPHAD. Where in other cases where a “border” identity has emerged where borderlanders are under pressure (cf. e.g. Brambilla 2007; Flynn 1997; Richards 1996; Schmidt 1996), in this case the traders redefine and put forward a “disabled trader” identity. At the border, disabled insist that they want to trade rather than beg. In contrast to elsewhere in society, they make their disability visible, making the border into a place that accommodates “otherness” (Schmidt 1996) by establishing the identity and social role of disabled traders at the border.

When seated high on their products above the rest, their merchandise and power become evident. As a French documentary crew notes, “They enthrone themselves on their merchandise”¹² (Zajtman and Renaud 2010). They use their physical position here to exert their authority and command those who work with them. In contrast, those who are impaired in a less

¹⁰ « Les petits commerçants qui traversent quotidiennement le fleuve font l’objet de tracasseries par les forces de l’ordre, qui sont alimentées par le manque de procédures établies pour le passage et la pratique de la corruption et des passe-droits. » My translation.

¹¹ « Cette activité, pour intéressante qu’elle soit, en termes d’atténuation de la précarité de ces personnes vulnérables, n’en cache pas moins une pratique instituée de la fraude douanière et des trafics illicites. » My translation.

¹² « Ils trônent sur leur merchandise ». My translation.

visible way, such as the deaf, have much greater difficulty acquiring the rights that the physically impaired users of the tricycle receive. While polio patients and blind can use their prosthetics in a visible fashion, the deaf must make a show of their disability to be taken seriously (Timmerman 2010).

This has an influence on the perception of the surrounding persons; it also has an influence on the paralysed traders themselves. Disabled traders are much more confident towards others while seated on a fully charged *vélo* with helpers pushing them than they are without it. In *D'une rive à l'autre* for instance, we see Malu going through traffic with her son pushing her in a small wheelchair towards the Beach. The two of them seem small, weak and alone in the busy traffic around them. Someone almost collides with them and shouts "Watch where you're going, idiot"¹³; "Fuck off!"¹⁴ comes the reply from Malu's son (Kifouani 2009). The contrast with the images we see a moment later is immense: Malu and others are seated on large tricycles loaded with goods. Where her son was defending her and in control before, now it is she herself and other disabled negotiating with police and instructing their helpers.

However, they most often assert the legitimacy of their profession through union-like organisations such as UPHAD. These organisations defend the rights and the position of the disabled on the border. UPHAD mainly speaks for physically disabled traders; other organisations speak for deaf-dumb, blind, or female traders. In this social atmosphere where the traders have an ambiguous position, UPHAD and the other organisations work towards defending the disabled body politic, against threats like the coming bridge.

Through its overt presence at Ngobila Beach, UPHAD creates legitimacy: the organisation has a desk in front of the entrance to the border where disabled and their assistants pass by before travelling to Brazzaville. They are authorised to levy a contribution from every *passeur*, to issue recognised *laisser-passer* passes to assistants, to intervene with governmental officials, and even to organise court hearings in disputes involving a disabled trader. By becoming a member, the traders organise themselves and comply with certain regulations and obligations. In return, the system of social security they benefit from helps to negotiate and intermediate with the people and situations they come across.

¹³ « Regarde où tu vas, idiot. » My translation.

¹⁴ « Va te faire foutre! » My translation.

Preliminary conclusions

The role of certain technologies and circumstances in transborder trade is absolutely vital and raises the question of the influence of top-down regional integration on existing systems that function. In this sense, the project of the bridge is similar to other large scale projects implemented by the government that will affect regional integration, such as the Cité du Fleuve, a project where developers are building an island on the outskirts of Kinshasa for elite members of society. The island will be close to the international border and will function as a gated community, likely to draw wealthy residents of neighbouring countries who long for a better standard of life. Where la Cité du Fleuve will affect regional integration in attracting the higher echelons of several nationalities while physically separating rich and poor, the bridge risks to further alienate and possibly even eradicate small-scale traders between Kinshasa and Brazzaville. Indeed, the infrastructure of the border along with creative technological adaptations such as the *vélo* and social networks create a system through which procurement is possible and merchandise moved from one city to the other rises in value and can be sold at a profit on the other side. Because the infrastructure and technology necessary to support the niche is subject to fail at any moment, however, the competitive advantage of the disabled at the Beach remains extremely fragile. The niche in trade for the disabled is ironically based on the absence of a solid connection between the cities, with the coming of a bridge it is likely to disintegrate altogether. The disabled may thus have temporarily become a powerful figure at the border, when seated on their merchandise they are in control. However, they are not happy in this position that is simultaneously powerful and yet weak. As a trader remarks, “If I manage to create another activity, I will leave from here. My wish is to leave this occupation because there is no guarantee. If they close the passage, we [will] find ourselves once more with nothing.”¹⁵ (Kifouani 2009). Staying in the trade is concurrently a necessity and a gamble; when the technologies necessary for their niche fail, they will have to adapt to their situation once again.

¹⁵ « Si j'arrive à créer une autre activité, je partirai d'ici. Mon souhait c'est de quitter ce métier, parce qu'il n'y a pas d'assurance. Si on ferme ce passage, on se retrouve dans le néant. » My translation.

References

- African Development Bank 2008 'AfDB Grants US \$7.45 Million to DRC and Congo for Transport System Improvement Project Study' *African Development Bank Group*. Available at: <http://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/article/afdb-grants-us-7-45-million-to-drc-and-congo-for-transport-system-improvement-project-study-3384/>.
- African Development Bank 'Multinational: Democratic Republic of Congo - Republic of Congo: Proposal for a Grant of UA5 Million to Finance the Study of the Road-Rail Bridge Between Kinshasa and Brazzaville and the Kinshasa-Ilebo Railroad' . Available at: www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/30769748-EN-MULTINATIONAL-EUDE-PONT-RAIL.PDF.
- Anon 2009 'Atta-Mensah : « Le pont route rail Kinshasa-Brazzaville ne nuirait pas aux recettes de la RDC »' *Radio Okapi*. Available at: <http://radiookapi.net/sans-categorie/2009/11/13/atta-mensah-%c2%ab-le-pont-route-rail-kinshasa-brazzaville-ne-nuirait-pas-aux-recettes-de-la-rdc-%c2%bb-2/> [Accessed: 18 May 2012].
- Anon 2008a 'Beach Ngobila: Retrait du grand bac Matadi de la navigation' *Le Potentiel*. Available at: http://www.lepotentiel.com/afficher_article.php?id_edition=&id_article=59108.
- Anon 2005 'Congo-Kinshasa: EU's Plan for Congo River Bridge Hits an Obstacle' *SouthScan (London)*. Available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200511020631.html> [Accessed: 17 May 2012].
- Anon 2011 'Pont Kinshasa-Brazzaville: 7 millions USD de la BAD pour financer l'étude de faisabilité' *Radio Okapi*. Available at: <http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2011/09/16/pont-kinshasa-brazzaville-7-millions-usd-de-la-bad-pour-financer-1%e2%80%99etude-de-faisabilite/> [Accessed: 29 January 2012].
- Anon 2008b 'The Bank is driving the African continent forward through financing of regional Transport and Energy infrastructure programs' *African Development Bank Group*. Available at: <http://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/article/afdb-grants-us-7-45-million-to-drc-and-congo-for-transport-system-improvement-project-study-3384/>.
- Brambilla, C. 2007 'Borders and identities/border identities: The Angola-Namibia border and the plurivocality of the Kwanyama identity' *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 22(2): 21–38.
- Flynn, D.K. 1997 '“We are the border”: identity, exchange, and the state along the Bénin-Nigeria border' *American Ethnologist* 24(2): 311–330.

- Gampaka, E. 2011 'Plus de 5 millions U.S.\$ pour relier Brazzaville et Kinshasa' *Africa Info*. Available at: <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201110050553.html>.
- Gondola, C.D. 1997 *Villes Miroirs*. Editions l'Harmattan.
- Haidara-Yoka, C. 2009 *Mères Chefs*. l'Association congolaise de livraison entre les artistes et la production (CLAP).
- Herderschee, H., Kaiser, K.-A., Mukoko Samba, D. & World Bank 2012 'Unlocking the Infrastructure Challenge: Current Status of Major Infrastructure Sectors' in *Resilience of an African giant : boosting growth and development in the Democratic Republic of Congo* Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Isik, G. 2011 'Unlocking the Kinshasa-Brazzaville Bottleneck' *blogs.worldbank.org*. Available at: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/unlocking-the-kinshasa-brazzaville-bottleneck> [Accessed: 18 May 2012].
- Kambale, J. 2009 'Congos to tighten ties with a bridge' *Daily Nation*. Available at: <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/623030/-/138shqlz/-/index.html>.
- Kanzi, P. 2009 'Le projet pont, route, rail Kinshasa-Brazzaville au centre d'un débat' *Groupe L'Avenir*. Available at: <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/623030/-/138shqlz/-/index.html>.
- Kifouani, D. 2009 *D'une rive à l'autre*. Les Films de l'Atelier, La SMAC.
- Lubindi, D. 2011 'Le Pont Kinshasa-Brazzaville, nous le maudissons' *Groupe L'Avenir*. Available at: <http://www.groupelevenir.cd/spip.php?article41050>.
- Porter, M.E. 1985 *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*. 1st ed. Free Press.
- Richards, P. 1996 'The Sierra Leone - Liberia Boundary Wilderness: Rain Forests, Diamonds, and War' in P. Nugent & A. I. Asiwaju (eds) 205–221. London: Pinter.
- Schmidt, H. 1996 'Love and Healing in Forced Communities: Borderlands in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation' in P. Nugent & A. I. Asiwaju (eds) 183–204. London: Pinter.
- Timmerman, K. 2010 'Cross-border trade by deaf people in the context of Kinshasa's deaf-scapes' in Basel, Switzerland.
- Wrong, M. 2002 *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Zajtman, A. & Renaud, M. 2010 'Handicapés et rois du commerce' . Available at: <http://www.france24.com/fr/20100120-handicap-s-rois-commerce>.

WHERE HAVE THE *JUULA* GONE?
BORDER REGIMES AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION
IN A WEST AFRICAN MUSLIM TRADE DIASPORA

- *Draft: please do not cite or circulate without permission* -

Paolo Gaibazzi

Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin

Email: paolo.gaibazzi@gmail.com

Abstract

This contribution focuses on Muslim traders from the Upper River Gambia valley and the ways in which their migrations are entangled with institutional projects of regional formation. In precolonial times, Muslim traders known as *juula* and their settlements along trading routes constituted a major force of economic, political and socio-cultural integration between the Gambia and Senegal river valleys. The *juula* remained key actors of regional integration after the onslaught of colonization and the creation of national boundaries; however, the progressive marginalization of indigenous traders in the colonial economy greatly affected this dynamic integration ‘from below’. Postcolonial (economic) policies of cross-border cooperation (e.g. ECOWAS, Gambia’s re-export trade policies) have also contributed to transforming the position and function of long-standing trading communities in the Upper River borderland. The *juula* have withdrawn from the socio-commercial networks currently spanning the Senegalo-Gambian borderland; at the same time, by extending their trading ventures across ECOWAS countries and beyond, they have simultaneously become key economic actors in West Africa, thus integrating the Upper River in the wider regional economy. Other border regimes have become relevant to them and help, in contradictory ways, in conferring on the current *juula* a role in regional formation. The paper shows that an analysis of this contrasting outcomes of the interaction between Upper River traders’ long-term strategies and policies of regional cooperation cannot be sufficiently understood within a simple dichotomy between integration ‘from below’ and ‘from above’. The paper argues for a scalar approach to the study of economic actors, states and markets in the (un)making of regional (dis)integration, thus showing the multiple trajectories and configurations that processes integration may yield.

In precolonial Senegambia and Western Sahel, Muslim trading diasporas – the *juula* – constituted one of the main actors of what we might call today ‘regional integration’ (Curtin 1975; Barry 1988; cf. Lambert 1994). The *juula* organized and ran caravans transporting salt, cattle, textiles and other goods between the fringes of the Sahara and the forest areas, and between the interior of the region and the coast. Most commercial hubs in this region had neighbourhoods where traders and scholars would live and carried out their transaction (Levtzion and Fisher 1987). These nodes were linked by extensive networks built on, while also criss-crossing, ethnic, kinship, and regional ties (Curtin 1975:68-75). The Muslim faith, which was a preserve of the merchant elites until the late nineteenth century, provided legal institutions to conduct transactions and constituted a powerful idiom to construct a shared sense of belonging. Thanks to the long-lived institution of hospitality, traders and caravan leaders were able to travel long distances and enjoy protection as well as useful linkages to local markets (Amselle 1977). In the nineteenth century, Muslim traders used like cowry shells and particular kinds of cloth as special purpose moneys, and integrated European textiles in their currency system. In addition to contributing to religious, commercial, and financial integration of the area in question, prominent Muslims often acted as diplomatic agents. Although merchants rarely achieved political office – usually controlled by warrior clans that were either pagan or Muslims whose conduct merchants deemed too lax – their itinerant activity and extensive network of contacts made them crucial agents in international politics, including between European and African leaders. Indeed, the Atlantic slave trade was substantially grafted on such social infrastructure, and polarized it towards the coast.

Indigenous trade would, however, decline under colonial rule. Since the end of the 19th century, the colonial administrations supported the interests of European firms, paving the way for a more capillary penetration of African markets (Mbodji 1992). Thus, the history of the *jula* is usually described as one of progressive and inexorable disappearance, fragmentation or marginalization. Muslim traders on the whole lost regulatory power over commercial networks and institutions, and were forced to a dependent position in the capitalist market. Certainly, Abner Cohen’s (1969) and Jean-Loup Amselle’s (1977) famous ethnographies show that indigenous West African Muslim traders continued to play a role in long-distance commerce until past decolonization. Nevertheless, some scholars, especially those writing along the lines of dependency theory, decreed the imminent decline, subordination or radical transformation these traders vis-à-vis the bureaucratic state and the international capitalist market (see esp. Meillassoux 1971). Thus, where have the *juula* gone?

Have the politico-economic functions, social networks, cultural practices and religious institutions that contributed so much to regional integration in Senegambia and Western Sahel been dismantled?

In this paper, I try to reconstruct less visible transformations of one network and node of the *juula* in Senegambia, namely the commercial families and settlements in the Upper Gambia River Valley. In particular, I will focus on Soninke-speaking communities on the southern banks of the Upper River and their expatriates. Usually known as Serahuli in the Gambia, Soninke speakers founded their villages as commercial, clerical and agricultural centres at the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century. As this period coincided with colonial conquest, the formation of states, and the expansion of commercial agriculture (peanut) and European commerce related to it, the Upper River Soninke villages represent a strategic site for understanding how actors once central to regional formation responded to the changing political economy, in the colonial period as well as after it. I will argue that although the Soninke *juula* had limited control over the markets and marketing networks in colonial Upper Gambia, they survived in commercial niches at the margins of such markets (see also Mbodji 1992). Rather than disappearing, however, indigenous trade networks branched out and globalised after World War II, progressively integrating with worldwide circuits of labour and commercial mobility.

One of the sectors in which *juula* traders along the Gambia river reproduced their strategies in the early twentieth century was cross-border trade. Not only did the smallness of the country facilitate exchanges across state borders, but also many Soninke communities happened to be founded in their proximity. They thus integrated smuggling into both long- and short-distance commercial trade. However, as migrants later transferred their commercial bases to other countries, regional networks became looser and less economically significant. Other networks and actors dominated the thriving cross-border trade that resurged in the Upper River from the 1970s onwards. And other borders other than the Senegal-Gambia one became important for the subsequent generations of Soninke traders, especially for those heading to countries with restrictive entry conditions.

By tracing the spatial transformations of Soninke commercial migration, this paper brings to surface the role of border politics in reconfiguring regional spaces. As both regulatory apparatuses and social constructs (Donnan and Wilson 1999), borders affected the ways Muslim traders moved, constructed their bases and perceived themselves in space. At the same time, merchants exploited the marketing differentials created through and at borders in order to maintain their networks and created spaces of economic and human circulation

transcending them. This interplay between different actors involved in making place should not be seen as dialectics between polar opposites, such as ‘regionalisation from below’ vs. ‘regionalisation from above’ (cf. Söderbaum and Taylor 2010). Much as the binary formal/informal is inappropriate to analyze how traders actually conduct business on the ground, so the below/above dichotomy does not capture the multiple scales of interactions between actors situated in different positions in physical, political and economic space (Howard and Shain 2005:12; Caglar 2006). In what follows, I therefore try to disentangle dynamics of place-making (Gupta and Ferguson 1997) between traders and borders throughout the twentieth century. I will end the paper with some reflections on the current conjunctions and disjunctions in the institutional processes of regionalization (e.g. ECOWAS) vis-à-vis transnational spaces of West African Muslim trade.

Regional Trade and Traders (ca. 1850 – 1945)

The Serahuli or Soninke of the Gambian Upper River Region (URR) mostly come from commercial-clerical communities¹ in Bundu (Curtin 1975:68), the region in today’s Senegal between the upper Gambia and Senegal valleys. These villages were on a busy commercial route, and acted as a logistical base for home-grown as well as other traders from the region. As a consequence of political turmoil, the Soninke started to move toward the Gambia valley in the second half of the 19th century. Arrivals from Bundu and from further east continued through to the first half of the 20th century. In addition to seeking security, migrants were attracted by the booming commercial groundnut sector (Swindell and Jeng 2006:chapter 2). The Soninke thus reconstituted their commercial-clerical (and –farming) villagers in the URR, particularly on the southern banks, which were a relatively unpopulated area suitable for settlement and commercial groundnut cultivation. My fieldwork was conducted in Sabi, a Gambian border village on the main road between Basse Santa Su (the regional capital of the URR) and Vélingara (the capital of the homonymous *département*).

As far as trade was concerned, the Soninke retained control of some trading networks even after the colonial takeover (1901). Upper River traders ranged from the upper Senegal valley and Mali to Guinea-Bissau and Futa Jallon (Guinea Conakry). Although manufactured textiles from Europe flooded the local markets, some kinds of hand-made cloth were cheaper

¹ Trade and Islam have been intimately linked in this region of Africa. In trading families, while clerics cultivated a scholarly tradition in the community, some of their family members usually undertook the commercial career (Levtzion 1987).

than European manufactures, while some types of prestigious tie-dye textiles produced in Gidimaxa and Gajaaga (upper Senegal river valley) were prestige items used for ceremonial dressing (Clark 1999:71-2). The latter were known by Gambian Soninke as *Xay yiramu* (wrappers or cloths of Kayes, a city in the Malian Senegal valley)². Malian cloth was resold in Gambia, in the central and lower valleys. Guinea Bissau constituted another important marketplace for Malian cloth. Traders also travelled south to Futa Jallon, particularly to Labe and Kindia, where a similar kind of cloth (*kindia*) could be found³. Finally, raw cloth was also imported and dyed in Soninke towns⁴.

As ancient as the cloth trade, gold was mined in Mali and brought by traders to the Gambian valley. It was originally extracted at the historical sites of Banbuxu and Bure, and resold as either powder or artefacts in Gajaaga. Both Gajaaga Soninke and Gambian Soninke were involved in the gold trade along the Mali-Gambia trade route⁵. Gold was a prestige item in Gambian society, and the growing Soninke population fuelled the demand for it. Gold earrings were particularly popular among Soninke women: it seems that, as women advanced in age, the size and number of their earrings increased. Earrings were a display accessory used in ceremonies and important occasions⁶. Buying gold earrings, and gold in general, was also a form of savings for Gambian women (Shipton 1995).

Livestock represented another form of investment and an item of trade. As the internal slave trade and domestic slavery were progressively abolished and disrupted during the first half of the twentieth century, slaves as capital were gradually substituted by other forms of investment and savings such as cattle (Swindell and Jeng 2006:123). In addition to cloth, cattle could be bought along the route to Futa Jallon. Cows were not only bought for personal property but were also imported and resold to Gambians willing to convert their peanut sales into livestock wealth⁷.

The establishment of national borders created constraints as well as opportunities for traders (cf. Nugent and Asiwaju 1996). In the last decade of the 19th century the Anglo-French

² Despite the name Kayes, the cloth was manufactured in greater quantities in Gajaaga; however, as colonisation established an administrative centre and important market in Kayes, traders probably began to supply at the very city (cf. Clark 1999).

³ Interview with Sixu Konte, 14 January 2008, Sabi.

⁴ Roche (1985:314) mentions that *jula* traders imported raw cotton (*yirandora*, or *sorre*) to Gambisara where it was dyed. A 1901 British report mentions that Numuyell (Fuladu East) was renowned for its dyed cloths (Gambia National Archive (GNA) NGR 1/16 Annual Report 1901, in P.D Gamble's file 'The Serahuli').

⁵ Interview with Fode Kaira, 25 February 2008, Sabi; Kumba Silla, 17 January 2008, Sabi.

⁶ Interview with Bakoyo and Omar Suso, 16 October 2006, Serekunda.

⁷ Interview with Musa Mariko, 31 January 2008, Sabi.

Boundary Commission began to trace the border between Senegal and Gambia. In 1901 the URR was annexed to the Gambian Protectorate, while the Haute Casamance (today's region of Kolda) had been already conquered by the French⁸ (Roche 1985). This did stop the southward moving agricultural frontier, which by the mid-20th century gave rise to other Soninke communities on the Senegalese side of the borderland. Indeed, farmers took advantage of price and marketing differentials on the two sides on the border and smuggling produce. Local smuggling of European goods was also a widespread. Farming groundnuts provided an opportunity to enter trade from scratch, for early farmers as well as for 20th century Soninke ones. In 1946, an Agricultural officer visiting Koina (the easternmost Gambian village) wrote "Trading is carried on in any commodity in demand in French territory and groundnuts are sold as soon as the trade season opens in order to obtain cash to buy such commodities"⁹.

The smuggling of European goods was integrated into longer-distance trading networks¹⁰. Far from solely being a contestation of the colonial political and territorial order, smuggling involved networking with key actors in the state. For instance, in the first part of the colonial period, gunpowder was distributed to the population to deal with bush game as well as dangerous animals, such as hyenas, when venturing into forested areas to clear new land. Thanks to their political and matrimonial connections with district chiefs, who were probably stakeholders in the business, Soninke traders were able to acquire a surplus of gunpowder which they could easily smuggle into Casamance and Guinea Bissau, along with Malian cloth. They would return with different kinds of imported and indigenous tobacco. Guinean tobacco was also appreciated in Mali, for Malians apparently exchanged it in matrimonial transactions. Thus, traders would not go to Mali and Gajaaga empty handed. Peppermints and other European candies imported into Gambian wharf towns were also carried as commodities to the east. Malians appreciated peppermints, and some reportedly used strong peppermints as a decongesting medicine for the chest¹¹. The advent of rail transport along the Dakar-Bamako line (1924), which had a stop at Tambacounda, must have

⁸ There were some litigations concerning villages such as Gambisara Lamoi, and definitive boundaries were actually agreed only in 1904 (see Archives Nationales du Senegal, 1.F.26, Délimitation de la Frontière Gambie-Sénégal: Litige du village de Gambisara).

⁹ GNA NGR1/16 Letter No. UP/1/46 from Agricultural officer, Georgetown, to S.A.O., D.P. Gamble's file 'The Serahuli'.

¹⁰ Information for this paragraph relies mainly on: Bakoyo and Omar Suso, 16 October 2006, Serekunda; Kumba Silla, 13 November 2007, Sabi.

¹¹ This observation reported by Omar Suso may have some foundation if compared with today's Gambia. Peppermints are still very popular in Gambia, and widely used for coughs and colds, together with mentholated balm.

transformed the organization of trade between Mali and Gambia. The railway probably eased the journey for traders, but in the long run it led to scaling up the organization of commerce in European goods to the detriment of small-medium and indigenous traders (cf. Lambert 1993:40-3).

The integration between long-distance and cross-border trade during the colonial period shows that Muslim traders did not succumb to colonial capitalism. On the other hand, the agency of such traders should not be overemphasised. Borders were not simply lines on the ground that often failed to regulate fluxes of people and goods. They were also political technologies in a wider scheme of reconfiguration of the political economy. While both colonial administrators and European merchants were certainly not happy to see peanuts (cash crops) crossing the border to Senegal, commercial agents in riverside outposts were probably less concerned with the fact that farmers used the earnings from such sales to buy goods from the traders and smuggle them across the border. Indeed, the delimitation of meagre strips of land along the river was enough for the British to secure control over river-side commercial outposts and thus pave the way for the penetration of European merchant capital into the regional markets. Through a system of licences and financial facilities, the colonial administration facilitated European companies and Lebanese traders, whom were relied upon as intermediaries (Barrett 1988; Mbodji 1992). Progressively, the *juula* lost control over the market, and were forced to what Mohamed Mbodji (1992) called a *frontière syncopée* of market opportunities.

Mbodji (1992:223-4) further showed that the marginalization of indigenous traders continued after World War II and for much of the first two decades after independence (1965). During this time, the state centralized the marketing structure. While many European companies pulled out of the country, thus leaving room for other actors to step in, the state reinforced monopolies on strategic goods and services. Decolonization was an opportunity for some of the *juula* traders who had sent their children to colonial schools, for they were sometimes able to place their children in strategic positions in the state. However, most of the commercial apparatus fell onto the hands of the urban elites that had dominated the civil service in colonial times and of the cliques of businessmen linked to the latter (Lambert 1994).

Going Global

Though progressively forced out of business, the *juula* did not disappear. Not only did they maintain control over the aforementioned sectors of the market, but also diversified their activities and networks. Mobility played an important role in their strategies. After World War II, traders began to migrate further afield and pioneered new routes. In the 1950s, a 'diamond rush' drew a number of well-established traders and first-time migrants to Sierra Leone, and subsequently to diamond areas in neighbouring countries as well as in Central Africa. Many Soninke have prospered in the diamond trade, where they acted mainly as middle men in a complex networks connecting different African countries to Europe and the Near East (Bredeloup 2007). In parallel to the diamond trade, Soninke traders have also entered the African art trade, especially in Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria (cf. Steiner 1994), and eventually found their way to the US markets (cf. Stoller 2002).

It is possible that experience in cross-border trade (dealing with controls, police, etc.) in Upper Gambia was probably instrumental to the development of migratory networks. What is sure is that in the subsequent decades trading networks, and with them cross-border smuggling activities, in which the Soninke were involved greatly developed. This is especially evident in the diamond sector, where smuggling takes on a transnational scale, and where West African traders often act both as stake-holders and carriers (see Bredeloup 2007). With a flight connection to Brussels (and hence to Antwerp) and many Gambian *diamantaires* scattered throughout West and Central Africa, Gambia is today a node of this international network.

While the Soninke have been very engaged in transnational and transborder trade across the continent, their involvement in commercial activities in the upper Gambia-Senegal borderlands has decreased. In the late 1960s, few Soninke were still travelling along the usual regional routes. The sons of prominent regional traders had gone to other places like Sierra Leone and Congo. Some goods like Malian cloths are still traded today by Upper River villagers and Malians alike, but this is a very marginal sector. The Soninke who still work in the cloth trade are today importers and wholesalers of second-hand clothes from Europe and North America or of cheap manufactures from Asia in many commercial port cities in West, Central and Southern Africa (especially: Accra, Lomé, Cotonou, Luanda), including Banjul, the capital of the Gambia.

Paradoxically, cross-border border trade in the URR has not waned. It has actually increased. As a way of diversifying the economy, in the 1970s the government began to turn

the small size of the country into an advantage, dreaming of transforming it into the 'Singapore of Africa' (Sall and Sallah 1994:128). Rice, sugar, textiles, tomato paste and other goods imported at low tariffs were thus re-exported to Senegal and the countries of the interior lacking seaports or keeping customs high to protect their industry. The re-export trade has not been a state monopoly (especially after structural adjustment), thus leaving room for African traders (Golub and Mbaye 2009). Still, the major stakeholders belong to a restricted circle of Banjul-based importers with sufficient capital and connections with the government. Then comes a network of Mauritanian wholesalers and traders, and of Senegalese trader-transporters who distribute goods to the region (Lambert 1994:85-7). Thanks to the capital accumulated abroad, some Soninke returnees have managed to become prominent importers in Banjul, but the Soninke do not control the transport and commercial networks linking the coast with the Upper River Region.

In the 1980s, the re-export trade further expanded. Under the aegis of the Senegambian confederation, which lasted from 1982 to 1989, border cooperation was improved. But it was above all structural reforms that, by revising customs and commercial rules, boosted trade in and across Gambia (Sall and Sallah 1994:127-31). At the local level, this meant that the Basse-Velingara road next to Sabi became much trafficked with trucks heading to the Kolda region and to Guinea-Conakry. The opposite direction became an important commercial route as well. About halfway between Velingara and Kolda, the town of Diao Be has become the main regional market for agricultural produce (especially from Guinea-Conakry) and semi-processed products (palm oil, dried fish, etc.). Wholesale and retail traders come to Diao Be from major urban centres, including Dakar (Fanchette 2001). Basse is an important logistical node of these commercial networks. The town has once again become a bustling commercial centre that has attracted Guinean skilled and unskilled workers, as well as traders from Mauritania and even others from further away, such as the Nigerians, who sell spare parts for vehicles.

While many trucks thus plough through the Basse-Velingara road, very few stop in Sabi. Here, the effects of the re-export trade have been limited. This is not to say that cross-border trade has been insignificant. At the end of the 1970s, a weekly market (*lumo*) and market place was established in Sabi. Weekly markets at border towns are important nodes of the marketing system while the state controlled commerce was rolled back under neoliberal restructuring (Fanchette 2001). The *lumo* supplies goods to rural districts and represent places where goods from trucks are divided into smaller loads and smuggled across the border (Lambert 1994:235). In the 1980s, some Sabinko successfully ran stores in Sabi, sometimes

with the financial help of migrant relatives. Many Fulani men could be seen by these stores in the evening hours, waiting with their bicycles for darkness in order to venture so Senegal along bush paths. However, while the Fula have continued to ride and smuggle goods along such bush tracks, most store owners have by now retired. Credit problems and redistributive pressures caused by declining rural incomes have discouraged them out of business. In addition, when in 1989 Senegal and Mauritania clashed and reprisals on Mauritanian stores ensued, some traders came to Gambia. As there was competition in the village than in Basse, some have eventually come to border villages. Guinean migrants have also come in numbers to Sabi to open retail stores, bakeries and mechanical workshops.

Meanwhile, Soninke importers based in Banjul have preferred to diversify their businesses or to decrease the portion of capital invested in commercial sectors (rice, sugar, tomato paste, etc.) associated with the re-export trade. Many of them complained to me that business is not as good as before¹². In 1994, a 50% devaluation of the Franc CFA suddenly made goods priced in Gambian Dalasi more expensive to buy for traders coming from Senegal. In the same year, the military coup scared some traders out of business, especially those who had cultivated some linkages with the former government. The new government also mismanaged some border and marketing issues during the second half of the 1990s, something which had negative effects on the re-export trade and further contributed to traders' disinvestment. Most important of all, countries like Senegal that used to have protectionist policies became free market economies in the 1990s under the pressure of the IMF and the World Bank. This has made goods imported through Dakar much more competitive to the detriment of the Gambia (Sall and Sallah 1994:134).

In sum, over the past half-century the geography of Soninke trade has undergone significant change, with networks growing global while at the same time disappearing from the Upper River. Formerly crucial commercial nodes of the region, Upper River *juula* villages are today only local markets or transit stations of a trans-border trade which few villagers control and benefit from, except as landlords of the stores run by immigrants. New nodes have emerged in the region and new actors have taken over the commercial networks that have developed in it the period of structural adjustment and liberalization of the economy.

¹² Musa Njay, 6 December 2006, Serekunda.

Borders, Migrant Transnationalism and Regional Formations

Soninke traders' disinvestment from regional commercial networks appears to underscore the thesis that the *juula* have indeed lost their role as actors of regionalisation. On the other hand, the complex spatial reconfigurations of migrant merchant networks demands greater heed be paid to regions or spaces whose form does not necessarily correspond to the geographical constructs to which we are accustomed to referring in order to describe trans-state regional formations in this part of West Africa (e.g. lower Senegambia, Upper Guinea, etc.). This is not to say that such labels are not useful to describe realities on the ground; rather, these socio-spatial realities are also overlaid with formations whose vital nodes and networks are not easily contained within the physical and political geographies we know. In particular, I would like to draw attention to the transnational spaces which Upper River dwellers and migrants, and especially Soninke traders.

Since the early 1990s, studies of migrant transnationalism have helped overcome the methodological limitations that constrained social analysis within units coterminous with nation-state territories (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003). By emphasising movement and movers that transcend boundaries, the transnational approach brought into focus the formations and fields of interaction in which migrants and stay-at-homes, rather than multinational corporations and international organizations, connect distant locations and contribute to social change (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Some variants of this approach have gone as far as glorifying the migrant as an agent of a globalization or transnationalism from below, thus risking to overlook widening power inequalities in the world and the growing curtailment and securitization of mobility that excludes from international mobility so many citizens in the global south (Cunningham 2004). A perspective on border regimes and bordering practices is, in this respect, a necessary complement to a *trans*-border framework. In this respect, West African Muslims involved in trade diasporas are simultaneously active players and outsiders of economic globalisation. Transformed and marginalised under colonialism, in the aftermath of neoliberal reforms, African trade has resurged again (Meagher 2005; Golub and Mbaye 2009). As we have seen, Muslim traders have responded to globalisation through integration with worldwide commercial circuits, which include labour migrants in Europe and North America activating commercial linkages with their home countries. At the same time, traders' mobility strategies are increasingly hampered by the consolidation of a global visa regime of mobility (Salter

2006). Over the last decade border security in West Africa has been heavily reinforced, with the EU assuming an active role in controlling and preventing North-bound migrations (Streiff-Fenart and Kabwe-Segatti 2012).

Since I am interested in the interaction between Muslim trade diasporas, border regimes and regionalization, I will especially, though not exclusively, focus on 'West Africa' as a referent of discourses on regionalism. Although I never visited the expatriate communities of Gambians in West Africa I shall describe, I base my analysis on interviews with numerous migrants I encountered in 2006-8 during their return or temporary visits to the Gambia. What is more, I also base my analysis on the spatial imaginations that would-be migrants convey by talking about their plans of emigration, the transit places they would go to in order to find business opportunities or travel documents, and the people who would assist them in their undertaking.

ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) plays an important, if counter-intuitive, role in the political economy of transnational migration. Compared to the past, commercial migration to West Africa has lost its appeal. This is due to political instability and economic downturn in the 1990s, which led many Soninke traders based in West African countries to either return to Gambia or advise and support their sons to leave for the US and Western Europe instead of joining their enterprises. In parallel, competition and the saturation of the market have made entry into business more selective and capital intensive for young traders. The networks constructed by migrants over five decades of commercial migration in West Africa are, nonetheless, crucial to the migrant economy of the Soninke and some other Gambians. Some senior Soninke and other Muslim traders are still major players in the commercial sector in Accra, Lome and Cotonou, and have very good linkages with political authorities as well as with intermediaries specialized in bureaucratic matters. This is a crucial resource for would-be migrants. Since only the UK and the US embassies can be found on Gambian territory, aspirant migrants must go elsewhere to look for a visa. In addition, it is crucial that aspirant migrants follow the rumours about the geography of travel bureaucracy. For instance, a young man might learn that the US embassy in Ghana being more flexible than that in Gambia, and thus decide to go to Accra in order to file his application there. Since ECOWAS is a visa-free area for its citizens, aspirant migrants can easily reach their transit place¹³. In addition to accessing informal networks, relying on the hospitality of such landlords allows them to keep costs down while waiting for outcome of the

¹³ It is true that ECOWAS conventions do not always translate into practice on the ground. Stranger might for example suffer from police harassment. However, they can rely on well-established landlords for protection.

visa application, which is often a lengthy and tortuous process. Moreover, in order to occupy productively their time, the applicants might borrow merchandise or money from their landlord or from their peers and start doing petty business on the side. Eventually, many fail to obtain a visa and return home or move on to another destination; but some might succeed as traders and revise their original plans of migration.

The Gambian state has had an ambivalent approach to its diaspora. Mostly, it has been unable to adapt to the diasporic reconfiguration of its nation. In contrast to neighbouring Senegal, high-level initiatives to cater for expatriate constituencies have been limited and the relations between the diaspora and the homeland government have often been tense. This is especially true of the educated professionals in the US and Western Europe, who have been very critical of the Jammeh regime and its abuses of human rights and democratic rule. On their part, Upper River merchants operating in transnational spaces have had a more cautious attitude. Many, especially among the Soninke, seem to have adhered faithfully to the old rule of avoidance of political offices prevailing among the *juula*. Most wealthy businessmen are satisfied to lend support to the government of the day to avoid troubles, but also without becoming too involved with the moral economy of state patronage.

Notwithstanding their relative autonomy, there have been various forms of exchange between diasporan traders and government officials. Although the principal two monographs dedicated to Gambia's foreign policy do not mention the role of the diaspora (Denton Eyatunde 1998; Touray 2000), my interviews with prominent merchants reveal that informal relations and flows of money have played an important part in electoral politics during decolonization and the First Republic (1965-1994). This trend seems to continue today. In 2008, some informants drew my attention to the fact that numerous honorary councillors of the Gambia in West African countries (and the rest of the world) were prominent traders (especially of Soninke ethnicity). As it emerged from my interview with the then councillor in Ghana, Oussenu Yafa, diasporic communities often played an active role in the process by lobbying the Gambian government for it to appoint a representative. The powers of honorary councillors are limited compared to a fully-fledged Embassy (even though one cannot underestimate the advantages that a diplomatic passport accrues to someone whose profession is transnational commerce). One is nonetheless struck by the fact that the Gambia has decided to graft part of its diplomatic service on informal networks and charismatic authorities (traders/lodgers) based on principles and logics historically founded on the modes of organization of long-distance Muslim trade.

In addition to political and institutional functions, it is worth pointing out that Muslim trade diaspora have a role in creating social integration across West Africa. In the literature on West African Muslim diasporas, traders are often represented as a segregated community. This has historical validity. Used to coping with hostile situations in the receiving context, as strangers Muslim traders have learned to maintain close inner ties, secrecy and unity vis-à-vis practices of discrimination (Whitehouse 2009). In many cities of coastal and tropical West Africa, Muslims lived in separate neighbourhoods. In addition, the traders often have an interest to maintain religious and cultural distinction in order to maintain their monopoly of certain sectors of the market (e.g. Cohen 1969). However, the image of the segregated, inward looking Muslim trade diaspora often prevailing in the literature should not be overemphasised. Muslim traders involved in export-oriented business such as the diamond and the African art trade do not have a monopoly. Rather, conducting transactions implies a good deal of cultural knowledge about customers' or intermediaries' customs, languages and religious orientations (Bredeloup 2007). In Gambia's Upper River, virtually all Soninke villagers stressed that living abroad is certainly dangerous, but it also enriching. One is often struck by the quantity of languages spoken in such villages, which are thought to be remote and backward places by many Gambian urbanites. Far from being an ideological statement, this cosmopolitan attitude has had visible social effects. It is not uncommon that migrants (men) marry a woman of the place. In the village where I was based, there were a number of women from Sierra Leone who fled the conflict (1992-2002) and took refuge in their husband's village. Many villagers, whether or not they were married to a local, thought of Sierra Leone as a second home. Speaking of regional integration, when the Gambia welcomed thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees during the 1990s, the families of migrants provided support. Some Sierra Leoneans found accommodation and work in the houses and firms managed by former Gambian *diamantaires* who had lived in Sierra Leone and spoke fluent Creole.

Muslim traders have also had an important role in the formation of moral and religious spaces. This is not the place to analyze the complexities of Islamic change in the Gambia valley and in West Africa at large. Nevertheless, one should mention that Muslim migrant networks have created and have been created by linkages and currents of Islamic thought. Despite the wane of indigenous trade in West Africa, Islam has continued to be a fundamental component of the identity as well as of the everyday conduct of traders in the diaspora. First, Islamic specialists (the so-called marabouts) have circulated between homeland and diaspora, including in European and American destination. Second, shared Muslim faith has been the

basis for consolidating linkages with Muslim migrants from countries other than the Gambia. Indeed, in Sierra Leone some migrants married not autochthones but children of Malian, Mauritanian and Guinean parents. Third, circulation of people and ideas, on the one hand, and encounters with other Muslims, on the other, have favoured the spread of so-called reformist ideas since the 1960s. Currents of Islamic thought and practice associated with the Middle East have found fertile ground in diasporic contexts, in West and Central Africa as well as in some European contexts (see also Riailand 1998; Timera 2001; Soares 2005:188-9; Janson 2011; Whitehouse 2012). Wealthy businessmen have also enabled some of their sons and daughters to undertake Islamic studies at high school and university level in the West Africa as well as in the Middle East. Migrants inspired by new forms of Islam and educated youths have subsequently become proselytisers in the Gambia. New mosques have been built, Islamic schools and centres opened, and audio and written material circulated. In this way, migrants have arguably contributed to the production of a global *'umma* transcending boundaries between states and communities.

Concluding Remarks

It is not possible to describe the past and current spatial configurations of the heirs of the *juula* by making exclusive reference to the territorial units in which these Muslim traders operated in the past, namely Senegambia and Western Sahel. If by regions we mean areas as they were socially composed prior to the drawing colonial state borders, the *juula* have, arguably, disappeared as actors of regionalization. Other actors and networks, often disconnected from the *juula* past, have replaced them and proliferated in the aftermath of economic globalization and structural adjustment. However, what has endured time in the Muslim trading communities is less the spatial fixes of their past activities than their capacity to spatially reconfigure such activities, their social institutions and social ties. By focusing on Soninke-speaking milieus in the Upper River of the Gambia, I have shown that traders have responded to opportunities and constraints by globalizing their networks and diversifying their activities, while simultaneously pulling out of the regional commerce in which they thrived prior to re-diasporization.

It is not simply the scale of Muslim trade that has changed. Along with the territorial units, the borders relevant to the traders I have described here are not no longer the political boundaries that cut up such units into nation-states. If these territorial borders both enabled

the *juula* in the Upper River to thrive and contributed to their marginalization, the migrants who originate from those borderland communities are today challenged by attempts of several state (and sometimes non-state) actors to use not only territory but also other, biopolitical technologies of sovereignty to control their movement (Gabrielli 2012). I have thus described the multiple scales of interaction or multiple linkages between practices of bordering and migrants' strategies. One could say, ironically, that the restrictions in migration policies implemented by Europe and the US, together with a visa regime (Salter 2006) that delocalizes borders (e.g. in Embassies), have not only negatively affected Muslim trade diasporas in West Africa; they have also reproduced them. Young men from Gambia's Upper River seeking to reach the US and the EU are forced to circulate through West African countries in order to find visas and loopholes in the system.¹⁴ In their transit destinations, they are accommodated by prominent traders and lodgers from their villages and extended families. These prominent figures also provide young travellers with informal contacts in the bureaucratic circles and the black market for them to try to obtain the travel documents they need. Since Europe- or US-bound migrants also undertake commercial activity in their transit destinations and some even become settled as traders at destination, overall they contribute significantly to maintaining the social infrastructure that their fathers and grandfathers built in the past across West Africa and beyond. ECOWAS adds to the paradox of this hybrid trader-visa applicant by granting him (*sic*) a right to circulate in the zone. Even more ironic than this is perhaps the fact that the Gambian state partly upholds the complex interplay between the official and the unofficial in the business of migration by appointing some of the lodgers or traders as its representatives. Whether there is a Machiavellian strategy behind this or not, this phenomenon further shows that a simple dichotomy between regional integration from below and regional integration from above does not hold water. It is the simultaneous friction and fluidity between scales of institutionalization that has contributed to transforming and reproducing the *juula*, conferring on them the role of key players in economic, political and religious spaces.

¹⁴ Please note that undocumented routes through the Sahara desert and the sea (to the Canary Islands) play a limited role in Soninke migrations.

Bibliography

- Amselle, J.-L. 1977. *Les négociants de la savane : histoire et organisation sociale des Kooroko, Mali*. Paris: Anthropos.
- Barrett, H. R. 1988. *The marketing of foodstuffs in the Gambia, 1400-1980 : a geographical analysis*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Barry, B. 1988. *La Sénégambie du XVe au XIXe siècle : traite négrière, Islam et conquête coloniale*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Basch, L. G., Glick Schiller, N. and Szanton Blanc, C. 1994. *Nations unbound : transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states*. London: Routledge.
- Bredeloup, S. 2007. *La diams'pora du fleuve Sénégal : sociologie des migrations africaines*. Toulouse; Paris: Presses universitaires du Mirail; IRD éditions.
- Caglar, A. 2006. 'Hometown associations, the rescaling of state spatiality and migrant grassroots transnationalism', *Global networks* 6(1): 1-22.
- Clark, A. F. 1999. *From frontier to backwater : economy and society in the upper Senegal Valley, West Africa, 1850-1920*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America.
- Cohen, A. 1969. *Custom & politics in urban Africa: a study of Hausa migrants in Yoruba towns*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cunningham, H. 2004. 'Nations rebound?: crossing borders in a gated globe', *Identities* 11(3): 329-50.
- Curtin, P. D. 1975. *Economic change in precolonial Africa; Senegambia in the era of the slave trade*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Denton Eyatunde, F. 1998. *Foreign Policy Formulation in The Gambia, 1965-1994: Small weak developing states and their foreign policy choices and decisions*. PhD Thesis. Birmingham: University of Birmingham.
- Donnan, H. and Wilson, T. M. 1999. *Borders: Frontiers of identity, nation and state*. Berg Publishers.
- Fanchette, S. 2001. 'Désengagement de l'État et recomposition d'un espace d'échange transfrontalier : la Haute-Casamance et ses voisins', *Autrepart* 19: 91-113.
- Gabrielli, L. 2012. 'European Immigration Policies Outside the Union: An Impact Analysis on Migration Dynamics in North African Transit Areas', in J. Streiff-Fénart and A. Wa Kabwe Segatti (eds.), *The challenge of the threshold. Border closures and migration movements in Africa*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Golub, S. S. and Mbaye, A. A. 2009. 'National Trade Policies and Smuggling in Africa: The Case of The Gambia and Senegal', *World Development* 37(3): 595-606.
- Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (eds.) 1997. *Culture, power, place : explorations in critical anthropology*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Howard, A. M. and Shain, R. M. 2005. 'Introduction: African history and social space in Africa', in A. M. Howard and R. M. Shain (eds.), *The spatial factor in African history : the relationship of the social, material, and perceptual*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill.
- Janson, M. 2011. 'Living Islam through death: demarcating Muslim identity in a rural Serahuli community in the Gambia', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17(1): 100-15.
- Lambert, A. 1993. 'Les commerçantes maliennes du chemin de fer Dakar-Bamako', in E. Grégoire and P. Labazée (eds.), *Grands commerçants d'Afrique de l'Ouest : logiques et pratiques d'un groupe d'hommes d'affaires contemporains*. Paris: Karthala; Editions de l'ORSTOM.

- 1994. 'Les commerçants et l'intégration régionale', in M. C. Diop (ed.), *Le Sénégal et ses voisins*. Dakar-Etoile: Sociétés-Espaces-Temps.
- Levtzion, N. 1987. 'Merchants vs. Scholars and clerics in West Africa: differential and complementary roles.', in N. Levtzion and H. J. Fisher (eds.), *Rural and urban Islam in West Africa*. Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers.
- Levtzion, N. and Fisher, H. J. (eds.) 1987. *Rural and urban Islam in West Africa*. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner Publishers.
- Mbodji, M. 1992. 'D'une frontière a l'autre, ou l'histoire de la marginalisation des commerçants senegambiens sur la longue durée: la Gambie de 1816 à 1979', in P. Kipré, L. Harding and B. Barry (eds.), *Commerce et commerçants en Afrique de l'Ouest*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Meillassoux, C. 1971. 'Introduction', in C. Meillassoux (ed.), *The development of indigenous trade and markets in West Africa: studies presented and discussed at the Tenth International African Seminar at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, December 1969*. London,: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute.
- Nugent, P. and Asiwaju, A. I. (eds.) 1996. *African boundaries : barriers, conduits, and opportunities*. London, New York: Pinter.
- Rialland, M. 1998. 'Hypothèse sur les origines d'un mouvement fondamentaliste en pays Soninke', *Islam et Société au Sud du Sahara* **12**: 75-85.
- Roche, C. 1985. *Histoire de la Casamance. Conquête et résistance: 1850-1920*. Paris: Karthala.
- Sall, E. and Sallah, H. 1994. 'Senegal and the Gambia: the politics of integration', in M. C. Diop (ed.), *Le Sénégal et ses voisins*. Dakar-Etoile: Sociétés-Espaces-Temps.
- Salter, M. B. 2006. 'The global visa regime and the political technologies of the international self: borders, bodies, biopolitics', *Alternatives: global, local, political* **31**(2): 167.
- Shipton, P. M. 1995. 'How Gambians save: culture and economic strategy at an ethnic crossroads', in J. I. Guyer (ed.), *Money matters : instability, values, and social payments in the modern history of West African communities*. Portsmouth; London: Heinemann; J. Currey.
- Smith, M. P. and Guarnizo, L. (eds.) 1998. *Transnationalism from below*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.
- Soares, B. F. 2005. *Islam and the prayer economy : history and authority in a Malian town*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Söderbaum, F. and Taylor, I. 2010. 'State, region and space in Africa', in U. Engel and P. Nugent (eds.), *Respacing Africa*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill.
- Steiner, C. B. 1994. *African art in transit*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stoller, P. 2002. *Money has no smell : the Africanization of New York City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Streiff-Fenart, J. and Kabwe-Segatti, A. W. (eds.) 2012. *The challenge of the threshold : border closures and migration movements in Africa*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.
- Swindell, K. and Jeng, A. 2006. *Migrants, credit and climate : the Gambian groundnut trade, 1834-1934*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Timera, M. 2001. 'Traiettorie del fondamentalismo tra le comunità Soninké musulmane immigrate in Francia', in A. Piga (ed.), *Islam e città nell'Africa a sud del Sahara : tra sufismo e fondamentalismo*. Napoli: Liguori.
- Touray, O. A. 2000. *The Gambia and the world : a history of the foreign policy of Africa's smallest state, 1965-1995*. Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde.
- Whitehouse, B. 2009. 'Discrimination, Despoliation and Irreconcilable Difference: Host-Immigrant Tensions in Brazzaville, Congo', *Africa Spectrum* **44**(1): 39-59.

- 2012. *Migrants and strangers in an African city*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Wimmer, A. and Glick Schiller, N. 2003. 'Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology', *International Migration Review* **37**(3): 576-610.

Integration through livestock trade on the Kenya–Somalia borderlands

Hussein Abdullahi Mahmoud,
Department of Geography,
Pwani University College,
Kilifi, Kenya

Abstract

This paper examines livestock trade as a medium of integration through which vital links between groups on the Kenya-Somalia borderlands have been created. While livestock trade on the borderlands have long been sources of incomes for a wide range of actors, including herders, livestock traders, middlemen, and local county councils, the commerce in this area is increasingly creating communal trust and cohesion and most importantly emerging as a mechanism of regional integration. The paper demonstrates that the cross-border Somali livestock trade is obviously an emerging element of regional integration in the absence of a favorable political environment and appropriate mechanisms. The cross-border clan relationships that always underpinned the trade are increasingly giving way to multiple clan business enterprises. The Kenya-Somalia borderlands are important for regional economic integration because they connect prime livestock-producing areas of southern Somalia to the region's large livestock markets in Kenya, including Garissa, Nairobi, and Mombasa. There is immense potential for regional integration through increased economic relationships and political stability not only in the Kenya-Somalia border areas but also across the Horn of Africa generally.

Introduction

While countries of the East African Region and the Horn are gravitating toward integration, Somalia is consistently and fast disintegrating into clan-controlled territories. The country is continuously being broken up into clan-dominated autonomous regions characterized by intense conflict between groups. While Somalia's political disintegration has been in global news and preoccupied peace seeking and peace keeping initiatives for over two decades, the vibrancy and increasing growth of local livestock trade and cross border interactions have gone largely unnoticed. The cross-border livestock trade in the pastoral areas of the Horn of Africa is becoming increasingly important as the volume of trade and the number of traders and other market participants have grown phenomenally in the past couple of decades. It is now a vibrant commercial undertaking involving an increasing number of trucks and new trekking routes have been added to the existing pool to facilitate the trade. It contributes immensely to local and regional food security, meat supplies to large urban centres, and poverty alleviation among pastoral communities in the region (Little 2009). Most significantly the commerce is the largest income earner for several categories of market participants, including herders, traders, brokers, transporters and butchers. Little (2009) notes that cross-border livestock trade on the Kenya-Somalia border is a huge success story in the livestock sector contrary to widespread belief that it is a clandestine activity.

The paper examines the significance of cross border livestock commerce focusing on the increasing trend of the trade and its economic support to a host of actors and the role of the commerce in forging communal cohesion among previously hostile communities. Third, it examines the growth of Garissa town and finally the influx of banking institutions in the border areas to tap into the growing potential for savings and investment.

The border area and its people

Kenya's North Eastern Province is a vast pastoral territory and weather conditions in the province can range between extremes with events, such as El Nino, dumping excessive rains during 1997-1998 and recurrent droughts forcing herders to migrate to the Juba Valley and riverine areas in southern Somalia and to southern and south-east Ethiopia. The province is mostly arid and semi-arid and has a bi-modal rainfall regime. The pastoral province borders Somalia to the east and Ethiopia to the north and is predominantly inhabited by Somali populations living across the borders in the three countries. Pastoralism is the major economic activity in the province, but other forms of livelihoods including agro-pastoralism are practiced along Tana River near Garissa in the south and along the Dawa River near Mandera in the north. Commercial and retail trades are vibrant activities in urban centres.

The border area has numerous entry points throughout its stretch with easy access into the two countries. Traders and herders have established crossing points that they use frequently to move trade animals to Kenya and

grazing animals into Somalia and the Somali Region of Ethiopia when droughts hit northeastern Kenya. While livestock and livestock products movements across these borders predates the colonial period, trade in other forms of commodities, including textiles, electronics, and food stuffs imported through Mogadishu and Kismayu ports, are relatively recent. Trade links between communities on the Kenya-Somalia borderlands can be examined at different times during the pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, and post-Barre eras.

The pre-colonial trade was based on informal exchanges of goods across ethnic boundaries and on long distance commerce linking the coastal Somali ports with inland markets and trading centres. Coastal-inland trade in the early part of the nineteenth century was initiated through the demand created by the industrial revolution in Europe and the consequent need for raw materials. Consequently, American and European traders were visiting Somali coastal towns to obtain hides, skins, beef, and dairy products (Cassanelli 1982). As a result, North Eastern Kenya became an important link between coastal Somalia and southern Ethiopia from where most of these commodities were drawn. Several trade routes came into existence, for example, one was running from Moyale in northern Kenya through Wajir in northeast Kenya to Somalia. Other important trading towns in the early twentieth century were Mandera in the north and Bura, Garissa, and Sankuri in the south along the Tana River (Dalleo 1975). Similarly, southern Somalia had been drawn into the expanding Zanzibari commerce, well known for slave and ivory trade. With an expanding trade in the region, the link between southern Somalia and Zanzibar was through trade in ivory, aromatic woods, and animal skins (Cassanelli 1982).

The colonial administration introduced formality and officially recognisable processes in the livestock trade by way of imposing taxes on livestock trading activities and keeping records of livestock movement and diseases. Livestock and livestock product exchanges within pastoral communities and between pastoral and non-pastoral populations has been going on for a long time. The colonial period was characterized by trends toward formalization of livestock movement in general. According to Little (2007) the market liberalization policies of the 1980s and 1990s were attempts by policy makers to formalize cross border commodity trade, but these efforts were seen as largely unsuccessful.

The fall of Barre regime in 1991 and the consequent disruption of economic activities in the country marked a major turning point in the livestock trading sector. The Somali war disrupted export activities at the ports of Mogadishu and Kismayu. The war in Somalia had implications for the cross border livestock trade with Kenya, in which regard Little (2003: 38) states that “[m]ore important for the border region in recent years has been the ‘unofficial’ export of cattle to Kenya, which has boomed since 1991. The Lower Jubba Region alone exports to Kenya about 70,000 cattle per year, which is more than twice as many as during the pre-war years.” This increasing trend of Somali livestock finding their way into Kenyan markets, chiefly through Garissa market, is likely to continue and expand in volume as long as the Mogadishu and Kismayu ports remain largely closed. The trend will also continue if Somalia does

not aggressively penetrate the Middle East markets and as long as Kenya will continue to provide favourable markets for the Somali livestock.

The major livestock trading markets in the province – Garissa, Mandera and Wajir have become important transit zones for livestock from various sources in the North Eastern Province and from southern Ethiopia and southern Somalia. Prior to the war in Somalia, the Lower Jubba Region accounted for about 35-40 percent of the country's cattle exports and about 20 percent of its camel exports, of which Kenyan camels were included (Little 2003).

The initial disintegration

The British ambition to extend its rule into northern Kenya was both political and economic, but with little ambition to create viable institutions in the region and little intention to integrate the region into its growing colony. This need was urgent and necessary, "...to keep hostile powers at a distance of a few hundred miles of semi-desert away from the White Highlands, the Brook Bond tea plantations and the Uganda railway" (Schlee 1989: 44). As for the economic-cum-political rationalization of the colonial decision, Kitching states that:

The concentration by the Administration (*British*) on Masailand and the Northern Frontier Province was by no means accidental. These were the two great areas of pastoral nomadism within the Colony and between them contained seventy per cent or more of the total African livestock holdings. From the first the Somali trade had revolved around these two hubs and then had gradually embraced Kikuyuland as well, and thus effective control over these two areas was the prerequisite of affording the settlers the protection they sought (1980: 214).

In addition to taking care of their economic and political motivations, the British desired to check Ethiopia's unrestrained expansion into northern Kenya. The British colonial administration earmarked the vast northern desert land with seemingly limited economic potential to provide a buffer zone between British interests in the rest of the colony, sometimes known as "down country Kenya," and the Ethiopian military advances (Simpson 1996).

Referring to statelessness in Kenya's frontier areas, (Menkhaus 2005: 1) states that "...the vast, remote and arid frontier areas bordering Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda were never entirely brought under the control of the state in either colonial or post-colonial eras." The successive post colonial Kenyan administration's deliberate negligence created a state of statelessness in northern Kenya. This partly explains the emergence of people and communities who make attempts to block peace in the region in order to achieve their economic, political and expansionist motives. Menkhaus argues that African states have allowed their frontier zones to go ungoverned for four "rational strategies" - if the frontier territory is of insignificant economic value, the cost of establishing an administration there is higher than returns, the state lacks the

financial and technical capacity to govern, and if spillover effects of anarchy in the frontier have little impact on the core areas of the state.

As Herbst (2000: 41) argues, “Formal political control in pre-colonial Africa was difficult and had to be earned through the construction of loyalties, the use of coercion and the creation of an infrastructure.” Thus, Emperor Haile Sellasie of Ethiopia was able to perpetuate Ethiopian expansion and the integration of the Boran and Somali territories using these procedures. Forty-five years after attaining its independence, Kenya has not made much efforts to integrate northern and northeastern Kenya into the country’s mainstream economic and political fabric, thus allowing numerous conflict actors and interests to thrive with enormous freedom. The distant seat of the state based in Nairobi represented by a weak outreach of district officials is a recipe for the vulnerability of northern and northeastern Kenya to acts of banditry and commercialization of conflict.

Livestock market participants

Several actors are involved in livestock marketing chain both in the market and off the market each specializing in specific areas of the trade and contributing to the overall process. The composition of livestock market actors varies from one market to another. Participants in livestock markets on the border areas include livestock producers (pastoralists), livestock traders, market brokers (livestock and transport brokers), *rangi* boys and transporters. Livestock markets demand a thorough coordination and cooperation between these actors in order for selling and buying processes to run smoothly. Because of their centrality in livestock marketing in northeastern Kenya, the roles and characteristics of livestock traders and brokers will be discussed.

Livestock traders

Livestock traders constitute the most important actors in livestock markets in northeastern Kenya as they are the primary source of income for livestock producers from whom livestock are purchased directly, market brokers receive commission on the number of livestock sold for traders, local county councils collect taxes on each head of animal sold in the market and the veterinary department collects revenue on all the animals moved out of the district for slaughter or breeding. A total of 119 livestock traders were interviewed in three different markets in the North Eastern Province. Of these, male traders were 116 constituting 97.48 percent and female traders were only 3 making 2.52 percent. The average age of these traders was 45 years with a maximum of 70 years and a minimum of 22 years. When asked about the number of years engaged in livestock trading the maximum was 35 years and the minimum was one with an average of 14 years. This indicates that the commerce has traders with many years of experience as well as relatively new entrants who are just beginning to learn one of the most demanding business undertakings in the region. Most traders resided in the places from where they purchased livestock, although many more travelled within and across the borders to procure livestock.

It is not uncommon to find some traders procuring livestock in one country trek them through the second and sell them in the third. For example, camel traders purchase these animals in southern Somalia trek them through northeastern Kenya and sell them in Moyale, Ethiopia where they fetch much better prices. Cattle are the most traded animals on the border in terms of volume of value as also indicated by Table 1 that shows the proportion of livestock traders with respect to the species traded. Livestock trading in a busy pastoral hub such as the Kenya-Ethiopia-Somalia borderlands is a fascinating web of activities.

Table 1: the proportion of traders engaged in different species of livestock (N=119)

Species of livestock	Number of traders	Percent
Cattle	52	43.7
Cattle + camels	21	17.65
Camels	15	12.61
Camels + cattle + small stocks	15	12.61
Small stocks	7	5.88
Cattle + small stocks	6	5.04
Camel + small stocks	3	2.52
TOTAL	119	100.01

Source: author's fieldnotes

Although most livestock traders engage in specific species there are many others who trade in a mix of species. Trading in different species helps in minimization of risks associated with over-reliance on particular species of animals. Also, different species of livestock traded in northeastern Kenya are area-specific, for example, cattle dominate the Garissa market while a large number of traders in Wajir trade in camels because these animals are the dominant species raised in these areas. The small stocks are mostly traded in Wajir and Mandera because they are mostly raised there more than in Garissa area.

Case History of Trader MAO-019

Trader MAO-019 is truly a regional livestock trader carrying out his business in three different countries with a lot of ease. He is a 51 year old trader living in Moyale, Ethiopia. He purchases only camels from Nagelle, Ethiopia, treks them to Mandera, Kenya where he sometimes sells at, but mostly treks to Moyale, Ethiopia through northern Kenya. Also, he has a bank account with a Kenyan bank. He makes a circular trip through northern Kenya to avoid hostile territories in southern Ethiopia and make use of the hospitality of his own Garre ethnic group that lives on both sides of the Kenya/Ethiopia border. His monthly turnover is about 75 camels and deals on a cash only basis when buying and selling. These animals are worth about Ksh.5,250,000 at an average price of

Ksh.70,000 in Mandera market and can easily be sold for Ksh.80,000-100,000 each in Moyale market. This trader has only been in livestock trade for the past 10 years, but must have been encouraged by the relatively new camel trade boom in Ethiopia.

Case History of Trader HAS-001

Trader HAS-001 is a Somali livestock trader, lives in Wajir and procures livestock from southern Somalia, Mandera, Moyale and Ethiopia. On the 17th of September 2011 he brought 129 head of cattle to Mandera, Kenya purchased from a small village market in south-eastern Ethiopia called Jarati Jiq. His own animals were 51 while 78 belonged to his trading partner. The route used was described as Jarati Jiq – Waladay – Dolow – Suftu – Mandera market. The animals were then trucked from Mandera to Wajir and on to Isiolo arriving there on 21st September 2011. On the night of 22nd September 2011 at about 9.30pm, five gunmen and five men with arrows stole the animals. The theft was reported to the police immediately and they were only able to recover two head of cattle and arrested three suspected gunmen. The issue was raised in the Kenyan parliament where the Minister for Internal Security promised to recover the animals, but the traders have not received the stolen animals yet. The cost of the animals and transport expenses were estimated to be about Ksh. 4.5 million (about US\$54, 217).¹

Livestock market brokers

Market brokers are vital part of livestock trading in northeastern Kenya as they are in other parts of the pastoral livestock marketing sector in the Horn of Africa. Their important role is to link livestock sellers with buyers and most fundamentally provide crucial information to market participants on an array of issues including the day's livestock prices, the security situation and key government regulations affecting livestock owners and traders. Essentially, traders rely on brokers to advise and acquire for them the best animals at fair prices while livestock producers expect brokers to provide them with the best prices possible.

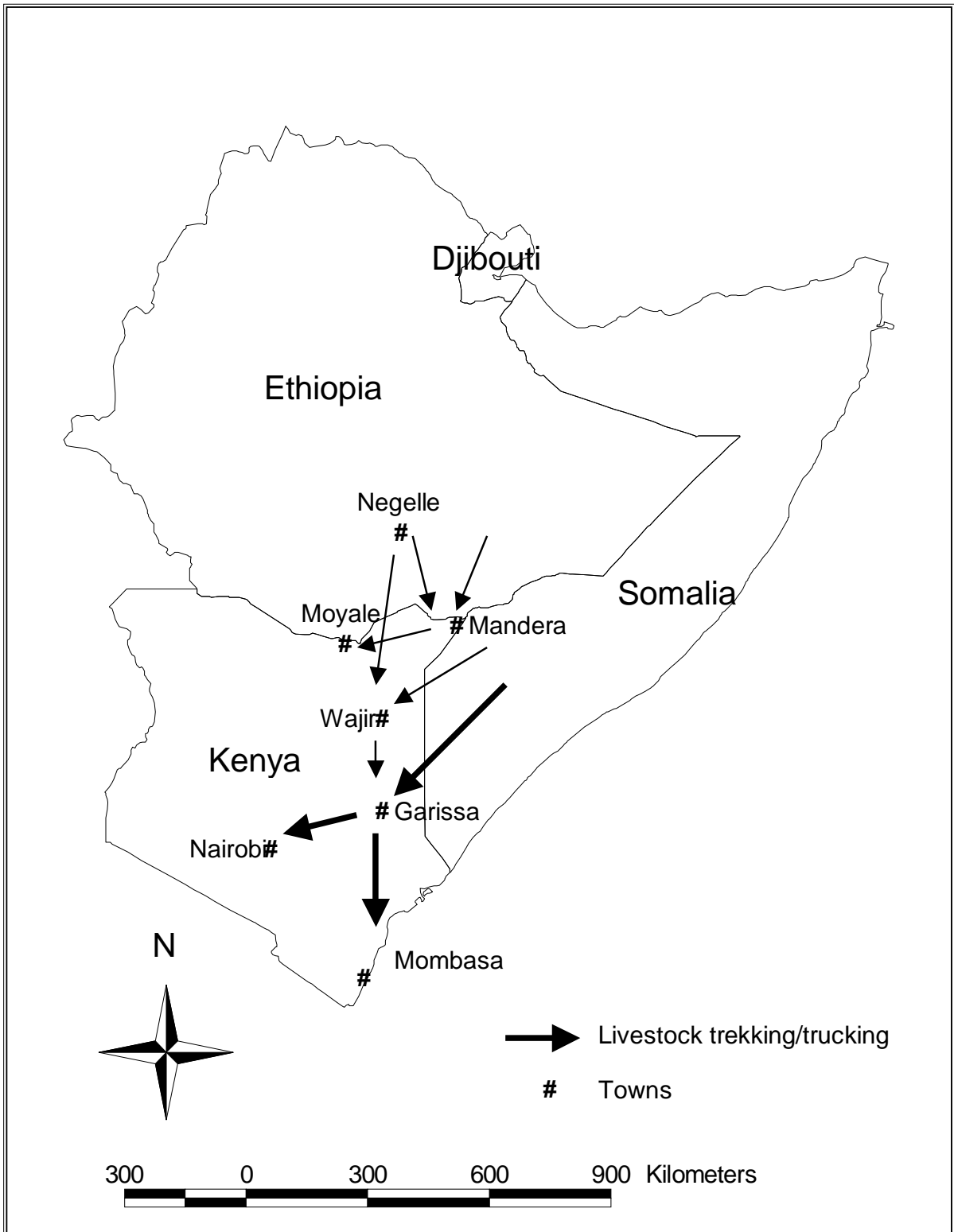
Livestock trade routes

Different trekking routes are used to transport livestock in northeastern Kenya. Figure 1 shows the major livestock trekking and trucking routes used on the Kenya-Ethiopia-Somalia border areas. While most transportation of animals from south-eastern Ethiopia and southern Somalia into northeastern Kenya is done by trekking traders do trucking from Garissa to Nairobi and Mombasa markets. Garissa market obviously handles the largest share of the province's

¹ The exchange rate of 1US\$ to Ksh.83 was used.

livestock trade signified by thicker arrows and also supplies a large number of animals to the major consumption centres including Nairobi and Mombasa.

Figure 1: Livestock trade routes on the Kenya/Ethiopia/Somalia borderlands

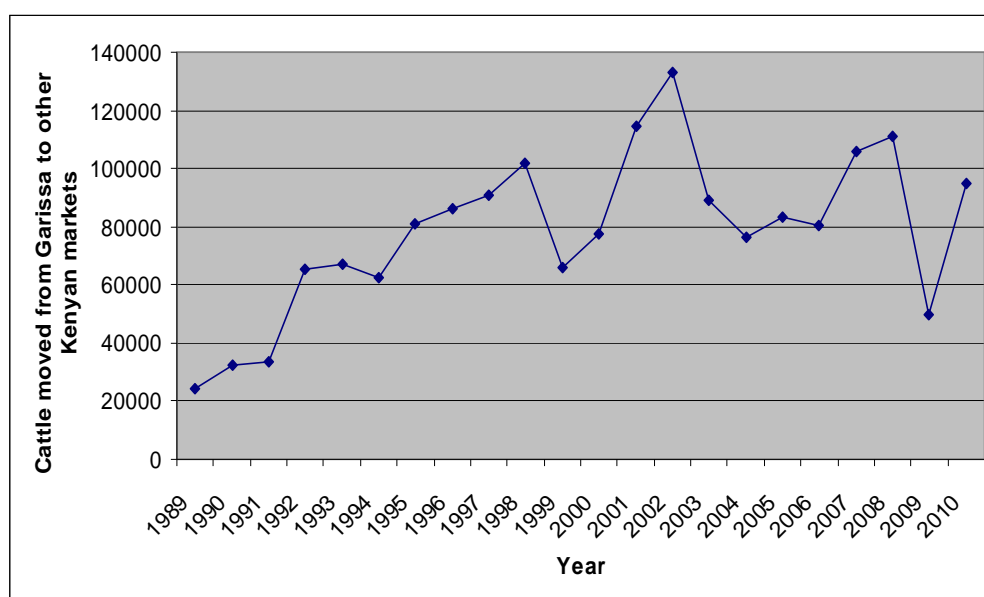


The significance of cross border livestock commerce

Increasing cross-border livestock trade

Cattle are the most prominent trade animals in the North Eastern Province of Kenya both in terms of volume sold and revenue generated. Figure 2 shows the volume of livestock moved out of Garissa to various destinations in the country from 1989 to 2010.

Figure 2: Livestock moved out of Garissa to other Kenyan towns, 1989-2010



Source: data for sales from 1989-2000 courtesy of Little 2003: 96. The author collected sales data from 2001 to 2010 from the Ministry of Livestock offices in Garissa

As shown in Figure 2, livestock sales in Garissa market have increased significantly in the past 20 years from a low of just over 20,000 cattle sold in 1989 to a 20-year peak of nearly 133,000 in 2002. In 2010, almost 100,000 head of cattle were sold in that market. Between and beyond these periods of low and high supplies livestock sales have been highly erratic. Although highly erratic the significance of Somali livestock marketing is growing to meet the growing demand for meat in Kenya's fast growing urban centers.

A good sense of the value of livestock trade can be attained from an analysis of the volume of a small number of respondents in this study who were asked to provide an estimate of their monthly sales. These traders engaged in all the common species of livestock traded in northeastern Kenya including camels, cattle and the small stocks. The volume of monthly trade is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: the average volume of livestock purchased monthly and estimated value in Kenya Shillings

Livestock species	Volume purchased	Estimated value (Ksh)	Maximum	Minimum
Camels	3,566	285,280,000 ²	200	13
Cattle	13,245	264,900,000 ³	800	8
Small stocks	6,130	18,390,000 ⁴	600	90

Source: author's fieldwork

Table 2 confirms the popularity of cattle as the preferred commodity on the borderlands then followed by the small stocks, but the value of camels in this small sample exceeds the combined value of the other two species. The value of camels has gone up dramatically in the past few years because of increased exports to Arab countries, principally through Ethiopia.

The growth of Garissa town

Traders in southern Somalia had already established a link with the Garissa market across the border prior to the collapse of the government in Mogadishu and Little (2003) states that this channel of trade was the least affected by the ensuing war. Consequently, Garissa town has grown into a key regional market in what Little (2003: 91) refers to as the "cross-border boom," "the aggregate value of cattle sales in Garissa grew by an astounding 400 percent between 1991 and 1998 and 600 percent between 1989 and 1998."

In his assessment of the situation until early 2000s, again Little (2003: 125) states that "...what is amazing about the border region and other parts of Somalia and Somaliland is the degree to which life goes on and the extent to which populations have weathered instabilities along all fronts – political, economic, and climatic." The condition of the trade has not changed to date and, indeed, the volume of Somalia's livestock sold in Kenyan markets has expanded remarkably as has been shown earlier.

Figure 2 illustrates two important issues, first, that the cross-border livestock trade is thriving leading to rapid growth of Garissa town. There are years of low sales, for example, in 1999 and 2004, but the general trend is an increase in sales, which has contributed to the increase in the number of new big businesses, hotels, restaurants and small enterprises in Garissa. Second, that the political crisis witnessed as a result of the creation of the Transitional Federal

² An average price of Ksh 80,000 per head of camel was used to estimate the total value of camels traded by the sample of traders

³ An average price of Ksh 20,000 per head of cattle was used to estimate these values

⁴ An average price of Ksh 3,000 per head of sheep and goats was used to estimate these values

Government (TFG) in Somalia and the Ethiopian intervention has not affected the commerce. The 2006 and 2007 sales were not abnormal despite the rise of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and antagonism with the TFG in 2006 and the Ethiopian invasion in 2007. In fact, cattle sales in Garissa increased by nearly 32 percent between 2006 and 2007 despite increased hostilities between warring Ethiopian and Somali forces.

According to Kenyan Somali livestock traders, the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 2007 sent shockwaves across the Somali livestock business community, particularly among Kenyan traders who regularly venture into southern Somalia markets and continue to do so to procure animals. It was a time of high political temperatures and not many people were ready to take the risks as the border areas were highly militarized with increased police roadblocks and numerous searches done on people coming into Kenya from Somalia and the borderlands generally. The presence of “two strangers on both sides of the border” in reference to the presence of Ethiopian army in Somalia and US intelligence backed by Kenyan forces on the Kenyan side was a frightening scene according to Abdi.⁵

As mentioned earlier, during the reign of the ICU the Kenya-Somalia cross-border livestock trade was not disrupted, indeed the relative calm contributed to increased confidence among traders. The perception of livestock traders regarding the current conflict between the TFG and the Al-Shabab militia is one of power politics. According to both Mohammed⁶ and Abdi, these conflicts could negatively impact on livestock commerce. As the trade is a major contributor to the regional economy, restricting it would result into constraining a crucial source of livelihood to herders, traders, brokers and a source of tax to local militias. It is important to note that livestock trade in southern Somalia involves a dense network of actors and negotiations between clans on livestock trekking routes. Because numerous communities have a stake in it, the constraining of this economic activity is not taken lightly.

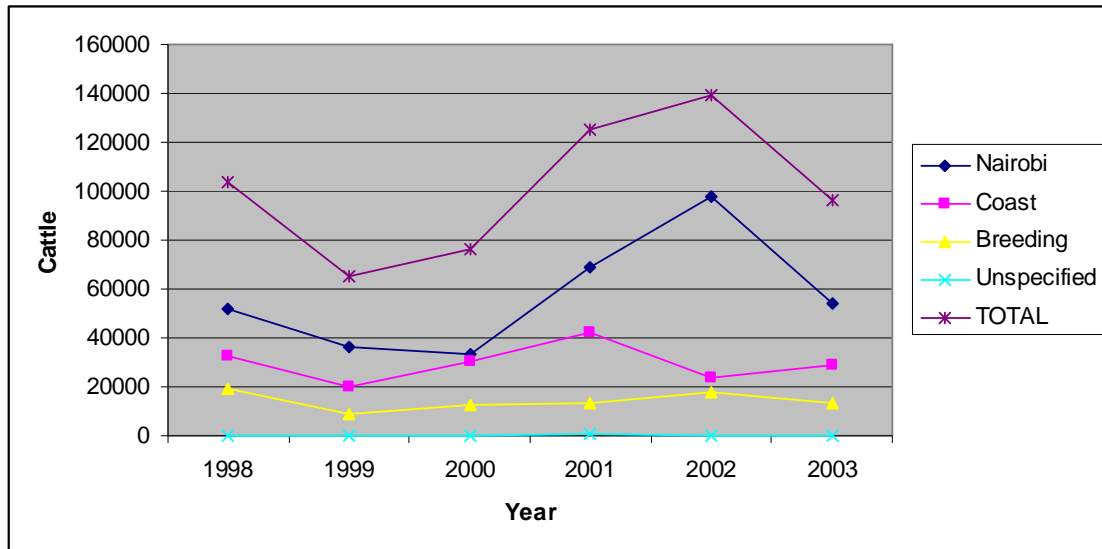
Livestock sold in Garissa market are moved to various destinations in Kenya, including Nairobi, coastal towns, such as Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu and Kilifi and for breeding purposes to Kamba, Maasai and central Kenya areas (see Figure 3). Nairobi is the largest consumer of livestock from Garissa receiving a whopping 139,279 head of cattle in 2002 alone (see Figure 2). Cattle destined for Nairobi are promptly directed for immediate slaughter at one of the two livestock markets-cum-slaughterhouses in the city - Njiru and Dagoreti slaughterhouses. The former is popular with livestock from northern and northeastern Kenya while the latter largely services traders from the Rift Valley and ranchers. Most of the

⁵ Abdi is one of my key informants involved in managing the sale of a large herd of Somali livestock at Kenya coast. He is one of the pioneer Somali livestock traders at the coast and among the first to be involved in the Somali livestock fattening ranches.

⁶ Mohammed is a Garissa-based Somali livestock trader whom I met at the Njiru market-cum-slaughterhouse in Nairobi in November 2009.

livestock transported to the coast end up in Somali-leased ranches for fattening (see Mahmoud 2006).

Figure 3: Destination of cattle from Garissa, Kenya, 1998-2003



Source: author's fieldnotes

Income to local county councils

Livestock traders pay numerous taxes to local county councils and they have bitterly complained about it, but these payments are important sources of income to these organs of the local government. Table 3 shows how much these organs earn from a head of cattle sold in Garissa market.

Table 3: payments made at the point of sale in Garissa and in Nairobi

Payment type	Recipient	Amount per head of cattle (Ksh)	Cattle sold in 2010 in Garissa market	Estimated revenue collected (Ksh)
Auction fee	Municipal Council of Garissa	160	94,715	15,154,400
Export fee	County Council of Garissa	100	94,715	9,471,500
Loading fee	DLMC ⁷	30	94,715	2,841,450
Landing fee	Nairobi City Council	160	94,715	15,154,400
TOTAL		450		42,621,750

Source: the number of livestock sold in Garissa was obtained from the District Veterinary Office, Garissa, but the other data were obtained from trader interviews

In 2010 alone, livestock traders from Garissa paid to different organs of the local government a whopping Ksh.42,621,750 (about US\$ 513,515). The sales of more than 100,000 had been registered several times in the past, which indicates that earnings to these local government organs must have been higher than what they earned in 2010. While these are handsome incomes to these organs that are largely blamed for “delivering nothing” to livestock traders in exchange, the latter continue to be harassed and none of their fees help them out during crises.

Meat supplies in urban centres

As mentioned earlier, the arid and semi arid area are important suppliers of livestock to large urban centres in the country and the Nairobi and Mombasa have significant shares of this supply. Southern Somalia alone provides about 13-17 percent of Nairobi’s meat supplies (Peter D. Little, personal communication). Butcheries represent the largest share of meat distribution in Nairobi and account for about 93 percent of the total volume of meat sold in Nairobi. Informal outlets, such as kiosks, form the second most important outlet controlling about 3.2 percent of the market share, while large supermarkets rank third with about 2.8 percent (Gamba 2005).

⁷ District Livestock Marketing Council

Fostering inter-clan relations across the border

Cross-border livestock trade is the most significant mechanism through which vital connections between communities, economic and political actors have been maintained. It provides incomes for a wide range of market actors across the borders, including herders, traders, middlemen, transporters and local authorities. Livestock procurements begin across the borders through complex market arrangements and channels that involve several participants (Little and Mahmoud 2005). It is these actors who create a web of cross-border relations based on trade and clan affiliations and are key in maintaining crucial integration.

Clan considerations (*qabil*) have always been important in the livestock trade in the borderlands of the two countries. Trading involves people from different ethnic groups and clan affiliations. Clan relations have always helped livestock procurement and trekking in southern Somalia. Indeed, the clan approach to livestock trading is an important ingredient in ensuring the success of the trade; it facilitates market transactions, acts as a security and enhances trust. During the period after the collapse of the state and the emergence of warlords until the appearance of Islamists, *qabil* was a major factor in Somali politics and had a disastrous effect on the livestock trading sector in southern Somalia and along the border with Kenya.

Since Islamists came to power in 2006 new kinds of cross-border trading relationships involving different Somali clans have been emerging. These emphasize the growing significance of multi-clan commerce in the Somalia–Kenya livestock trading sector. Whether this denotes a decline in the significance of *qabil* in the dynamic Somali political landscape shaped by Islamic ideology is an interesting question. Multiclan business activities have emerged in other areas of Somali commercial activity, apparently as a risk mitigation strategy. According to traders, since the period of Islamist rule in southern Somalia, clan identity or affiliation was no longer needed to do livestock business in any of the Al-Shabaab-controlled areas of the south. As a result, different Somali clans are now becoming involved in the Somalia–Kenya cross-border trade, including the Habar Gidir of Hawiye clan family who would not have ventured into Darood clan family territories during the warlord period. The Al-Shabaab administration seems to promote multi-ethnicity and lower ethnic visibility, particularly in trade and commerce. Currently, the most prominent livestock traders on both sides of the border and in the Northeastern–Nairobi–Coast corridor are the Degodia and Ogaden clans.

Cellular phones in livestock trade⁸

The use of cellular phones by livestock traders in the Horn of Africa is becoming increasingly common. This new trend in pastoral marketing has opened up new trading frontiers and opportunities. It also has enabled trading partners to connect within and across borders both on the Kenya-Somalia and Kenya-Ethiopia borderlands. Livestock traders' entrepreneurship has facilitated and improved the trade between Garissa, Kenya and smaller livestock markets in southern Somalia. Similarly, northern Kenya livestock traders use cellular phones to facilitate livestock trade between the area and Nairobi as market transactions progress on both ends of the trading chain.

Information is vital in pastoral livestock marketing, particular in cross-border trading. For instance, availability of information on the prevailing livestock prices in Nairobi, Garissa and Mombasa informs traders on the size of livestock already in the market from other parts of the country. The lack of it has posed serious setbacks to pastoralists' and livestock traders' capacity to compete competitively in these large markets. Lack of access to livestock trading information is often overlooked in policy forums. The use of cellular phones is popular on the Kenya-Somalia livestock trade for strengthening trading partnerships and cash transfers.

Trading partnerships between livestock traders in northern and northeastern Kenya were not common until recently. Livestock traders form trading partnerships to easily handle the hassles of trading. The formation of trading partnerships increases as risks associated with trading intensify. Second, trading is more complex now, for example, debt collection in Nairobi is almost a full time occupation, which necessitates the need for a trading partner. Cellular phones provide a crucial link between trading partners based in different markets within and across the borders. These partnerships entail relatively equitable forms of collaboration: equal work sharing, equal profit sharing, and a division of labor based on specialization and expertise. The common type of partnerships often involves two or more traders, though it is not uncommon for partnerships to involve more than two partners.

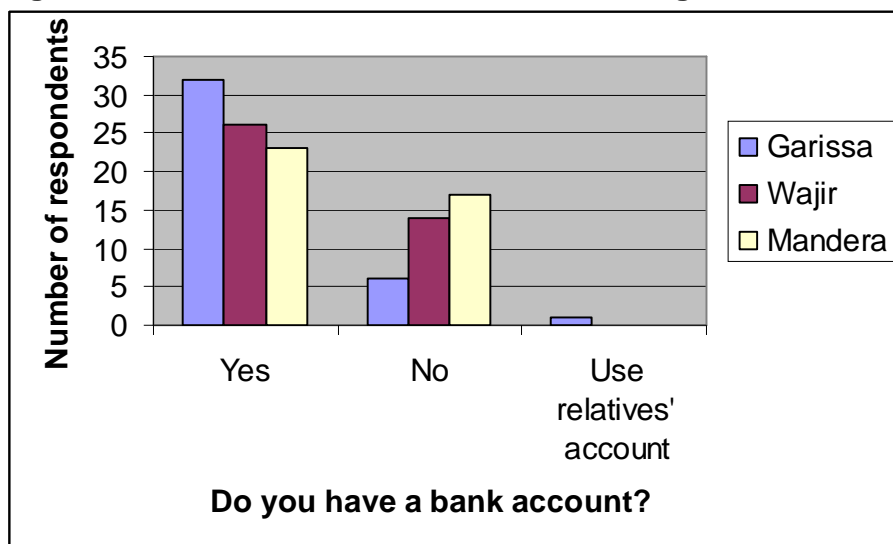
Cell phones have become tools of immense importance in pastoral livestock trade facilitation and more importantly aid in gaining insights into market conditions, security, and accessibility of the roads, especially during the wet season. Livestock traders are now better informed of market conditions and policy issues than in the past. With increasing livestock trade between southern Somalia and Kenyan markets of Garissa, Nairobi and Mombasa, the innovative use, sophistication and associated benefits of cellular phones will increase significantly as it also acts as an integrative mechanism.

⁸ See Mahmoud, Hussein A. Haramata: Bulletin of the drylands. No. 54, March 2009, pg. 27-9 on the use of cellular phones by northern Kenya livestock traders. The use of this technology and associated benefits and cross-border livestock trade facilitation is similar among both Kenya-Somalia and Kenya-Ethiopia borderlands with significant differences in the ways in which cash is transferred between traders and close associates.

Banking across borders

A total of 119 livestock traders drawn from Garissa, Wajir and Mandera Districts were interviewed on whether or not they had a bank account with regard to their livestock businesses. Eighty one traders had bank accounts, 37 had none while one uses his relative's account. It is interesting to note that the use of banking facilities increases as one moves from Mandera (closer to the border) to Garissa (closer to Nairobi and Mombasa). On the other hand, the number of livestock traders who do not have bank accounts increases as one moves from Garissa to Mandera as shown in Figure 4. Our respondents use five different banks in Garissa, four in Wajir and three in Mandera. This implies that the number of banking institutions decreases as we move further away from the capital, at least, for the northeastern case. The banks listed in Garissa include Gulf African Bank, First Community Bank, Cooperative, Equity and Barclays and those in Wajir include Gulf African Bank, First Community Bank, Equity and Kenya Commercial Bank. Three banks were used by our respondents in Mandera and these include Equity, Kenya Commercial Bank and Gambella Bank in Ethiopia. The use of a bank in Ethiopia by some livestock traders stresses the nature of cross border trade that necessitates the need for availability of cross border facilities. The use of banks in Ethiopia and probably hawala services in Somalia also explains why the number of Kenyan bank users in Mandera is lower than those in Garissa and Wajir.

Figure 4: The use of banks in livestock trading in northeastern Kenya



Source: fieldnotes

Several other services and options are available to northeastern livestock traders for cash transfer. These include banking services, *hawala*, M-Pesa, carrying on one's self and using other people to carry the cash for them. Because

of its centrality in the Somali business system, the *hawala* services are discussed in the following section.

Cash transfer and “hawala” services

Livestock trade on the Kenya-Somalia border involves a transfer of large sums of cash. Traders often become targets of bandit attacks on the dusty highways leading to border towns in these frontier areas. To avoid the hassles of existing cash transfer systems, such as formal banks and associated expensive fees and banditry on the highway, livestock traders use the services of *hawala* to transfer cash. In the Kenya/southern Somalia case cash transfers of literally any amount can be done between Nairobi, Garissa, and Mombasa on the Kenyan side and any location in southern Somalia. The system is not only safe, but also fast, a key requirement for the dynamic cross border livestock trade. It is based on trust and personal relations reinforce the system. Cellular phones and HF radios are used to instruct on how much has been transferred and who should collect the cash on the other side. As Little (2003: 142) states Somali livestock traders avoid carrying large amount of cash across the borders after cattle sales, instead they travel to Nairobi with Kenya shillings “convert them to dollars, and then ‘wire’ them back to money houses in Somalia, where they can be picked up by associates.” These arrangements work within the clan system and social relations and are markedly based on trust.

Conclusions

This paper has shown that livestock trade is the main economic activity and a crucial source of income for the pastoral populations in southern Somalia and northeastern Kenya and to several other market actors located in large meat consuming urban centers away from livestock production locations. The cross border trade has endured periods of extreme political instability and uncertainty because it is largely supported by clan and social ties and networks, particularly in southern Somalia.

The paper has demonstrated that in the past two decades or so, the Kenya-Somalia cross-border livestock trade has expanded remarkably leading to increased sales. This has led to the tremendous growth of Garissa town. In addition, the expanding trade has provide opportunities for innovative approaches in pastoral livestock marketing in the region. The trade and traders have largely remained resilient to the fast changing Somali political landscape, particularly in southern Somalia, with astounding events, such as the rise and quick fall of the Islamic Union Courts, the invasion of Ethiopian armed forces and the on-going supremacy of Al-Shabab militia in the region. Supporting pastoral livestock sector in general and marketing in particular will go along way in improving pastoral livelihood systems with immense potential of promoting regional integration through increased economic relationships and political stability not only in the Kenya-southern Somalia border areas but also the Horn of Africa generally. However, this sector in particular receives little recognition

and support from policy makers within the government and peripheral services from agencies and the donor community. This pathetic state of affairs persists despite massive multimillion dollar investments in pastoral projects over the past several decades.

Improving cross-border livestock trade in the Kenya-Somalia borderlands has significant implications for food security and poverty alleviation. While these borderlands are not spatially remote from Nairobi, they are indeed economically and politically so. Colonial and post-colonial policies have played big roles in the isolation and underdevelopment of the province. As a result, the province has been a major recipient of food aid in the past decades. This trend has discouraged efforts to address development issues in the province and resources are directed towards addressing the symptoms rather than the fundamental issues that generate and sustain pastoral vulnerability. Outdated livestock marketing policies, such as lingering quarantine regulations and other rigid veterinary regulations, have damaged the livestock marketing sector on the Somali borderlands and other pastoral districts of northern Kenya thereby alienating these areas.

Despite a lack of adequate institutional support to the livestock trading sector, particularly in northern and northeastern Kenya, Somali traders have effectively carved out a niche in supplying the growing urban meat market in Kenya. Governmental and institutional support in the form of increased trade facilitation through the removal of certain bureaucratic constraints and out-dated restrictions on animal movements will ensure the expansion of the region's livestock trade within and beyond the country's borders. Policy reforms in the pastoral livestock marketing sector, particularly in Kenya's northern and northeastern regions, should be a key element of a long-term program to alleviate poverty, improve food and human security in the area, and most importantly foster regional integration.

References

- Cassanelli, L. V. 1982. *The shaping of Somali society: reconstructing the history of a pastoral people, 1600-1900*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Dalleo, P. 1975. *Trade and Pastoralism: Economic Factors in the History of the Somali of Northeastern Kenya, 1892-1948*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Syracuse University.
- Herbst, J. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kitching, G. N. 1980. *Class and economic change in Kenya: the making of an African petite bourgeoisie 1905-1970*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
- Little, P.D. 2009. Hidden Value on the Hoof: Cross-Border Livestock Trade in Eastern Africa. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (COMESA/CAADP). Policy Brief Number 2.
- 2007. "Unofficial Cross Border Trade in Eastern Africa," Paper presented at the FAO workshop on "Staple Food Trade and Market Policy Options for Promoting Development in Eastern and Southern Africa," March 1-2, 2007, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy
- 2003. *Somalia: economy without state*. Oxford and Bloomington IN: James Currey and Indiana University Press
- Little, P. D., and H. A. Mahmoud. 2005. Cross-border Cattle Trade Along the Somalia/Kenya and Ethiopia/Kenya Borderlands. Global Livestock CRSP Pastoral Risk Management Project, Research Brief 05-03-PARIMA.
- Mahmoud, H. A. 2006. "Innovations in pastoral livestock marketing: the emergence and the role of 'Somali cattle traders-cum-ranchers' in Kenya," in J. G. McPeak and P. D. Little (eds), *Livestock Marketing in Eastern Africa: Research and Policy Challenges*. ITDG.
- Menkhaus, K. 2005. *Kenya-Somalia border conflict analysis*. Nairobi: USAID-DAI.
- Schlee, G. 1989. *Identities on the move: clanship and pastoralism in northern Kenya*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Simpson, G. 1996. Frontier banditry and the colonial decision-making process: the East Africa Protectorate's northern borderland prior to the First World War. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 29:279-308.

Namhla Thando Matshanda

PhD student

Centre of African Studies

The University of Edinburgh

Paper to be presented at the ABORNE Conference, Edinburgh

5-8 June 2012

Regional Integration on the eastern Ethiopia/Somaliland borderlands: the mutual shaping of state and community through cross-border trade at Tog Waajale.

Abstract

This paper examines how integration has been accelerated through a combination of efforts by the state and the local communities on the Ethiopian side of the Ethiopia/Somaliland border. The paper argues that certain regional and national developments have necessitated the Ethiopian state to actively encourage formal and informal cross border trade at Tog Waajale. And that these interventions have come to intersect with already established local networks. The result, however, is something of a double-edged sword where there is a clear potential to accelerate regional integration but at the same time the state's heightened presence in the borderlands has the potential to threaten local trading patterns as well as negatively influence people's perceptions about the meaning of the boundary. The minor progress made in the pursuit of regional economic integration in the Horn of Africa is only observable upon closer inspection, at the sites where it actually occurs, at the borders and surrounding borderlands. One such place is the eastern Ethiopia and Somaliland border area of Tog Waajale. As the main crossing point, Waajale has developed into a vibrant border town due to the increased use of the border for informal and formal cross-border trade.

Introduction

The discourse on borders and cross-border activity in the Horn of Africa is always framed within a problematical framework. The general opinion is that of contestation and tension between the various states of the region over their territorial boundaries as noted by Woodward (1996) and Cliffe (1999; 2004). This is to a large extent a fair reflection of reality. As a result the region has lagged far behind other continental sub-regions in the quest for greater regional integration. This is reflected in various statistics on development and growth in Africa. However, what is not always reflected in the statistics is that there have been modest initiatives by some of the states, such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan, and the parallel initiatives of the local communities who are directly affected by the stability or instability of the borders and the surrounding borderlands. The outcome has been a mixed bag of results in terms of state approaches to their borders; indeed, for the most part, it has been top-down approaches that have dictated the nature of the border and surrounds, in terms of security and cross-border activities.

In the present context of national and local approaches to cross border activities in Ethiopia, notable developments are taking place at the Tog Waajale border between Ethiopia and Somaliland. The Ethiopian state is increasingly playing a vigorous role in the administration of cross border movement particularly that of trade related activities. It appears that the degree of cooperation at the community level on either side of the boundary has compelled the state to respond in ways that complement and even encourage the local practices.

The state has to a large extent relaxed its grip on policing population movement on this border. As a result, the border at Waajale has become quite open, facilitating the free movement of citizens of two different countries across the boundary line (Gross 1973). People use this border on a daily basis and are not required to go through extensive bureaucratic measures. In addition to this, the customs officials are working hard to clamp down on illegal cross border trade and smuggling. All this indicates to the increasing presence of the state at this border, regardless of the seemingly contradictory approaches of allowing for extensive permeability while heavily policing illegal trade.

The citizens on both sides of the boundary, particularly on the Ethiopian side, use the border quite extensively for their livelihoods, ranging from small-scale trade to daily purchases. This can only be seen as part of what Feyissa and Hoehne (2010) have termed the usage of borders and borderlands as resources. However, at the same time, this boundary in addition to still retaining its spatial divisions continues to hold different meanings for the people who use it. The boundary is mentally constructed in particular ways by the people who use it. As Migdal (2004) notes, there is a real mental map that exists and constructs a division between home and alien territory. These seemingly contradictory dynamics that are at play at this border area suggest that the instrumentality of the border is being fully utilised, while at the same time the meanings associated with the boundary as a marker of difference are increasingly coming to the fore.

This paper aims to demonstrate how the mutual shaping of the state and community at Tog Waajale is playing itself out. The Ethiopian state has made its eastern borderlands with Somaliland more open for the movement of people and goods as a direct result of the informal cross border networks that exist. Although the state still maintains a firm grip on the illegal movement of goods and people there is considerable freedom of movement.

The paper will show that because of the high levels of cooperation between the two communities on either side of the dry river boundary, and the increasing presence of the state at the borderlands, there is an element of 'us' and 'them' that is slowly emerging. There is a reification of the border in people's minds on the Ethiopian side. This helps to caution against romantic notions of regional cooperation or integration on this particular border and elsewhere. I argue that the increasing presence of the state at this border area has resulted in a relatively open border, primarily as a result of pressing commercial imperatives; however, because of this, people's awareness of being Ethiopian has also become more pronounced.

I will demonstrate this by first outlining some of the ways in which the state has made the border more open. This will be done by simultaneously giving examples of what the state has done and how the local population has made use of these changes. I will do this by using evidence based on immigration and customs policies and practices obtained from observations and interviews gathered in Harar, Babile and Tog Waajale

areas of the Harari National Regional State and Somali National Regional State, respectively, in the eastern Ethiopia borderlands. Next, I will demonstrate how this has led to more cross-border cooperation between the communities on both sides of Tog Waajale thus creating a highly permeable boundary. This will then be contrasted by evidence of how the open border is developing strong notions of being Ethiopian.

Context

Background of the Ethiopia-Somaliland border

The border between Ethiopia and Somaliland has a remarkable if not complex history. Barnes (2010, p.122) notes that the Ethiopian victory of Adwa in 1896 led to Ethiopia's occupation of large tracts of Somali-inhabited areas on its eastern periphery. The subsequent British Somaliland Protectorate government then endeavoured unsuccessfully to return the 'lost' Somali lands to the Somalis. Prior to independence, union and the formation of the Somali Republic in 1960, the border experienced a complex administrative history. The Imperial state in Ethiopia administered on one side, while the British Somaliland Protectorate government administered across the border.

However, at the outbreak of the Second World War, the British came to administer both sides of the border, assuming administrative rights on the Ethiopian side as well. Ethiopia as enemy territory due to the Italian occupation since 1936 came to be administered by the allied forces, in this case Britain, under the British Military Administration (Ibid). This means that for a period of over five years, the border ceased to be a significant international boundary in its daily use. It was not until 1960 that the boundary became critical, probably for the first time in its history, assuming a significant political and security status.

It was not until the early 1980s when the Ethiopian Derg began supporting northern Somali liberation movements, and hosting them in eastern Ethiopia¹, that the boundary took on a new dimension. This facilitated a new approach to the movement

¹ Interview with Bobe Yusuf Duale, former SNM fighter and Director of APD, Hargeisa, 9 January 2012

of people across this border, particularly at Tog Waajale. Since the 1980s the border has facilitated a constant flow of goods and people, back and forth across the boundary. The most salient of these can be said to be the movement of the Somali National Movement (SNM) guerrilla fighters and of refugees fleeing northern Somalia at the height of the Somali civil war in the mid-1980s. The latter is of particular significance, as many people in Somaliland today can recall crossing over to Ethiopia during the civil war. Ethiopian border towns such as Hartasheik received and hosted the largest number of refugees. This history of cross border movement has ensured the cordial relations that emerged between Ethiopia and the breakaway region of Somaliland after 1991.

Regional Integration in perspective: Africa and the Horn

Regional integration has long been touted as the key to development in Africa. As noted by Akpura-Aja (2001, p.279), at the conference of African leaders in 1958, economic integration and cooperation were recognized as developmentally imperative. However, in the following years after this meeting only minor progress has been made. Integration has failed to yield the desired results. Many regional economic communities have failed to move beyond the initial stages of development, which include the most basic levels of integration (Mshomba 2000). The outcome has thus been a dismal account, where the imperatives of integration have been difficult to achieve in most of Africa, but more specifically in the Horn.

The main obstacles are largely political in nature. However, the economies of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region are said to equally possess major structural obstacles to the attainment of regional economic integration (Healy 2011). The IGAD region is made up of Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea (suspended membership), South Sudan (has applied to join) with Somaliland holding an unofficial observer status. These countries occupy the bottom of many world development indexes, with some of the worst poverty statistics. The region has some of the lowest levels of intra-regional trade in Africa (Ibid). However, looking at specific cases, and observing cross border trade at particular boundaries, one notices cooperation that bodes well for elevated levels of integration. This is the case as one looks at recent cross border trade studies conducted at the

Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, and Sudan borderlands, such as that of Majid (2010), Pavanello (2010) and Aklilu and Catley (2010).

In many of these studies, Ethiopia emerges as the key and central player with the most extensive informal and formal cross-border trade networks. With a rapidly growing economy, Ethiopia is also the only IGAD member that is trading more vigorously with its neighbours (Healy 2010). Ethiopia's military dominance in the region has long been noted, said to be one of the largest and well-equipped armies in sub-Saharan Africa as early as the 19th century (Marcus (1994), and more recently during the 1970s, as noted in works such as Kapuscinski(1998) and Clapham, (2001).

In the past decade, one can begin to speak of Ethiopia's ascendance in terms of political and economic dominance (Maiyo 2012), sparking debates about the country's regional hegemonic aspirations (Iyob 2000). All of this is taking place in a regional context that is rapidly changing, with increasingly blurred distinctions between the "Horn" and "East" Africa. According to Maiyo (2012) and Onyango-Obbo (2012) South Sudan and Somalia are said to have applied for East African Community (EAC) membership. Kabukuru (2012) notes that Ethiopia is seen to be joining (unofficially) the EAC with the launch of a multi-billion dollar mega infrastructure project with South Sudan and Kenya.

The implication of these developments and shifts are that Ethiopia is in a position to seek the creation of a favourable economic regional context. With a history of military dominance, emergent political and economic might, "Ethiopia should therefore be expected to control its regional environment" (Clapham, 2006, p.31). The development of efficient trade transit corridors is seen as an urgent and necessary step to achieve some of the most pressing socio-economic challenges facing the Horn of Africa sub-region, as noted in Thomas (2009), UNECA (2010), and IGAD (2012). With Ethiopia at the centre of developmental initiatives in the region, such plans can be expected to be addressed with a greater sense of urgency, thus propelling integration to new heights. With a booming economy, Ethiopia can expect to benefit the most from the realisation of such initiatives.

The border with Somaliland represents a potential lifeline for the economic well-being of Ethiopia. Ethiopia, as noted by Clapham (2006), has become the largest landlocked state in the world (measured by population). The decision to open the

border and to relax the control of population movement can be seen as a necessary step to achieving a flexible interaction with neighbouring Somaliland. This, of course is made necessary by the latter's underutilised port of Berbera which is roughly 850 kilometres from Addis Ababa, and about 300 kilometres from the border with Ethiopia.

In addition to the Djibouti port (which is the closest and most overused), and Mombasa (much further away), Addis is increasingly being forced to consider the opportunities presented by its neighbour, Somaliland. By the Somaliland authorities' own admission, the Berbera port lacks the adequate infrastructure to be a serious competitor to Djibouti or Mombasa ports². As a result, the port has mainly been used by Ethiopia to receive food aid³. The improvement of this situation will undoubtedly be beneficial to both Ethiopia and Somaliland in the long-term.

Emerging ideas of difference

Some sections of the community on the Ethiopian side of the Waajale border feel a strong sense of difference from their neighbours across the border. This can to a large extent be understood in a constructivist perspective. Migdal (2004, p.6), notes, that boundaries connote the site at which things are done differently or the limits to where things are done in one way, thus they are social constructs. This is evident in the fact that, these feelings have not always existed in their current form, but have evolved and changed over time, and will continue to be shaped and reshaped by both national and regional contexts. The current understandings of self on the Ethiopian side have been shaped more recently, with the increasing presence of the state in the Waajale border and surrounding borderlands.

This is particularly interesting on this particular border which at face value can be seen as one that separates seemingly ethnically homogenous people. Waajale is within the Somali Regional state of Ethiopia or 'Region five' and certainly the population is predominantly Somali. However, the ethnic homogeneity of the Somali people is a

² Interview with the Director of the commercial branch in the Trade Ministry, Hargeisa, 10 January 2012.

³ Ibid.

misleading notion that needs to be cautioned against in any serious consideration of intra-and inter-state relations in the Horn of Africa.

Mohammed Abdi Mohammed (1997, quoted in Markakis, 2011, p.56) notes that Somali society is a dynamic one, breaking up and rebuilding constantly, depending on the times, the circumstances, and the needs of the various communities. This fluidity helps to understand how the border people at Waajale are able to see differences between them and their kin across the border, where none necessarily existed twenty years ago. In addition, the Ethiopian community at Waajale border is moderately heterogeneous, consisting of other Ethiopian ethnic groups. Therefore, the strong feelings of being Ethiopian cut across ethnic lines on the Ethiopian side.

The people at Waajale appear to be finding common ground in their being Ethiopian than the seeming differences between their own ethnic identities. This is perhaps an unintended consequence of the increasing presence of the state in the borderlands. To be sure, the state exists at Waajale first and foremost to regulate cross-border trade to and from the coast of Berbera. Others, such as Love (2009, p.5) note that this can be seen as the beginning of a significant integration of the Somali region more fully to the rest of the Ethiopian economy. If this is the case, then there could be quite a fundamental development taking place at Waajale, one that could have implications for both the nation and state in Ethiopia.

Cross border activity

The opening of Tog Waajale border

The coming into power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991 ushered in a new era of economic renewal in Ethiopia. Apart from the apparent dramatic changes in the political landscape, equally novel transformations have taken place on the economic front. In this case, the political and economic changes have been mutually constitutive. A case in point is the fact that in 1993 Ethiopia became a landlocked country following Eritrean secession and independence, making it the largest land locked country in the world. Not an enviable feature by any means. The new Ethiopian rulers have had to find innovative economic means to sustain its eighty million plus population. Hence the existence of a vital

interest for Ethiopia to gain access to a port, which, according to Clapham (2006, p.22) could in principle, be attained through any of its six neighbours.

Somaliland, not having much to lose, but a lot to gain is in a much better position to make bilateral arrangements with Ethiopia. However, its lack of international recognition makes formal arrangements with other neighbours much more challenging. In May 2011 Somaliland celebrated twenty years of self-declared independence from the Somali state that dissolved in 1991. The past twenty years have been a bitter and poignant struggle for recognition for Somaliland. International, continental and regional approaches to Somaliland have been less than promising. Clapham and others (2011) note that neighbouring Ethiopia has been hesitant to diplomatically recognise Somaliland, a position that is criticised in Hargeisa.

Healy (2011, p.44) notes, that this has not stopped Somaliland and Ethiopia from developing bilateral trade cooperation. Somaliland relies on Ethiopia for 60% of its trade and the relationship shows the peace and prosperity dividends to be gained from integrated economic links (Ibid). However, this apparent trade imbalance worries Hargeisa. There is very little flow of goods from Somaliland going to Ethiopia, save for food aid coming from the port. The limited use of the Berbera port by Ethiopia does not make any profit as “a tonne of goods headed for Ethiopia from Berbera can cost the Ethiopians about 110 Somaliland shillings”⁴. As far as the Somalilanders are concerned, this is free service. The Director explained that they are in a process of seeking an equally beneficial arrangement, although he is very aware of the obvious limitations in any bilateral arrangement.

This can be seen as part of a wider regional process of economic integration from the top down, although in this case Somaliland’s status presents an interesting dynamic for regional integration. Nascent formal arrangements exist for instance between Ethiopia and Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan and with South Sudan. However, there is a

⁴ Interview with the Director of the commercial branch in the Trade Ministry, Hargeisa, 10 January 2012.

caveat, as Healy (2011) alludes to the fact that any amount of economic integration is subjected to the security interdependence that exists in the region.

The security interdependence however, is according to Healy (2011) as strong as the economic interdependence and springs from essentially the same source, namely the connectivity of communities across boundaries. It is for this reason that what has happened on the eastern borderlands of Ethiopia with Somaliland can be seen as quite significant. In this relatively stable borderland, informal trading has led the state to formalise some aspects of cross-border trade, even though the informal sector persists, and indeed thrives.

A good case to illustrate this point is the export of the mild narcotic plant khat. “Khat is the amphetamine-like leaf” (Clapham and others, 2011, p.16) which is said to bring about euphoria and extraordinary alertness when chewed for a certain amount of time. Although legal and a formal export via the Waajale border to Somaliland, Puntland and across the Red sea, the informal trading of khat is still big business. Indeed, there are two parallel export businesses for khat coming from Ethiopia, the legal (formal and informal) and the illegal. One is represented by the numerous trucks one sees rushing from the Ethiopian interior to the border, forming long queues to go through customs checks at Waajale; the other image is that of trucks moving about under the cover of darkness and often away from the main roads, still heading in the same direction.

It becomes apparent that what is taking place on this particular boundary is a result of political conditions in both countries that allow for the existence of formal and informal trade links across the border. This is evident as it is common knowledge that this boundary has not always enjoyed this type of openness under previous regimes in both Ethiopia and in the former Somali Republic. It is then possible to argue that the current political conditions that prevail in both Ethiopia and Somaliland have created a space for the local communities on the borderlands to freely engage with their contacts across the border. It then becomes of significant academic interest, that Ethiopia enjoys the most open and stable border with a neighbour that is not recognised as a sovereign state.

Immigration

The Waajale border post that separates Ethiopia and Somaliland lies on the edges of a dried up river, Tog (river in Somali language) Waajale, this as the key demarcation point. The formal set up at Waajale can be described as that of a road crossing with double immigration posts on either side of the boundary. This is not always the case, as border crossings are arranged differently, depending on individual state preference. All sovereign states have the right to determine whether and which foreign citizens are permitted to enter or reside within their territories. In addition, as Messina and Lahav (2006, p.233) have noted, that national immigration policies may be *de jure* or *de facto*, whatever the case, they are crafted in and generally reflect national interest. This is certainly the case in Ethiopia; it also seems to be the case in the peculiar case of Somaliland and is reflected at the border crossing.

State representations, however, take on an interesting reversal at the two border posts. A reversal in terms of what one would expect from a fully fledged internationally recognised state, and from one that is not. On the Ethiopian side, there is a generally jovial mood from the officials, and none are wearing uniforms. In fact it is rather difficult to distinguish them from the people who cross back and forth on the crossing. Whereas on the Somaliland side, one is greeted by national colours on flags and various art forms on the walls of the immigration office. In addition, the Somaliland officials are elegantly dressed in black and white uniforms, with sparkling white shirts. The mood however, is just as convivial as on the Ethiopian side.

The situation at the Waajale border crossing can be described as one of great permeability, where the boundary is crossed often by large numbers and with great frequency, especially by the borderlands people (Griffiths 1996, p.73). The scene Griffiths (1996) describes applies at this boundary crossing, where the officials do not attempt to interfere with the passage of local people on foot or bicycles, whereas foreigners are subjected to a proper bureaucratic process. However, unlike the image described by Griffiths, the procedure is relatively easy and hassle free for foreigners at Waajale, it is not the busiest border crossing, and very few foreigners cross here.

The important point here, however, is that the local people from Waajale on the Ethiopian side cross this boundary frequently without being subjected to any bureaucratic scrutiny. In fact the immigration officers do not even bother with them.

However, the situation is different when an Ethiopian wishes to travel onwards to Hargeisa with a foreigner. Then they need to produce their passport, and get a stamp right there at the post, as it was the case when I officially crossed the border to Somaliland en route to Hargeisa. In fact my companion had passed through here several times before on his own while travelling to Hargeisa without producing his passport. He told me that he would simply wave at the Ethiopian officials and go to the Somaliland border post to greet the officials there and then proceed to Hargeisa.

It appears then that either the Ethiopian state is according Somaliland a certain level of courtesy in the context of the latter's precarious sovereignty status. Or, Somaliland demands an equal respectability. However, I suspect that it is much more complex than this, and might have to do with Waajale cutting across a particular "culture area" Asiwaju (1985, quoted in Griffiths 1996, p.74). This is certainly not typical to this region of Africa, as "every international boundary in Africa cuts across at least one culture area" (Griffiths, 1996, p.74). It is for this reason then that we witness a certain level of permeability on this and other boundaries across Africa. For instance, my companion is of Somali ethnicity and an Ethiopian national, and was travelling to Somaliland. What becomes even clearer then is that there is more than one rule that governs the movement of people on this particular border.

But it gets even more complicated. People from Somaliland are required to produce documentation when coming into Ethiopia and travelling beyond the border town of Waajale. This became evident while on a minibus travelling from the border toward towards the interior in Jijiga, the capital of the Somali region. We were stopped at a supposedly customs checkpoint, about ten kilometres from the border. Here our entire luggage was checked, including identification and travel documents. A family travelling from Somaliland consisting of a mother, two daughters and a son ran into problems. All but one daughter had the required documentation and the Ethiopians would not let her go through, after about fifteen minutes of negotiation, they all had to get off and return to Waajale. The more important question is how they managed to clear immigration at the Ethiopian border post.

Despite the ambiguous application of rules at the border crossing, there is substantial movement on this border. The Somalilanders, especially women, whose main reason

for travel to Ethiopia is medical reasons⁵ continuously cross back and forth. In addition, in Harar-about 150 kilometres from the border I was able to visit a particular hotel that almost exclusively houses Somaliland visitors. Here I met a couple of women from Somaliland who told me they come to Ethiopia mainly for medical reasons and not commerce. They also told me that they require a passport to come in and get stamped to come into Ethiopia.

There are no set and rigid immigration rules for Ethiopians going into Somaliland; however, there appears to be a consistency in the rules that apply to Somalilanders coming into Ethiopia. There are a number of reasons for this. The Ethiopians appear to be much stricter in how they allow the Somalilanders in their territory beyond Waajale. This could be a simple case of how any state exercises its immigration policies, and has nothing to do with Somaliland's unrecognised status, or it is a case of a functional state being weary of its unrecognised neighbour. The constant going back and forth at the border within the Tog Wajaale vicinity does not necessitate any documentation. However, I believe there are cases, where cultural affinities are invoked at the moment of crossing the boundary.

Customs

The location of customs posts in relation to the border crossing of any border has significant implications for the effective regulation of the movement of goods. Therefore the location of the customs post can be related to the level of 'permeability' at the border. There is great variety on the location of a customs post on any border. As Griffiths (1996, p.69) illustrates that some are unguarded, that is, they have a customs post on neither side of the border, whereas others have a customs post that is set back from the actual crossing point.

On the Ethiopian side of Waajale, there are customs officials who are physically standing around at the crossing point, right next to the immigration post. The actual office is located a few meters away from the immigration office. Customs check here

⁵ Conversation with an Ethiopian immigration official at the Tog Waajale border post, 29 November 2011.

is only the beginning of more to come as one moves away from Wajaale toward the interior. For instance, on the Jigjiga road one encounters at least three other checkpoints. On the Somaliland side I did not notice any customs procedure or the checking of currency. However, as one moves away from the border area toward the Somaliland interior on the road to Gebile, and onwards to Hargeisa, there are at least five checkpoints. It is not very clear what these checkpoints are for. Bags are not searched, and no documentation is required when the small public taxis pass through. The officials simply ask that the windows be drawn lower and they peek through, exchange a few words with the driver and then lift the barriers.

However, it is on the Ethiopian side that the focus is on, and here they take customs checks seriously. Firstly, there is no public passenger transport that moves on the boundary crossing. People crossing the boundary do so on foot, as the taxi terminals are located further inside Waajale town. The only vehicles that move on the actual crossing are official and licensed trading vehicles, mainly trucks. As a foreigner crossing the border, one is only asked about the amount of Ethiopian currency they are taking out of the country. Locals do not go through customs checks, unless they are traders.

The Ethiopian customs office at Wajaale is quite busy, based on observations made there. People come in and out, both Ethiopian and Somalilanders; they are the legal traders and merchants. Many are being issued with permits and licenses, others making enquiries, while others have been called in because they have contravened a rule. From conversations with the customs officials, there is a lot of smuggling, large and small scale. I was shown a road where the large scale smugglers use to evade customs checks. It is a rough road further away from the official crossing point; apparently the officials cannot be bothered to police that road. “Mostly they smuggle khat to Somaliland and mainly on the small trucks, some even use camels at night”⁶. This is all known to the customs officials, but they simply do not have the powers to patrol the length of the border. Hence the focus is on the main crossing point.

On the several times I have been on this road, the customs officials at the first customs stop outside Waajale make a big show of the checkpoint. All the passengers

⁶ Conversation with Ethiopian customs official at Tog Waajale, 28 November 2011.

have to disembark the minibus, all the luggage that has been fastened on the rooftop has to be unloaded and checked, including women's handbags. The procedure usually takes a good amount of time. It does not end there; there are about two more mini checkpoints before reaching Jijiga. Upon arrival in Jijiga there appears to be random checks, whose official sanctioning is highly doubtful. Despite all these checkpoints, a number of these petty smugglers still risk it, although some do get caught, as I witnessed a woman being put into a custom jail at Waajale.

I was fortunate to be made privy to the antics of small scale smugglers while on a minibus from Waajale to Jijiga courtesy of one woman. She was carrying an excessive amount of fabric, the type used as head and body wraps in the region. Certainly aware of the checkpoint ahead about ten kilometres outside of Waajale, she began distributing the fabric to several people in the bus, including myself. Many simply took the fabric and put it into their bags, some women used it as extra head wraps. After being told that I'm a foreigner she apologised and stated that she thought I was Ethiopian, but nonetheless still asked me to take one of her cloths. This is common practice on this road, whether it is khat from Harar to the border or goods coming from the border to the interior. The small-scale smugglers often get away with it from my observations, and the officials also seem to be able to live with that.

Cross border trade at the community level

Informal cross border trade has hitherto provided the most salient catalyst to regional integration in the greater Horn region (if classified according to the IGAD region). The current immigration and customs conditions that prevail on the Ethiopia-Somaliland border at Waajale have greatly enhanced the levels of informal cross border trade. Most significantly, many of the current trading patterns and routes are routed in local practices of social organisation.

The reality is that it is the Somali that are heavily involved in informal cross-border trade, particularly that of livestock, on either side of the border. These networks, according to Majid (2010, p.2) penetrate deep into Ethiopia's Somali Region where many of these animals are raised. In a 2004 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) map of some of the key livestock trading routes in the Horn, several Somali

clans are revealed as the key participants and regulators. The key routes traverse at least four countries, finding their way to the Mombassa, Bossaso, Berbera and Djibouti ports. This is a key example of the nature of regional integration at the community level.

Livestock boom and some Khat

The state benefits significantly from the informal trade links that are organised within the Somali networks as many of the livestock that gets trekked to the ports is taxed. The extent of these networks is staggering, in addition to being meticulously if not creatively executed. Majid (2010) demonstrates this as he illustrates which clans control which corridors and the mechanisms required for successful passage of livestock. These include the catchments areas and the clan-controlled corridors; central to the networks is trust. In the context of a highly politicised environment, with the ever-present danger of conflict, the importance of social relations as an insurance mechanism cannot be overstressed (Ibid). The fluidity of Somali culture mentioned earlier can be seen to be at play here. That these clan-based relations can be either a source of cooperation or conflict at any given time, depending on circumstances is significant in the conceptualisation of region integration.

By far the most prevalent type of cross-border trade at Wajaale is the informal type. It is important to note here, as Healy (2011. p.23) that informal trade takes place outside the control of the state but is not necessarily illegal. However, on the Ethiopian side the informal trade has flourished to the extent that the state has intervened to regulate it, a move not always welcome by those engaged in the trade. Even the small scale informal traders are required to have a licence for the import and export of goods such as rice, electronics, milk, khat, second hand clothes and livestock⁷. In addition, these licences can only be for a fixed commodity⁸, therefore, restricting the traders.

The large-scale nature of livestock trade requires specific attention, as it dominates not only in the entire Horn sub-region, but also in the eastern Ethiopia borderlands.

⁷ Interview with immigration officials at Togochole, 29 November 2011.

⁸ Ibid

Indeed, it is argued, that Ethiopia is “a major cross-border livestock exporting country, unparalleled anywhere in Africa” (Aklilu and Catley, 2010, p.6).

In the eastern Ethiopia borderlands, one needs only to visit the Babile camel and cattle market. Babile is located on what Majid (2010) calls the “Harar-Jijiga-Hargeisa-Berbera” corridor. This village town lies on the road between Harar and Jijiga, where the Harar highlands give way to the Jijiga plains. Babile has the dubious distinction of having a dual administration, under both the Oromiya and Somali regions, a casualty of intra-federal boundary making in Ethiopia, according to Kefale 2010, p. 623). The market is, however, one of the biggest in the eastern part of Ethiopia.

At the market one gets a clear sense of the centrality of livestock breeding to people’s livelihoods. In informal conversations, I was told that the livestock comes from all across the Somali and Oromiya regions, particularly the former, and as far deep into the Ogaden in places such as Gode. Babile has become a popular choice for these faraway places mainly because, according to Aklilu and Catley, (2010, p.7) it offers better market opportunities than the much closer regions of Southern Somalia. The state has thus become increasingly involved in the livestock trade, following years of non-engagement by the country in formal export markets (Ibid, 6).

In a survey that monitored cross border trade at Waajale between October and November 2011, it was discovered that rice accounted for about 26 % of trade from Ethiopia into Somaliland. It is noted in the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group report (2012, 2-3) that during the same period, Waajale also recorded the highest figure of livestock traded in all the monitored border crossing points, a total of over 140 000 heads of cattle. It is true that the principal trading commodities at this border are livestock, particularly camels and cattle, as well as khat. The latter is even more dominant, as it is traded on a daily basis, whereas cattle trading peaks during certain times of the year such as during the annual Hajj pilgrimage.

It is not an exaggeration to state that livestock and khat are the region’s key trading commodities. Indeed, as noted in Desta (2007, quoted in Healy, 2011, p.27) earlier Ethiopia is said to have the largest livestock population in Africa, the Horn region as a whole is likely to contain the largest concentration in the world. This means that there is great potential for coordinated trade across the region on this alone. Khat on the

other hand is a central part of the social culture of the region, and thus provides comparable opportunities for coordinated efforts.

The use of currency for cross border trade at Waajale is of interest. Locals freely move around with any type of currency. In fact, on the Somaliland side of the border, three types of currencies are in circulation, the Somaliland shilling, the Ethiopian birr and the US dollar. All three are equally and widely circulated up to and including Hargeisa. On the Ethiopian side however, the Somaliland shilling and US dollar cannot move beyond Waajale. Majid (2010) notes, that in Ethiopia access to foreign exchange is more restricted. This free exchange of currency at the border areas provides more freedom to the traders and thus encourages cross border trade and cooperation. However, it is not certain to what extent this free circulation of currency would exist if Somaliland were a recognised sovereign state. The Somaliland shilling itself is highly problematic, as unofficial exchange rates with the US dollar generally fluctuate between 4000 and 5000 shillings per dollar, making it highly cumbersome for practical use.

Potential pitfalls to integration through cross-border trade

As much as the fusion of cross border trade between state and community has created conditions for accelerated integration, this collaboration has several potential pitfalls. One of the main dangers is the excessive presence of the state for the regulation of cross border trade. This has the potential to limit the space for informal trade. The result could be the exclusion of some sections of the local community from informal trade networks leaving them and unable to negotiate the intricate channels of highly regulated trade.

The next and related potential problem is that of the state shaping and entrenching perceptions of being Ethiopian on the borderlands. Indications are that the intensified levels of cross- border trade and the heavy involvement of the state have to a certain extent overcome ethnic identities (Oromo, Somali and Amhara in cross border trade) while simultaneously enhancing the national identity. This is a positive outcome for Ethiopian nation building, however, it is could potentially strain the hitherto smooth relations with the borderland community across the border in Somaliland.

Too much state?

It is possible that in seeing the potential benefits of cross border trade the Ethiopian state will continue to tighten its authority on policy and the policing of this sector. This is certainly the case at Tog Waajale, a traditionally quiet border crossing. With the Ethiopian economy growing significantly in recent years as noted in an earlier section, the pressure for access to the coast has also increased. As a result, the Ethiopian government has invested time and resources in exploring its options.

One of the options is the development of a formal trade corridor between Addis Ababa and the port of Berbera in Somaliland. There are notable results already; for example the current asphalt road linking Harar to Waajale was recently completed in the past year. The road ends where the Ethiopian border post is located at Waajale. As mentioned in Clapham and others (2011), on the Somaliland side one finds a series of mud roads criss-crossing their way through dongas over a flat, bleak terrain for a distance of nearly twenty kilometres on the way to Hargeisa. However, a number of unofficial sources note that the Ethiopians are interested in upgrading the road on the Somaliland side as well, all the way to Berbera. This would certainly be a magnanimous move on the part of the Ethiopians and a good sign for regional integration.

The development of a formal trade corridor would most likely disrupt a large proportion of the informal trade, bringing some people into the formal realm, and leaving the majority out. It is a known fact, that such developments are top-down in nature, as the net benefits are usually to the state, wherein the latter has to make a concerted effort to include the local communities (Thomas, 2009). There is no doubt that such a trade and transport corridor would be a significant undertaking in the pursuit of regional integration. Such development corridors have been known to encourage integrated development by their economic potential rather than by political boundaries (Ibid). It would take a highly dedicated Ethiopian state to cater for the inclusion of borderland traders in the event of the establishment of such a corridor. This would be a critical moment in Ethiopian state making.

In addition, in the Ethiopian case it may not always be easy to separate the economic from the political. Indeed, the geopolitics of the region is always a crucial factor to consider. The spectre of secessionist movements in Ethiopia's south-eastern

borderlands also remains. As a result, the borderlands or 'emerging' regions according to Majid (2010, p.12) tend to be conceptualised more in security terms than in developmental ones. It is highly plausible that what may have initially begun as an economic venture may ultimately be driven by political imperatives, indeed, even becoming dominated by them. It is accurate to argue that the economic prosperity of the borderland communities is linked to political developments nationally and regionally.

But we are different.

Despite the seemingly elemental and longstanding relations between the Somalis who form the ethnic majority in these borderlands, there are some deep cutting differences, perceived or real. There are long standing fault lines among the people who occupy the borderlands, on either side of the border. As Markakis (2011, p.16), notes that perennial clashes among the pastoralists over traditional resources such as pastures, water, livestock and access routes remain. The recent trend of the state becoming increasingly involved and present in the borderlands is likely to emphasise these. The Tog Waajale borderlands have thus experienced the civil branches of the state for the first time only in the past two decades than they have in over a century. They have since become more familiar with the centre that they belong to in more ways, and thus reshaping their understandings of belonging.

These new notions of belonging manifest in the most remarkable ways. For instance, while at Waajale, though not necessarily nationalist, the people are fully conscious of their nationality. For one, they are fully aware of their neighbour's precarious state as an unrecognised state. Although there is great permeability on the border, the boundary represents something much more fundamental in people's minds. The boundary is said to, "signify the point at which something becomes something else, at which the way things are done changes, at which "we" and "they" begin, at which certain rules for behaviour no longer obtain and others take hold" (Migdal, 2004,p.5) . This includes instances where boundaries are constructed and maintained by people's mental maps which divide home from alien territory, the familiar from the other.

At Waajale this became apparent through interviews with immigration officials. When asked about the permeability of the border and whether they faced any problems because of this, the most unexpected response was that the biggest problem

they have has to do with “cultural differences”⁹. These apparent and seemingly significant points of difference are the social and economic systems of the people on either side of the boundary. “For the pastoralists there is no border, they have no idea about passports and regulations, they only follow their grazing lands”, “these people are wild”¹⁰ was another comment.

Hogg (1997) confirms that indeed, pastoralists are no respecters of state borders. However, these seemingly extreme comments of the immigration officials are merely reflecting state policy which appears to influence their own opinions as well. In other less formal conversations, the emerging picture is that the Ethiopian state is more real and can be associated with permanency and security, as opposed to the uncertainty and possibly “wildness” that prevails across the border.

The general attitude of the centre towards these areas has been ambivalent at best; as Hogg (1997, p.13), notes, they have generally been regarded as troublesome border areas inhabited by ‘primitive nomadic tribes’. Since the 1970s, with limited success, there have been several projects aimed at reversing this mode of existence. For instance, the planners of a World-Bank funded project in 1975 insisted that pastoralists change their traditional ways of doing things (Ibid). In the 1990s a more intensified shift began, not of the attitudes per se, these seem to be entrenched, rather on the state’s engagement with these areas.

According to Healy (2010, p.30), Ethiopia’s national development plans include the option of settlement programmes for pastoralists and the establishment of new livestock marketing system. The plan to do away with these people’s way of life has picked up pace in recent years, with the state dismissing anthropologists and foreigners and accusing them of romanticising the nomadic way of life (Ibid). It is no wonder then that the state representatives at Waajale hold these strong views against the Somaliland nomads. Although held by the state, this agriculturalist-pastoralist divide also exists between different Somali clans, as noted by Kefale (2010) and Markakis (2011), meaning that it is not confined to the state level.

⁹ Interview with immigration officials at Togochole, 29 November 2011.

¹⁰ Ibid

Conclusion

Cross-border trade on the Waajale border between eastern Ethiopia and Somaliland has expanded in the past several years and can be seen as a precursor to accelerated economic integration. Through the auspices of the regional body, IGAD, accelerated economic integration has been on the main agenda in recent years. Fully aware of the numerous challenges that have prevented substantial integration, several regional interventions have been initiated. Within this context, on the Waajale border, informal cross border trade has intersected with regional and national development plans.

What is taking place at Waajale is a case of integration at the community level possibly facing a take over by the state, with potentially negative unintended consequences. In a borderland region that has never experienced much state presence, the state is making itself felt, a situation brought about by economic imperatives, and provided for by a regional context that encourages integration. The risk of this development is the alienation of small-scale cross border traders who cannot be fully absorbed in the formal sector thus reversing their economic fortunes and affecting their livelihoods. In addition, the heightened sense of nationality at the border conjures up more questions on the future of regional integration.

Bibliography

- Akpuru-Aja, A. (2001) The Politics of Regional Integration and Development in Africa: Issues, Limitations and Prospects. In: Iheduru, O.M. ed. *Contending Issues in African Development, Advances, Challenges and the Future*. London, Greenwood Press. pp.277-291.
- Barnes, C. (2010) The Ethiopian-British Somaliland Boundary. In: Hoehne, M. and Feyissa, D. eds. *Borders and Borderlands as resources in the Horn of Africa*. Suffolk, James Currey. pp.122-132.
- Clapham, C. (2002) Controlling Space in Ethiopia. In: James, W.; Donham, D. et al. eds. *Remapping Ethiopia, Socialism and After*. Oxford, James Currey.
- Clapham, C. (2006) Ethiopia. In: Clapham, C.; Herbst, J. and Mills, G. eds. *Big African States*. Johannesburg, Wits University Press. pp. 17-38.
- Clapham, C. (2001) War and State Formation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, *Failed States Conference, 10-14April, Florence Italy*.
- Clapham, C., Herbst, J. and Mills, G. et al (2011) *African Game Changer? The Consequences of Somaliland's (Non) Recognition*. Discussion Paper, The Brenthurst Foundation.
- Cliffe, L. (1999) Regional Dimensions of Conflict in the Horn of Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, 20, (1) February, pp.89-111.
- Cliffe, L. (2004) Regional Implications of the Eritrea-Ethiopia War. In: Jacquin-Berdal, D. and Plaut, M. eds. *Unfinished Business, Ethiopia and Eritrea at War*. Asmara and Trenton, Red Sea Press. pp. 155-168.
- East Africa Cross -border Trade Bulletin, Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (October-December 2011). [Internet], Available from <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/East%20Africa%20Cross-border%20Trade%20Bulletin%20February%202012.pdf> [Accessed 10 May 2012].
- Gross, F. (1973) Registering and Ranking of Tension Areas. In: Strassoldo, R. ed. *Boundaries and Regions, explorations in the growth and peace potential of the peripheries*. Trieste, Edizioni LINT. pp. 317-328.

- Griffiths, I. (1996) *Permeable Boundaries in Africa*. In: Nugent, P. and Asiwaju, A. eds. *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*. London, Pinter, pp.68-83.
- Healy, S. (2011) *Hostage to Conflict, Prospects for Building Regional Economic Cooperation in the Horn of Africa*. Chatham House Report.
- Hoehne, M. V. and Feyissa, D. (2010) *Borders and Borderlands as resources in the Horn of Africa*. Suffolk, James Currey.
- Hogg, R. (1997) *Pastoralists, Ethnicity and the State in Ethiopia*. London, HAAN Publishing.
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (2012) *Concept Note: Cooperation under the Horn of African Initiative (HOAI)* [Internet], Djibouti, Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Available from http://igad.int/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=397:concept-note-cooperation-under-the-horn-of-africa-initiative [Accessed 28th April 2012].
- Iyob, R. (2000) The Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict: diasporic vs. hegemonic states in the Horn of Africa, 1991-2000. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 38 (4) December, pp. 659-682.
- Kabukuru, W. (2012) Why Kenya is fighting in Somalia. *New African Magazine*, April, pp. 34-36.
- Kapuscinski, R. (2008) *The Shadow of the Sun, My African Life*. London, Penguin Books.
- Kefale, A. (2010) Federal Restructuring in Ethiopia: Renegotiating Identity and Borders along the Oromo-Somali Ethnic Frontiers. *Development and Change* 41 (4), pp.615-635.
- Love, R. (2009) *Economic Drivers of Conflict and Cooperation in the Horn of Africa, A Regional Perspective and Overview*. Chatham House Report.
- Maiyo, J. (2012) Ethiopia Can Become New East Africa Hegemon. African Arguments. [Internet]. Available from <http://africanarguments.org/2012/04/20/ethiopia-and-somalia-joining-eac-will-transform-regions-security-architecture-%E2%80%93-by-josh-maiyo> [Accessed 2nd May 2012].
- Majid N. (2010) *Livestock Trade in the Djibouti, Somali ad Ethiopian Borderlands*. Chatham House Report.
- Markakis, J. (2011) *Ethiopia, The Last Two Frontiers*. Suffolk, James Currey.

- Messina, A., and Lahav, G. (2006) *The Migration Reader: Exploring Politics and Policies*. Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Migdal, J. S. (2004) *Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints: Struggles to Construct and Maintain State and Social Boundaries*. In: Migdal, J. ed. *Boundaries and Belonging, States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp.3-23.
- Mshomba, R. E. (2000) *Africa in the Global Economy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Onyango-Obbo, C. (2012) South Sudan, Ethiopia are the kind of guys EAC needs. *East African* [Internet], 3 March. Available from <<http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/OpEd/comment>> [Accessed 2nd May 2012].
- Pavanello, S. (2010) *Livestock Marketing in Kenya-Ethiopia Border areas: A baseline study*. Humanitarian Policy Group at Overseas International Development paper. [Internet], Available from <<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/6054.pdf>> [Accessed 03 May 2012].
- Thomas, R. (2009) *Development Corridors and Spatial Development Initiatives in Africa*. Overseas International Development paper. [Internet], Available from <http://www.fdi.net/documents/WorldBank/databases/africa_infrastructure/Thomas_SDI_paper_lowres.pdf> [Accessed 03 May 2012].
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2010) *Annual Report*. [Internet], Available from <http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2010/documents/English/AnnualReport_2010.pdf> [Accessed 08 May 2012].
- Woodward, P. (1996) *The Horn of Africa: State Politics and International Relations*. London, Tauris Publishers.
- Yacob, A., and Catley A. (2011) *Mind the Gap, Commercialization, Livelihoods and Wealth Disparity in Pastoralist Areas of Ethiopia*. Research Report. Feinstein International Centre and UKDID. Tufts University Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy.

NB This is a working draft. Please do not cite without permission

FRICION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

José-María Muñoz

Friction inflects historical trajectories, enabling, excluding, and particularizing -Anna Tsing

This paper is an attempt to approach transport corridors as privileged objects of study in our efforts to get insight into socioeconomic dynamics across borders. With few exceptions, transport corridors have received little ethnographic attention in sub-Saharan Africa. They are interesting objects of study in that they come into being through the interplay of laws and regulations (multilateral and bilateral instruments, national laws, subnational ordinances), institutions and organizations (intergovernmental, governmental, non-governmental), physical and financial infrastructure (ports, railway, roads, cargo terminals, customs posts, weight stations, checkpoints, parking yards, road funds, tolls, taxes and fees), cargo (cotton, grain, crops, livestock, fertilizer, and all sorts of other goods being transported), vehicles and people (importers and exporters, agents and intermediaries, logistics managers and operators; truck owners, drivers, and motor boys; police and gendarmes, customs officers; warehousemen, mechanics, security guards...). Corridors are sovereign territory and yet they are geared towards a modulation of state sovereignty in the cause for 'trade facilitation', a powerful mantra of contemporary strategies for economic development and commercial expansion that puts countries' capability to transport as many goods as fast, securely and cheaply as possible to exacting tests. As such, they are iconic of a 'logistical modernity' that has found its prophets/critics in figures such as Paul Virilio (1986), who has thematized the modern world as one governed by technologies of surveillance, mobilization, and fortification, and their independent administrations.

The transport corridor I look at is what has come to be known as the Central African transport corridor, which links the port of Douala in the coast of Cameroon with Ndjamena and Bangui, the capitals of two landlocked countries, Chad and Central African Republic (CAR). It is an object of study I only know in depth partially, through my extended fieldwork from 2003 to the present in one of its nodal points, the city of Ngaoundéré in Adamaoua Region, northern Cameroon.

This transport corridor is well known for all the wrong reasons. In a recent and influential study of all the sub-Saharan African transport corridors conducted by two World Bank economists, for example, the Central African corridor has been singled out for its high costs, its poor quality, its overregulation and its cartel-like organization (Teravaninthorn and Raballand 2009; cf. Zerelli and Cook 2010). The comparison with transport corridors in East, Southern, and West Africa is very unfavorable. And yet, it is a corridor in which the European Union, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the French development agency have invested heavily. These organizations have of late come to the understanding that part of the problem has been their almost exclusive focus on physical infrastructure, mostly road construction and maintenance (Machi and Sequeira 2009). In a parallel questioning of the conventional wisdom on the 'structuring effects' of the

transport infrastructure (Offner 1993), transport corridor are called to morph into so-called development corridors, a concept which several international organizations and development agencies have now endorsed (Thomas 2009) and whose currency grew out of the Maputo Development Corridor (Taylor 2001; Roodt 2008).

The following pages are intended as a modest contribution to an 'ethnography of infrastructure', a field into which Susan Leigh Star invited anthropologists to invest themselves long ago with only limited success. In this endeavor, I take inspiration in recent ethnographic work by Wolfgang Zeller's (2009) and Jamie Cross (2010). Zeller examines border dynamics at the Trans Caprivi Corridor, which links the Copperbelt of Zambia with the Namibian coast. He suggestively argues that the regulatory authority of the Namibian state is being eroded from 'above' and from 'below' along this transport corridor. This bypassing of state authority, however, has proved compatible with the enhancement of the power of individual representatives of the state. I am concerned with many of the same questions with which Zeller grapples but the differences of our respective case studies are considerable. The 'upgrade' that has taken place in the Trans Caprivi Corridor under the auspices of a powerful 'public-private partnership' is largely missing in the transport corridor linking Cameroon, Chad and CAR. Cross's fieldwork on the Vizag 'special economic zone' in Andhra Pradesh, India allows him to question the language of exceptionality used by many analysts of neoliberalism. Much like special economic zones, transport and development corridors continue to be "imagined and conceptualized as unique territorial, juridical and disciplinary spaces", yet "in their everyday operation, the continuities and interconnections of these spaces with the wider economy make them decidedly unexceptional" (Cross 2010: 369).

The paper is structured in three sections: the first provides the historical background for recent developments in the Central African transport corridor; the second charts the protracted process that put an end to the monopoly of Cameroonian truckers' representation in Ngaoundéré; and the third discusses the addresses the some of the predicaments of Chadian transporters operating Cameroonian territory.

THE EMERGENCE OF A HUB IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

The Central African transport corridor as we know it today took shape in the 1970s with the construction of the Transcameroonian railway, which since 1974 has linked the port of Douala and Ngaoundere, the railway northern terminus, as well as with the completion in 1977 of a paved road from Ngaoundéré to Kousseri, the Cameroonian city on the Chadian border, across the river from Ndjamen. Ngaoundéré was thus transformed into the almost unavoidable passage of all goods traded to and from Cameroon's two landlocked neighbors, Chad and Central African Republic.¹ The

¹ It should be noted that Chadian and Central African exports and imports could follow alternative routes: through Kousséri to Maiduguri and then to Lagos by road in the case of Chad; and from Bangui to Brazzaville by the Oubangui river and then to Pointe Noire by train in the case of CAR—and southern Chad. Traffic from Bangui through Brazzaville to Pointe Noire grew considerably in the 1960s under the authority of an intergovernmental agency called the Agence Transéquatorial de Communication. By 1964, it attracted about a third of the cotton exports and 59,000 tons of imports (Goni Ousman 2010: 27). Although the Transcameroonians meant that Chadian exports and imports stopped taking this route for the most part, in the mid-1980s it still channeled 75 percent of CAR's foreign trade (Slob et al 2006: 85). However, in the 1990s, political troubles in Congo-Brazzaville and the decline of the Congolese railway made this option

impact of the railway fell short of the economic revolution that had been anticipated. Hopes for the establishment of new industry, which the government fed by creating a one-hundred hectare Zone Industrielle de Ngaoundéré (ZIN) in 1973, were not fulfilled.² However, the magnitude of the transformation that the city experienced is hard to overstate. Trucking companies proliferated in unprecedented manner. By the end of the 1970s about one thousand trucks and tractor-trailers serviced the railway cargo terminal.

The cornerstone of the transport system during this period was Sogetrans, a consortium that resulted from a 1972 government-backed agreement between foreign transit companies and the Syndicat de Transporteurs Routiers du Cameroun (SNTRC), the national truckers' union³. A 'unitary' organization like the SNTRC was emblematic of the one-party system. Through its partnership with Sogetrans and with the blessing of the transit companies, it monopolized business opportunities in the sector. Its members were captive in the sense that membership was a precondition to doing business. Nothing prevented the union leadership from reserving the lion's share of available freight and credit for themselves and for those in their good graces (Plat and Rizet 1989: 10).

Sogetrans' assistant general manager explained how its role was essential:

Transporters were not specialists; they were simply traders who had purchased trucks... [Sogetrans] went as far issuing the truck owners' invoices, processing the payments [they received from transit companies], collecting [the truck owners'] taxes on behalf of the state, and producing their annual balance sheet. As well, Sogetrans played a financial role. The company provided advances and even loans for union members [...] All it took was to buy a truck, join the union and put your truck at Sogetrans' disposal.⁴

Sogetrans' prominence relied on interlocking agreements with all other actors involved. As a result, Regifercam, the parastatal railway company, obtained the monopoly of all freight to and from CAR, Chad and northern Cameroon in the Douala-Ngaoundéré segment of the route. No trucks were allowed to operate in this segment, a measure that was meant to ensure the financial viability of the railway line. The Coopération des Transporteurs Tchadiens (CTT) and the Bureau d'Affrètement de la Centrafrique (BARC), the organizations representing Chadian and Central African truckers respectively, entrusted Sogetrans with overseeing that the distribution of freight conformed to the established quotas.⁵ Thus, for example, to get their cargo documents validated by the BARC and the CTT in Ngaoundéré, truckers had to go to Sogetrans' offices. Accordingly, Sogetrans, which had the legal status of a private business, a *société anonyme* (public limited company) more precisely, came

unviable. In recent times, these alternatives to the Cameroonian corridors have attracted very small commercial flows (Bennafla 2002: 49-59).

² ZIN was to be managed by the state agency MAGZI (*Mission d'aménagement et de gestion des zones industrielles*), which took 35 years to open a regional antenna in Adamaoua.

³ Created in 1963, the union was first called Syndicat de Transporteurs Routiers du Cameroun Occidental. In 1967, after absorbing its equivalent organization in Anglophone Cameroon, it became the SNTRC.

⁴ Alhadji Sani Tidjani, ESRC-sponsored seminar 'Le Formel et l'Informel dans les Activités des Opérateurs Economiques Camerounais', University of Ngaoundéré, 24 September 2004

⁵ The convention in place between CAR and Cameroon reserves 60 percent of the available freight for Central African truckers and leaves the rest for Cameroonians. The distribution is 65 percent for Chadian and 35 percent for Cameroonian truckers, according to the bilateral agreement between Chad and Cameroon.

to be regarded as a public service by many Cameroonian, Chadian and Central African truckers (Plat and Rizet 1999: 11).

After a decade of remarkable expansion for road transport, in the late 1980s a severe economic crisis unsettled the existing arrangements. Faced with bleak business prospects, the transit companies operating in the Cameroonian rail-road interface saw the existing power struggles within the SNTRC as an opportunity to abandon the commitments they had undertaken during the previous decade. Sogetrans was liquidated in January 1988. The most immediate consequence of the freight shortage and the disappearance of Sogetrans was that many truckers went out of business. Those who remained active evolved towards increased informality. 'In 1989, the union was in disarray—a trucker who managed to stay afloat during this period explained to me. Truckers went into *le maquis*. Before, it was Sogetrans that collected our taxes. All we did was stop by to pick up our checks. With the crisis, we no longer took the trouble to file our taxes. It wasn't our problem'.⁶

The end of the railway monopoly over the Douala-Ngaoundéré itinerary, a weakened union, the non-observance of national quotas, and the erosion of governmental legitimacy during the advent of multi-party politics marked the early 1990s. All these 'liberalizing' factors were more consequential than the liberalization from above advocated by the World Bank for all branches of the Cameroonian transport industry, which was hindered by the reticence of the government and constant changes in the teams of expatriate consultants involved (Meyo-Sula 1999: 45). Yet, these processes of liberalization on the ground were soon watered down through a decision by the minister of transport to create a *Bureau de Gestion du Fret Terrestre* (Bureau for the Management of Ground Freight, BGFT) on 26 August 1993. The context was one of reassertion of public authority once the government perceived to have left the challenge of the general strikes known as *Villes Mortes* safely behind. On account of the need for a mechanism to ensure the observance of the freight sharing agreements between Cameroon and, respectively, Chad and Central African Republic, the BGFT received extensive powers over truckers involved in international transit. These powers included the prerogatives to decide minimum and indicative fares and to charge truckers a three percent commission for its services.

When I first arrived in Ngaoundéré for my dissertation fieldwork in June 2003, road transport was undergoing its first moment of expansion in fifteen years. This expansion had taken place with the direct inducement of the construction of a 1,070 km pipeline from oil wells in southern Chad to the Cameroonian coast by a consortium led by Exxon-Mobil. Despite the Chad-Cameroon pipeline's rhetoric on promoting the local private sector (Muñoz 2008), the oil consortium contracted its massive expenditure on transport during the construction period with multinational companies. None was better placed than the Bolloré group to take advantage of this opportunity. In the years running up to the beginning of the pipeline construction, the French multinational had made substantial progress in realizing its vision of becoming Africa's leading 'integrated' logistics network (Debie 2001).⁷ In due course, Bolloré's Doba Logistics was appointed the pipeline

⁶ Interview Martial. On *le maquis* as a site of informal economic activity, see Muñoz 2010: 162.

⁷ In 1986, Bolloré bought SCAC, the French freight-forward firm that controlled freight routes to Africa through the Socopao network. Its expansion in the sector continued in the early 1990s with the acquisition of the ailing Delmas-

consortium's main logistics contractor—and remained so until its dubious managerial practices and serious violations of workers' rights became an embarrassment for the consortium and led to the termination of its contract and its replacement by Geodis, another French logistics multinational. Both Doba Logistics and Geodis hired Cameroonian and Chadian truckers to do the job while keeping the lion's share of the profits. The end of the construction phase in 2004 marked a predictable downturn for the sector. My paper looks at recent developments of this post-pipeline construction period which I find revealing of the present configuration of rules, organizations, infrastructure, and actors that becomes naturalized under the rubric 'transport corridor'.

THE LONG DEATH OF THE TRUCKERS' UNITARY UNION

Cameroonian law has allowed for the possibility of freely creating business associations and trade unions since 1990. In most parts of the country, the official end to the SNTRC's monopoly of the trucking sector translated into a proliferation of truckers' unions within a short period. Not in Ngaoundéré, however. For almost two decades, no rival union worthy of its name saw the day. This was a source of puzzlement for me and many of the people I interviewed between 2003 and 2005. The president of the SNTRC's local chapter underscored this oddity himself: 'Truckers got together and created their union. Those were the times of the single party. [The government] issued an act [establishing that] a single party [should be matched by] a single union. With democracy, numerous unions were created. Yet, in Ngaoundéré, it's only us. Nobody has created another'.

The SNTRC's uncontested position in Ngaoundéré was all the more perplexing in light of the general dissatisfaction expressed by virtually everyone concerned. 'There's a lack of consensus; there's no order within,' explained one of the board members. 'It is not a union that enjoys recognition and defends the interests of transporters. Freight owners and forwarders are the ones that decide the terms. The union's voice remains irrelevant', told me the owner of one of Ngaoundéré's oldest and largest transport companies. To this subordination to shippers, a young transporter whose company had expanded during the pipeline added the SNTRC's submission to public authorities: 'The union is controlled by the state. It cannot be expected to defend truckers' interests autonomously'. When asked whether he belonged to the SNTRC, the owner of two trucks answered: 'No! Well, actually, I'm in it. I'm just not part of the board'. Such detachment from the union's affairs was often voiced by its rank and file. Truckers' frustrations were also frequently tinged with guilt. As someone active in union politics since the late 1980s noted, 'We truckers are often complicit. We're the first ones who don't really want things to change. How else would we have the union we have? It has needed to hold an assembly to renew its board and years go by without it taking place'.

The failure to hold board elections had certainly not helped the legitimacy of the Ngaoundéré chapter's leadership. An interim president had been designated by the board at the death of the last

Vieljeux, a shipping company whose presence in sub-Saharan Africa dates back to the 1910s, whose merger with SCAC resulted in the creation of SDV (Barrier and Gugenheim 1990). In 1997, Bolloré stepped up its freight and logistics operations with the purchase of Saga. Two years later, the group was the main beneficiary of the new railway concession that culminated the privatization of Regifercam, which the government had agreed with the World Bank in the Project for the Preparation of the Transport Reform (1995). Bolloré's objective of mastering the entire logistics chain were crowned in 2004 with its successful bid for the concession of Douala's port container terminal. Although, soon after, in 2005, the group withdrew from the shipping business with the sale of the Delmas shipping lines to CMA-CGM.

elected president in 2002. 'He became president as a substitute, without election and without votes—a board member explained. We'll hold elections in a couple of years, in a year perhaps'. This would depend on a decision of the SNTRC's national board of directors. In a casual conversation at the BGFT's offices, the interim president himself joked about the 'imminence' of an election.

In such circumstances, why had no other association challenged the SNTRC's position? Perhaps the single most important factor was the support the union received from the BGFT. In its role as enforcer of the freight sharing agreements, the bureau allocated freight in transit to and from Chad and CAR. In doing so, it privileged the SNTRC. In many ways, it was the BGFT that had rescued the union from its almost fatal weaknesses in the post-Sogetrans era. Since the creation of the BGFT in 1994, the SNTRC had been the only truckers' association present in the bureau's board of directors. The BGFT had turned the union into the only *interlocuteur valable* (recognized partner) of most transit companies. From 1994 onwards, membership in the union remained the only way most Cameroonian truckers could access international freight in Ngaoundéré. Furthermore, for every ton it distributed, the BGFT also collected CFA\$500 on behalf of the SNTRC, thus ensuring that the union was well-provided. The fact that the president of the BGFT's board of directors had since the late 1990s also presided the SNTRC made the complicity between the two institutions all the more glaring.

In many ways, the union leadership also reflected continuity with longstanding business networks. The interim president and vice-president were sons of Alhaji Arabo and Cherif Boukar, the two figures who had dominated the SNTRC since the city's emergence as a transport hub. The endurance of these networks, even during a period of decline, seemed to have been more consequential than the liberalization measures advocated by international organizations that had found their way into Cameroonian law.

A powerful boost to the SNTRC Ngaoundéré chapter's fledging fortunes had come with the Chad-Cameroon pipeline construction, soon before I began my fieldwork. At the national level, the SNTRC had seen its position reinforced seating through consultations between the oil consortium and 'host country' stakeholders. In Ngaoundéré, the decisive factor was Doba Logistics and later TCL's policy of dealing with Cameroonian truckers by and large only through the SNTRC. But this boost died out relatively quickly when pipeline-related freight decreased sharply in 2003-2004⁸.

When a full-fledged challenge to the SNTRC in Ngaoundéré finally took place, it did so under the sign of controversy. 2009 began with attempts by an alliance of three small unions that had seen the light in the previous years to claim a share of the Cameroonian quota of freight in transit. The context was one of considerable excess capacity in the sector. The severe crisis of the logging industry in 2008 meant that more than two thirds of the trucks specialized in carrying timber were refurbished to transport containers (quote Karsenty and mention IFC's loan to Sodetrancam). This

⁸ The pipeline consortium's spending in Cameroon peaked in mid 2002 and fell after the end of construction in early 2003. It went from CFA\$ 32.6 billion in the second quarter of 2002 to 17.2 billion in the second quarter of 2003 and then to 8.5 billion in the same quarter of 2004.

pushed prices down to unprecedented levels and created a propitious environment to question the status quo.⁹

In January 2009, the new unions started an assault to the SNTRC's privileges. The Ngaoundéré agency of the BGFT refused to change its modus operandi. Amidst a media backlash, this initial refusal, however, soon gave way to an attempt to appease the rebel truckers. On 26 January 2009 the BGFT took the decision of granting them access to the Cameroonian quota if they agreed to comply with a series of formalities. This concession was judged insufficient—partly because many of their members were not in a position to comply with some of the formalities—and failed to solve the conflict. The *meneurs de la fronde* (rebel leaders) stood firm in their denunciation of the SNTRC as 'illegitimate, illegal and ineffective'.¹⁰ They saved the most serious indictment, however, for the BGFT. This government agency was accused of failing to announce and allocate freight transparently, blocking the public scrutiny of their periodic statistics, managing the funds it collected with absolute opacity, and refusing to dialogue with truckers. As the leaders of the new unions' alliance told a widely circulated national newspaper, 'We are now in the era of pluralism. The [legal] texts, which granted all the rights to the SNTRC are obsolete... An audit [of the BGFT's management] is also much needed, since this organization has enriched itself at our expense for fifteen years now'¹¹.

In 2004, I had interviewed some of the individuals who were to form the new unions' leadership. A couple of them were former leaders of the SNTRC, who had been voted out of their positions in the previous decade. In those interviews, they made no secret of their discontent with the union but they aimed their protests at the BGFT, which was in their eyes the decisive player. After a few years of institutional void in the late 1980s and early 1990s, they argued, the BGFT had taken up some of Sogetrans' functions, such as monitoring the observance of the freight sharing agreements. Like Sogetrans, the BGFT also got a cut of every transport contract it oversaw. Yet, unlike Sogetrans, which provided a series of services for truckers (payment advances, warrantor of loans to purchase new trucks, filing tax returns), the BGFT made no tangible contribution to its clients.

To counter these criticisms, the BGFT's representatives in Ngaoundéré point at the new unions' shortcomings. Most of them did not own trucks. None of them had obtained the requisite CEMAC authorization. They had no presence outside of Ngaoundéré and, to top it all, they were not updated on their tax obligations¹². The SNTRC's rivals managed all the same to see their persistence rewarded. The adept deployment of media coverage and the strong position held by one of their leaders, a former supporter of the opposition party UNDP, who had in recent years become one of the ruling party RDPC's most visible sponsors played in their favor. Although the calls for increased transparency of the distribution of freight quotas and of the use of the revenue thus generated have

⁹ Transport rates experienced a 60 percent decrease within a year, according to SNTRC's estimates (Chendjou, Léopold, 'Le secteur du transport routier à l'agonie au Cameroun', *Le Messenger*, 2 February 2009).

¹⁰ Boyomo, Georges A., 'Discorde: l'arbitrage du ministre de transports attendu', 2 February 2009.

¹¹ Egouté, Claudia. 'Transport routier : duel autour du fret terrestre', *Mutations*, 19 March 2009

¹² Interview, Ngaoundéré, 14 August 2010. See also Chendjou, Léopold, 'Bobbo Hamadama: 20% de la flotte des transporteurs est au garage', *Le Messenger*, 20 March 2009.

remained unheeded to this day, by March 2009 the BGFT was granting all truckers' unions access to international freight on the basis of their declared truck fleet.

FOREIGN SUBJECTS IN THE CORRIDOR

The bilateral agreements that since 1975 have reserved 65 percent of the freight to and from Chad to Chadian truckers underwrite the significant Chadian presence in Ngaoundéré's transport sector. These Chadian transporters, drivers, motor boys, and mechanics, largely Muslim, are part of a diverse community, whose size was estimated at 7,000 in 1999, some 2,000 of whom were students attending the local university (Mohamadou Awal 1999). It is a community divided by regional, religious, class, and political differences.¹³ To illustrate the sociopolitical dynamics surrounding the Chadian presence in the city's trucking services, let me recount two recent incidents.

The first episode concerns the Syndicat National de Chauffeurs Tchadiens (SNCT), the largest union of Chadian truck drivers. The SNCT was created as a self-help organization with the mission is of defending the interests of Chadian drivers vis-à-vis their bosses and the public authorities. Its activities in Ngaoundéré date back to the completion of the railway and the opening of the cargo terminal in 1974. Funded by members' contributions, the union offers legal aid to its members and provides them with last resort assistance in case of death, illness, or accident. Since the professional itinerary of many truck drivers leads them to purchase old vehicles from their bosses after years of loyal service, most of the union's leaders are no longer driving themselves and are best described as truck owners. Despite their insistence that they are 'simple' drivers, the union also serves the role of grouping the trucks owned by its members and securing for them access to the Chadian quota distributed by the Bureau National du Fret (BNF, the Chadian counterpart to the Cameroonian BGFT).

As a result of a confrontation between different factions within the SNCT and amidst accusations of embezzlement, a dissident group created a rival union in May 2010. When a new parking yard next to the cargo terminal had been created back in 2001, Ngaoundere's municipal authorities granted Chadian truck drivers a spot within it to conduct their business. At the time, one member donated a spare container to act as their office, which was the place where I was first introduced to some of its representatives in July 2004. The donor of the container/office being among the seceding group in 2010, the new union managed to reclaim it for their organization. The dispute escalated on 14 August 2010, when in response to the new union's attempt to destroy the metallic plate that identified the office as their rival's, the old union tried to force them out. Since the mediating offices of Ngaoundere's top police officer failed to effect a reconciliation, he resolved to have them all arrested for the night.

¹³ Those who hold a residence permit are a small minority. In 2004, the residence permit cost CFA\$80,000, a considerable expense that Chadians in the city employed as domestic servants, wage laborers, or moto-taxi drivers could ill afford. Many prefer the alternative of securing a Cameroonian I.D. by bribing employees at the local issuing office. Most get by with an irregular migratory status that makes them especially vulnerable.

Two days later, the regional governor issued an ordinance banning the two unions from exercising their activities. As he said during a public meeting with everyone concerned later that week,

Expatriates don't have the right to create unions in Cameroonian territory. The exercise of union activities is strictly reserved to nationals. These unions have escaped our control because we didn't even know of their existence... To Cameroon, Chad is a brother and a friend. These decisions don't mean that we don't accept Chadians here. We welcome their presence. All we do now is to confirm that public order was disturbed last week-end.¹⁴

In his statements to the press, the representative of the BNF was equally unsympathetic with the parties in conflict: 'We are extremely pleased with the governor's resolution. There was a lot of disorder lately. The BNF is the only arbiter entitled to manage transport between the two countries. The governor has said it: Chadian unionists should not come here to create disorder. There is no such a thing as Chadian unionism in Cameroon. It is only in Chad'¹⁵

The second episode I want to refer to took place on 14 February 2012 when a seemingly trivial incident escalated into a mass confrontation. It all began when a truck driver caught a Chadian teenager named Alain Kadjidoum while he tried to steal 20 liters of gasoil from his truck in Ngaoundéré's cargo terminal. The driver's decision to take the culprit to the police station met the outcry of witnesses present in the parking yard. Once the news spread, scores of people who thought Kadjidoum victim of an injustice gathered and took the truck's motor boy hostage. Having been alerted about this turn of events, the driver returned to try to rescue the motor boy and recover the truck. Alarmed by the hostility with which he was received, he decided to contact the truck owner, who in turn enlisted the services of a bailiff to establish an official record that the truck was being blocked. The arrival of the bailiff and his assistant with a police escort was taken as a provocation by Kadjidoum's supporters, who at this point had equipped themselves with machetes, clubs and knives. They easily overpowered the police escort. When city's police commissioner intervened to ease the tension, he was attacked and an open fight ensued, during which the police refrained from using firearms. It was only three hours later that a large contingent of military police managed to take control. The result was 25 people injured, half a dozen with severe wounds, three police trucks vandalized, and 92 Chadian citizens arrested.

The events were judged serious enough for the regional governor to make a call in the state-owned *Cameroon Tribune* the next day to let cooler heads prevail: 'Our Chadian brothers are lucky to live in a place where dialogue is permanent. As recently as last week, we met with them to discuss the issue of checkpoints and everyone left on good terms. [After yesterday's events] it is now apparent that something is not right... But let us say it loud and clear, we cannot approve of violence and disorder in the name of hospitality'¹⁶. The visit of the Chadian ambassador to Cameroon on 17 February led to the release of 53 of the detainees. The remaining 39 were kept in

¹⁴ Petsoko, Mathurin, 'Transport routier: syndicats de transporteurs tchadiens interdits d'exercice au Cameroun', *Journal du Cameroun*, 20 August 2010.

¹⁵ Nguete, Eric. 'Ngaoundéré : la communauté tchadienne aux abois', *Le Messager* 24 August 2010.

¹⁶ Mvogo Biyeck, Alfred. 'Enow Abrams Egbé: pas question de cautionner la violence', *Cameroon Tribune*, 16 February 2012.

detention, pending trial. The parking yard reopened that same day but traffic in the following days remained extremely low¹⁷. The majority of Chadian truckers observed a two-week strike in a failed attempt to have all detainees liberated.

On 5 March 2012, the Cameroonian minister of transport and the secretary of state in charge of the Gendarmerie conducted a two-day mission in Ngaoundéré to 'normalize' road traffic in the corridor. The presence of the minister guaranteed that anyone thinking themselves to be somebody in the transport sector made the trip. The BGFT's national coordinator thought that the mission would achieve the dual objective of 'appeasing our Chadian brothers' while 'making the traffic along the corridor fluid'. Also taking part in the official delegation, the head of the BNF minimized the events, calling them 'a minor incident', celebrated that the mission had succeeded in 'brushing this bottleneck in the corridor away', and reassured journalists that 'Chad and Cameroon are one country' and that 'for transporters, there are no borders'¹⁸. In fact, talking to Chadian TV, President Idriss Deby had a week earlier explained away the events as 'prompted by a group of Chadian rebels exiled in Cameroon intent on creating an embarrassment to destabilize Chad'¹⁹.

Despite the governor's protestations of surprise, this most recent disruption to the flow of goods to and from Chad had been preceded by a period of unrest among truckers operating in the Douala-Ndjamena corridor. On 31 January 2012, Cameroonian truckers had met in Douala under the banner of the SNTRC and given the government an ultimatum. If the tax authorities did not back out from their plans to impose a new corporate income tax advance, they would go on strike in two weeks time. They claimed that the increased tax burden made it impossible for them to run profitable businesses. A union representative told reporters: 'All we are doing today is to rein in our comrades, because we are close to an outburst... We await impatiently [the authorities'] response, for tension is rising'²⁰.

Chadian truckers had voiced their grievances even more insistently in the months preceding the violence at Ngaoundéré's cargo terminal. Given the Cameroonian authorities' refusal to acknowledge their unions, they had recruited the BNF to speak on their behalf. The BNF addressed a letter to the secretary of state in charge of the Gendarmerie on 24 January 2012.²¹ The number of checkpoints, which the letter set at 146 in the Douala-Ndjamena itinerary, and the exactions taking place when crossing them were the main targets of the truckers' complaints. This has been a recurrent problem for decades and it had been the rationale behind the introduction of a safe-conduct in 1999, whose effectiveness had, according to my informants, lasted only a few months. Different public authorities at the national, regional, and local level often voice their impotence in reforming or eliminating checkpoints, ironically referred to as 'pockets of resistance'²².

¹⁷ 'Baisse du trafic entre le Cameroun et le Tchad' *Le Jour*, 23 February 2012.

¹⁸ Ebel Olinga, Alain, 'Affrontements tchado-camerounais de Ngaoundéré : Paul Biya réagit', *Le Septentrion* 10 March 2012.

¹⁹ Yemga, Yanick, 'Ngaoundéré : le trafic avec le Tchad toujours perturbé', *Mutations*, 20 February 2012

²⁰ Mgbékoum, Aboubakar, 'Grogne: menace de grève des transporteurs', *La Nouvelle Expression*, 1 February 2012.

²¹ 'Ngaoundéré : des camionneurs menacent de faire grève', *La Nouvelle Expression*, 30 January 2012.

²² 'Nouwou, David, 'Barrières de police et de gendarmerie: enquête sur les poches de résistance', *La Nouvelle Expression*, 2 February 2011.

Problems related to the Cameroonian Customs' implementation of GPS monitoring of goods in transit had also become a sticking point since its introduction in August 2009. In the first months of operation of this system, known as Nexus, Chadian truckers would have to haggle with customs officials over the GPS devices required to circulate—there were 50 devices for the entire cargo terminal, which at peak periods can process over 600 trucks daily. Even after the worst of this crisis was solved when the Ministry of Transport's regional office mediated between Chadian transporters and the local Customs services in late October 2009, GPS monitoring remained a bone of contention thereafter. Acknowledging the need to 'rectify the imperfections that had transpired', the Customs authorities launched an improved system called Nexus+ in September 2010²³. Nonetheless, dissatisfaction with the system and the increased costs and restrictions it involved did not diminish substantially, particularly since the promise that its adoption would help curb the proliferation of checkpoints had proved to be empty.

The minister of transport's visit to Ngaoundéré gave Chadian and Cameroonian truckers alike an opportunity to vent these grievances²⁴. The results are to this day unimpressive. The aspiration that '[legal] texts are enforced 100 percent', which the head of the BNF articulated in his statements to the press, is shared by many Chadian truckers²⁵. It is an aspiration for which the tenor and intricacy of these legal texts—if not their devilish complexity and overt contradictions—combined with the fragmentation of the public authorities entrusted with their enforcement do not bode well.

* * * * *

In spite of considerable investment, the transformations undergone by the historically layered port, railway and road infrastructure that connects Chad and Central African Republic with the Cameroonian coast are judged as insufficient and unsatisfactory by present-day experts in trade facilitation. The previous pages have largely focused on the relationships between truckers and public authorities in Ngaoundéré's cargo terminal to argue that the danger of the Cameroonian state seeing its sovereignty over spaces of transnational commerce and circulation hollowed out remains until today rather remote. Technologies such as interstate safe-conduits or GPS monitoring systems have certainly created opportunities for defining new terms of engagement between truckers and public authorities but so far have failed to have the desired effect of ensuring the unimpeded flow of goods along this route. Much along the lines of what Jamie Cross (2010: 370) describes for one special economic zone in Andhra Pradesh, in this hub of the Central African transport corridor the precariousness of work, the porosity of the corridor's boundary and the politics of citizenship inside re-create the character of working life outside. I have tried to illustrate this through the Ngaoundéré chronicle of the erosion of the old one-party union's dominant position among Cameroonian truckers and of two recent conflicts that have had Chadian truckers as protagonists. With analytic distance, however, it is striking how absent freight owners and forwarders are both from the World Bank studies of transport corridor performance and from the media accounts of these incidents. Perhaps this is partly because in this transport corridor, unlike

²³ "Transit en zone CEMAC: Nexus+ expliqué aux acteurs de la chaîne à Ngaoundéré", Cameroonian Customs website [www.douanescustoms-cm.net].

²⁴ 'Baisse du trafic routier : la douane mise en cause par les transporteurs', *Le Messager*, 6 March 2012.

²⁵ Ebel Olinga, Alain, 'Affrontements tchado-camerounais de Ngaoundéré : Paul Biya réagit', *Le Septentrion* 10 March 2012.

the case analyzed by Zeller (2009), public-private partnerships have not been formally institutionalized along the Central African transport corridor. Instead, there are those rather small agencies known as freight bureaus. It is in this light that I make sense of an otherwise puzzling exchange between two fine observers of Ngaoundéré's transport sector.

Sani Tijani: The BGFT is simply unavoidable. You cannot go anywhere without their safe-conduit. The BGT is the informal [arm] of the state.

Saïdou Bobboy: Then, the BGFT is truly a employers' organization

Sani Tijani: Yes, indeed!²⁶

WORKS CITED

Barrier, E. and J.-M. Gugenheim. 1990. *Grands opérateurs européens du transport maritime*. Paris : Observatoire Économique et Statistique des Transports.

Bennafla, Karine. 2002. *Le commerce frontalier en Afrique Centrale: acteurs, espaces, pratiques*. Paris: Karthala

Castelnaud, Pauline de and Jean-François Marteau. 2009. "Quel accompagnement des douanes par la Banque mondiale en Afrique subsaharienne?", *Afrique Contemporaine* 230: 115-134.

Cross, Jamie. 2010. 'Neoliberalism as unexceptional : economic zones and the everyday precariousness of working life in South India,' *Critique of Anthropology* 30(4) :355-373.

Debrie, Jean. 2001. « Transport et espaces d'entreprise : les strategies africaines du groupe Bolloré », *Cahiers Scientifiques du Transport* 39 : 43-54

Faye, Michael et al. 2004. 'The challenges facing landlocked developing countries', *Journal of Human Development* 5(1):31-68

Goni Ousman, Abakar. 2010. *Le commerce extérieur du Tchad de 1960 à nos jours*. PhD thesis, University of Strasbourg.

Macchi, Patricia and Sandra Sequeira. 2009. 'L'infrastructure de transport 'immatérielle' des ports de Maputo et Durban', *Afrique contemporaine* 230 : 69-82.

Mohamadou Awal. 1999. *Regard sur la communauté tchadienne à Ngaoundéré, 1979-1999*. Honors thesis in History, University of Ngaoundéré

Muñoz, José-María. 2008. 'Au Nom du Développement : Ethnicité, Autochtonie, et Promotion du Secteur Privé au Nord-Cameroun', *Politique Africaine* (Paris), 112: 67-85.

Muñoz, José-María. 2010. 'Business Visibility and Taxation in Northern Cameroon', *African Studies Review*, 53 (2): 149-175.

Offner, Jean-Marc. 1993. 'Les 'effets structurants' du transport : mythe politique, mystification scientifique', *Espace Géographique* 3 : 233-242.

²⁶ ESRC-sponsored seminar 'Le Formel et l'Informel dans les Activités des Opérateurs Economiques Camerounais', University of Ngaoundéré, 24 September 2004.

Plat, D. & C. Rizet. 1989. *Politiques de réduction des coûts du camionnage en Afrique sub-saharienne : cas du Cameroun*. Lyon : Séminaire International sur les Transports en Afrique Sub-Saharienne [http://ideas.repec.org/p/hal/journal/halshs-00194057.html]

Republic of Chad and European Community. 2000. *Strategie de coopération et programme indicatif, 9^e Fonds Européen de Développement, 2001-2007* [http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/print_td_csp_fr.pdf]

Roodt, Monty. 2008. 'The impact of regional integration initiatives and investment in a southern African cross-border region: the Maputo Development Corridor', *African Sociological Review* 12 (1): 90-104.

Slob et al. 2006. *Evaluation de la coopération régionale de la Communauté Européenne en Afrique centrale*, vol. 2 [http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/38/7/38229015.pdf]

Söderbaum, Fredrik and Ian Taylor. 2001. 'Transmission belt for transnational capital or facilitator for development? Problematising the role of the state in the Maputo Development Corridor', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 39 (4): 675-695.

Star, Susan Leigh. 'The ethnography of infrastructure', *American Behavioral Scientist* 43(3):377-391.

Teravaninthorn, Supree and Gaël Raballand. 2009. *Transport prices and costs in Africa: a review of the international corridors*. Washington: World Bank.

Thomas, Rosalind H. 2009. 'Development corridors and spatial development initiatives in Africa' [www.fdi.net/documents/WorldBank/databases/africa_infrastructure/Thomas_SDIpaper_lowres.pdf].

Tsing, Anna L. 2005. *Friction: an ethnography of global connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Virilio, Paul. 1986. *Speed and politics*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Winner, Langdon. 1980. 'Do artifacts have politics', *Daedalus* 109(1): 121-136.

Zeller, Wolfgang. 2009. 'Danger and opportunity in Katima Mulilo: a Namibian border boomtown at transnational crossroads', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35 (1): 133-154

Zerelli, Sadok and Andy Cook. 2010. 'Trucking to West Africa's landlocked countries: market structure and conduct', *West Africa Trade Hub Technical Report* 32 [www.watradehub.com]

Demarcating Borders - Creating “Boundlessness”. Visual Practices in the Making of Nature Conservation Areas in the Namibian Caprivi

Luregn Lenggenhager, University of Zürich

Abstract

The establishment of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area or Kaza Peace Park, a vast transnational conservation area, not only has conservational impacts but also shapes the already complex border structures of the region. In this paper I will elaborate on visual practices used to promote new and diminish already existing borders in the name of nature conservation. The paper focuses on the practice of mapping while also addressing other visual practices such as photography. By doing so I will trace back earlier attempts of creating “visual conservation areas” in the Namibian Caprivi and discuss the interdependences between the visual promotion of borders and spaces and other practices used to create conservation areas.

Introduction

Early in the year 1978 an intensive correspondence between different public authorities of South Africa, the newly created Homelands of Caprivi and Kavango, South West Africa and some private companies took place to discuss the new uniforms and emblems for the conservation guards in the Caprivi and Kavango region.¹ Having in mind that the 1970ies have been marked by many political and administrative changes in the region,² how heavily militarized the region was and the multiple incursions by various armed forces in the area, the seriousness and effort, put into the purchase of new uniforms is surprising.

To outfit the guards with uniforms and to give them a cooperate emblem was one of the first actions the park authorities undertook after the boundaries of possible conservation areas were defined and drawn into a sketch-map in 1976.³ The ongoing hostilities in the region made it very difficult to use the conservation areas in its proper sense to protect wildlife, but what I argue is, that there were other means and practices to create “nature spaces”.

Such “virtual conservation areas” were not new to the Caprivi⁴, where plans to turn the entire

¹ NAN CAF50/619/7/1

² e.g.: Development of Caprivi Bantustan (1972-1976), Turnhalle Conference (1975-1977), Kangumu, Bennett: Contesting Caprivi. A History of Colonial Isolation and Regional Nationalism in Namibia. Basel 2011. S. 122-123.

³ Plan for Nature Conservation Planning + Development in the Eastern Caprivi NAN CAF50/19/7. The plan followed a more general memorandum in 1974 on environmental politics in the Caprivi.

⁴ 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

western Caprivi into a destocked and depopulated “Game Park” existed as far back as the late 1930s.⁵ Although this plan was never fully implemented the region was later marked as a conservation area and used as a military base and area and most parts of it today constitute the Bwabwata National Park.

After 1990 new plans for conservation areas came up leading to the establishment of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) or Kaza Peace Park in 2011.⁶ 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). Again, it seems as if its main impact so far has been the creation of a ‘visual’ space.⁷

As demonstrated in the example with the uniforms forty years earlier, the creation of such vaguely defined spaces has mainly been done by creating a “corporate visuality” of the park, be it through the use of emblems, pictures, or films or by drawing the outlines of the Park into maps. Still I agree, that visual conservation areas are not in a vacuum, but they have - also in their virtual and visual existence - an impact on the organization and perception of space and borders in the area.

Before I begin this paper on borders and boundaries I need to talk about the idea of “being boundless“. The Peace Park Foundation (PPF), the leading South African NGO behind the planning and promoting of Peace Parks throughout southern Africa often uses the slogan of a “boundless Africa”⁸ when they speak of their vision for the region. Marja Spierenburg and Harry Wels mention that the TFCAs are “supposed to present the ultimate form of tearing down fences” be it literally by allowing the free movement of animals over national borders or be it figuratively by “break down the fences that have hindered community participation in wildlife conservation”⁹. This is

later sense, as the KAZA Peace Park will include the entire Caprivi Strip.

⁵ NAN A503/25.

⁶ 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 2007. 6-7.

⁷ Only in March 2012 a treaty was signed by the five countries. The CEO of the Peace Park Foundation, that is promoting all TFCA in Southern Africa states that so far there are not yet any concrete plans on such important things as a distribution key for incomes or any forms of visa regulations within the park. Interview with Werner Myburgh, CEO of the Peace Park Foundation, Stellenbosch 11.07.2011

⁸ Interview Myburgh 11.07.2011

⁹ Spierenburg, Marja and Wels, Harry: “Securing Space”: Mapping and Fencing in Transfrontier Conservation in Southern Africa, *Space and Culture*, vol. 9, 2006. 299. This article was highly inspiring for my paper as it elaborates on the links between mapping and transfrontier nature conservation in the claiming of space. Much stronger researched than the KAZA park is the the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, see e.g.: Lunstrum, Elizabeth:

particularly done on a visual level in documentaries and promotional material in which symbolisms of removing barbed wire is constantly used.¹⁰ The PPF's official marketing partner is named "Boundless Southern Africa" and speaks repeatedly of "infinite possibilities", "open spaces" and "unlimited beauty".¹¹ Further it opens its publication with the words: "Beyond boundaries, we are free to connect. Beyond barriers, we are free to collaborate. Beyond frontiers, there is so much more to explore."¹² Even South African's former President Thabo Mbeki speaks of the importance of TFCAs "to build a new world of boundless peace and prosperity for our peoples, even as the animals of the wild learn to live in the new world created by the open frontiers"¹³.

The constant mentioning of the idea of "boundlessness" and overcoming and diminishing borders is done without defining or reflecting on the borders itself. As it is inherent in the Peace Park concept to cross national borders, it has to be assumed that its concept of a "boundless Africa" is built on the idea of overcoming national borders. What I argue is that, in order to create a "boundless Africa" or at least a "transfrontier conservation area" one has to address more than just national borders.

There are two very closely related ways of 'visually construct' such spaces. One is to create a homogenous, boundless visual space within the new borders (see example of the uniforms). The other is to demarcate its outlines, be it on the ground with signs or boundary marks or visually on a map. In this paper I will elaborate on the (visual) practices used by conservation organizations, mainly the Peace Park Foundation to erase or to blind out existing border-structures as well as creating new borders defining "nature spaces".

Border structures

Before I start elaborating on the nature conservation's influence on borders and boundaries in the region of the Kaza Peace Park let me mention some aspects of the region's spatial structure. To understand its complexity without falling into the trap of only pay attention to the most visible and most accessible borders one needs to look at practices of producing borders. I argue that the variety and hierarchies of borders and their importance in organizing and claiming space is closely linked to the practices of defining such borders.

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.

¹⁰ Spierenburg/Wels 2006. 299.

¹¹ Boundless Southern Africa (ed.): Open spaces, unlimited beauty, infinite possibilities. Investment Opportunities October 2008. Pretoria 2008.

¹² Boundless Southern Africa 2008. p. 3.

The Namibian Caprivi Strip – the geographical focus of my research – has a common national border with Angola, Zambia and Botswana the Zimbabwean border is only several hundred meters away. The methods to consolidate national borders in the region are relatively well researched and follow established patterns of defining colonial borders.¹⁴ To put it in simple words, the line of the border is first negotiated by the involved European powers and sometimes local allies. In a second step these lines are drawn into maps and implemented by a legal treaty. This was often followed by a military and administrative ‘occupation’ of the space within the new borders.¹⁵ Such processes are normally accompanied by a large number of well stored documents and can accordingly be traced back easily. These further means, that the functions and roles of national borders in Africa have been widely researched over the last decades.¹⁶

But there are many more borders criss-crossing the region of the KaZa Peace Park and not all of them have the same place in the hierarchies of borders. Practices to define and perpetuate other borders, such as language or 'ethnic' borders, boundaries of conservation areas, land-use zoning or – even more - spaces of perception often do not follow these same patterns and are not as well documented as national state borders. Still I argue that such borders do matter, not only for the promotion and definition of new spaces such as the KAZA Peace Park, but also for the researcher's approach to the topic. In my doctoral thesis I intend to shed light on alternative practices to consolidate borders and spaces. Visual practices (e.g.: mapping, photographing, advertising) are only some among many practices. Others are oral and narrative practices (story-telling, myths) or what I call here “practices on the ground” such as fencing or patrolling. In the following chapter I will elaborate on the visual practice of mapping outlines and borders of conservation areas. Then I will turn to the question of how such new spaces are visually ‘filled’ and ‘homogenised’.

Mapping borders

Although one of the most common ways to visualise borders are maps, mapping has long been neglected in visual studies. Particularly social and cultural geographers but also historians and

¹³ http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/02/0211_030211_limpopo_2.html

¹⁴ E.g.: Hangula, Lazarus: *The International Boundary of Namibia*. Windhoek. 1993.

¹⁵ Larément 2005. p. 24-25.

¹⁶ The concept of Peace Parks includes the idea of national borders as an obstacle in the way to peace and prosperity that needs to be vanquished through transnational conservation areas. Such a arbitrary understanding of borders has been challenged by many scholars since the 1970ies. It was enlarged by concepts of borders as links between „partitioned ethnic groups“ (e.g.: Asiwaju, A. I.: *Partitioned Africans. Ethnic Relations across Africa's Boundaries, 1884-1984*. London 1984), as “economic chance” (e.g: Nugent, Paul: *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: the lie of the borderlands since 1914*. Athens OH 2002) or as “irrelevant” in a globalised world (e.g.: 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. 337-349).

sociologists mainly focused on photography, artistic images or films¹⁷ and took maps for “an unquestionably ‘scientific’ or ‘objective form of knowledge creation’”¹⁸. It is only since the 1990ies that a narrow group of researchers started to theorize mapping as a social practice more than a scientific technique. Strongly referring to the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida JB Harley in his influent series of articles (1985-1991) approached mapping as a practice to negotiate relations of power and knowledge.¹⁹ He described maps as social documents and stressed the importance of their historical and technical contexts.²⁰ This opened up space for broader and more inclusive concepts of cartography including ‘non-scientific’ practices of map making such as imaginary mapping, narrative mapping, map art and even active attempts for counter-mapping.²¹ While in contemporary contexts such ‘alternative’ practices are gaining importance in the various fields particularly human geography and social anthropology, there remains a difficulty for historians to trace back such mapping practices as they were often not physically present nor were they institutionalized. Hence they were less likely to be preserved and more difficult to establish.²²

An early example of a visual attempt to create nature conservation areas in the region of the Kaza Peace Park is the already mentioned sketch-map of 1976.²³ It shows eight proposed nature conservation areas and two game hunting reserves. All proposed reserves are drawn by hand on a printed map of the Caprivi. The map is signed by Ben C.W. van der Waal, a South African official in the Eastern Caprivi. He attached the map 1978 - after he came back from another nature conservation visit - to a report he sent to Pretoria. In the report he adds written descriptions to the proposed conservation areas and makes recommendations on their organization. Although none of the reserves van der Waal proposed came into existence exactly within the then drawn boundaries, the map seems to have been the basis for many following decisions on nature conservation in the region. Hence the map can be seen as an example of how maps often precede the actual organization of space on the ground as they have the power to “link territory with what comes with it”.²⁴

¹⁷ Perkins, Chris: Cartography - Cultures of Mapping. Power in Practice, in: Progress in Human Geography, No. 28, 2004. P. 384.

¹⁸ Harley, J. B.: Deconstructing the Map, in: Cartographica, Vol. 26, No 2., 1989. P. 1.

¹⁹ Cramton, Jeremy W.: Maps as Social Constructions. Power, Communication and Visualization, Progress in Human Geography, 25, 2. 2001. p. 236.

²⁰ Harley, J.B.: Cartography, Ethics and Social Theory, in: Cartographica, No.27, 2. 1990. p.14.

²¹ See e.g: On Non-European mapping practices in Canada: Sparke, Matthew: Between Demythologising and Deconstructing the Map. Shawnadithit's New-found-land and the Alienation of Canada, Cartographica, 32, 1995. 1 – 21 or on early Japanese mapping: Yonemoto, Marcia: Mapping early modern Japan: space, place, and culture in the Tokugawa period, 1603-1868. London 2003. On map art and counter-mapping see also Wood, Denis: Rethinking the Power of Maps, New York 2010.

²² Perkins 2004. p. 386.

²³ NAN CAF 49 6/19/5.

The practice of “securing space”²⁵ through mapping is also used by the Peace Park Foundation and its advertising partner “Boundless Southern Africa”. They have been producing a high variety of maps since the first plans for the Kaza Peace Park emerged.²⁶ While the outlines of the park shifted many times over the last years, the practice of drawing the park’s outlines into maps was constantly used. The visual representation of the newly created outlines are strengthened by the erasing or blurring of other borders inside the area of the Park, for example the national borders. Meanwhile efforts are put into new scientific maps of the regions (so called Integrated Development Plans²⁷) presenting the cartographic basis of the newly planned land use structures within the park’s boundaries. Even there the silhouette of the park is strongly highlighted by only colour the areas within the Kaza Peace Park while are presenting areas outside the park only schematically. Another example of the promotion of the Kaza Peace Park’s external boundaries is how on its official website the park’s silhouette is displayed exactly the same like the silhouettes of the five participating counties.²⁸

On one hand this strong visual demarcation of the Parks external boundaries stands in obvious opposition to the slogan of a “boundless Africa”, as it is promoting new boundaries. On the other hand it is striking to compare this visually very strong external outlines with its importance “on the ground”. According to Werner Myburgh, CEO of the Peace Park Foundation the external boundaries of the Kaza Peace Park are still vague and are not foreseen to become strongly demarcated, controlled or fenced in the field. They are roughly drawn according to the natural annual movements of elephants and in detail negotiated with “local decision-makers”.²⁹ Furthermore they should connect already existing conservation areas to create corridors for game. Although are defined very loose and their function within the Kaza Peace Park is still uncertain they figure very prominent in the visual representation of the park.

To conclude, the practice of mapping is never just a visualisation of what exists but always serves an interest. Or in the words of Denis Wood: “Because these interests select what from the vast storehouse of knowledge [...] the map will represent, these interest are embodied in the map as

²⁴ Wood 1992. 10.

²⁵ Spierenburg/Wels (2006) According to them the website of the PPF in 2006 had a link named „securing space“ that led directly to the maps of planned TFCAs.

²⁶ Generally on PPF role in mapping TFCAs see: Spierenburg/Wels (2006). They also mention the CEO of the PPF being a GIS expert himself.

²⁷ The Integrated Development Plans of the Zambian and the Zimbabwean parts of the park can already be downloaded on: http://www.kavangozambezi.org/publications_and_protocols.php

²⁸ http://www.kavangozambezi.org/contact_us.php

²⁹ Interview Myburgh, 11.07.2011.

presences and absences”.³⁰ By drawing some (new) borders into the map and leaving others out mapmakers are creating new spaces. Hence the credo of critical cartography “that maps *make* reality as much as they represent it”³¹ is crucial for my historical research on the visibility of nature conservation areas within the complex border structure of the Kaza region. But as I will show in the next chapter mapping is not the only aspect of creating “nature spaces”.

Creating “Boundlessness”

A central aspect of the Kaza Peace Park is that it spans over many different national borders as well as many other borders, such as language borders, regional borders, land-using borders, time zone borders, and many more. This means, to produce a new conservation area does not only need the promotion and visual representation of new borders as shown in the last chapter, but there is also the need to create a cooperate visibility of the space within. This is not only done by softening internal borders on maps as discussed before but by a variety of other visual practices. As it will go beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on all this practices in detail I will only present two examples used to ‘create nature space’ in the Caprivi Region.

The first one is the already mentioned correspondence on the look of the uniforms of the park rangers. To outfit the park ranger with uniforms and design a common emblem were the first actions taken after demarcating the boundaries of the new conservation areas around 1976-1978. Another step that was taken during the same time was to task the Advertising & Marketing Agency R. Zaire with a pre-feasible study on the possibilities for advertising for the newly created parks for tourism.³²

This leads to the topic of photography and advertising, both strongly used by to promote the Kaza Peace Park. Over the last decades a ‘visual turn’ in social science has not only changed the historian’s work with photographs, but it also influenced many academic approaches to space. Joan M. Schwartz and James Ryan stress, that “the significance of photography in the construction of notions of space and place, landscape and identity may be found at a range of scales [...] However the meanings of local landscapes or global panoramas are neither obvious nor fixed.”³³ This

³⁰ Wood, Denis: *The Power of Maps*. New York 1992. p. 1.

³¹ Crampton, Jeremy W. and Krygier, John. *An Introduction to Critical Geography*, in: *ACME. An international E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, No. 4, 1, 2006. p. 15.

³² NAN 6/19/7/I. The study itself can not be found in the archive and it not sure whether it was conducted at all. But there is a letter ordering ‘advertising material’ from the agency.

³³ Schwartz, Joan M. and Ryan, James R.: *Introduction. Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, in: Schwartz, Joan M. and Ryan, James R.: *Picturing Place. Photography and the Geographical Imagination*. New York 2003. p. 5.

includes that, although there are complex power structures behind the photographs, their meaning is still contested. Still, as Donna Haraway remarks: “there is no unmediated photograph or passive camera obscura [...] there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing worlds.”³⁴

Such a world has been created by the promoters of the Kaza Peace Park. It is a boundless “kingdom of animals”³⁵ where nature is still “unspoiled” and people live in close symbioses with nature. No “modernity”- like undisguised people, infrastructure or ‘unnatural’ borders - should disturb this image of a peaceful nature space.³⁶ Even the limits of this boundless “paradise” are no longer set by people, but by the natural movements of the elephants. In this sense the name Peace Park also refers to the peaceful experience of being in nature.³⁷ The image of a “real”, “natural” and “untouched” Africa can be traced back to early colonial times and persist in many contexts up to now. Much research has been done on the interchanging relations between landscape, photography and power and how some colonial images of Africa are still reproduced today.³⁸ It is not the aim of this short paper to discuss that more deeply, but on the notion of borders and their visibility it is important to see how the region is visually represented as “boundless”, an in such resembles earlier images of “traditional” Africa as a untouched “nature space”. Hence such images also imply an idea of borders as arbitrary, unnatural and imposed by foreigners.

Beyond the visibility of borders

As I have showed in the previous chapters already the planning of nature conservation areas in the Caprivi – particularly the Kaza Peace Park - visually creates new borders as well as it blurs already existing borders. This is done by a myriad of maps, photos, logos, films and others. By doing so nature conservation had and still has a strong impact on the complex border structures of the Kaza region. Compared to other practices to draw and demarcate borders the highly professional visual strategies used by the promoters of the Kaza Peace Park are powerful. Still, neither borders nor spaces can be produced in an entirely ‘virtual space’. To establish and consolidate new borders and to overcome already existing borders visual practices are only some among many more. Maps and

³⁴ Haraway, Donna J.: *Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*. New York 1991. Quoted by Schwartz/Ryan 2002. p. 5.

³⁵ The term „Kingdom of Animals“ is mainly used for the Great Limpopo TFCA (e.g.: http://www.boundlessa.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=140&Itemid=256). But particularly in tourism it is also used for the Kaza Peace Park (e.g.: www.tourism-review.com/-news1303)

³⁶ See also: Spierenburg/Wels 2006. 299.

³⁷ Interview Myburgh

³⁸ In general e.g.: Mitchell, W.J.T (Hg.): *Landscape and Power*. Chicago and London 1994; Ryan, James R.: *Picturing Empire. Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*. London 1997. In the context of Namibia, e.g.: Hartmann, Wolfram; Silvester, Jeremy and Hayes, Patricia: *Colonising Camera. Photographs in the Making of Namibian History*. Cape Town and Windhoek 1998.

pictures “do work”³⁹, but they only work in close collaboration with other practices. Spierenburg and Wels demonstrate how close practices of mapping and fencing “work” together and how they are mutually dependent.⁴⁰ Many more practices can be found of defining borders and claiming space of nature conservation areas such as patrolling, building infrastructures, putting up signs or defining policies, just to mention a few. Furthermore - within these new spaces – less visible and not so intensively promoted borders and boundaries are still existing and alternative practices are used to establish them. This means for my further research to always question the dominant visualities of borders regimes and look for other, less powerful practices of ordering space. Or in other words, it is not only the representation of a border in a map that always “has an author, a subject, a theme”⁴¹, but borders itself have “authors”, “subjects” and “themes”.

³⁹ Wood 1992

⁴⁰ Spierenburg/Wels 2006

⁴¹ Wood 1992. 23.

Arteries of Empire

The materiality and visuality of South Africa's railway war of 1914-1915

Giorgio Miescher

University of Basel and University of the Western Cape

May 2012

First Draft, not to quote and not for circulation!

In its January 1915 issue the *South African Railways and Harbours Magazine* published a cartoon in support of South Africa's military campaign in German South West Africa. The cartoon shows 'father time' at a junction, where a "Briton" and a "Boer" railway track meet to form a single one leading to a distant land named "German West Africa". In his right hand father time holds a little flag bearing the date 1915, and the "Right!" at the head of the cartoon strengthens the old man's determination.



The cartoon is a contemporary interpretation of the military invasion of Namibia, South Africa's neighbouring colony north of the Orange and at the time under German imperial rule. In the image's framing the war of conquest emerges as a symbolic act of Union, formally attained in 1910, while still insinuating the freshness of the wounds caused by the South African war.¹ South Africa's decision to move its troops into the German colony was made in the wake of the clash between the imperial metropolitan powers, which was first fought in Europe itself. Government and parliament, the latter with overwhelming majority, decided to comply with London's request for military action. The British military's strategic interest was merely to bring under control the Atlantic ports of Lüderitz and Swakopmund, both equipped with wireless stations and hence potential threats to the British imperial navy.² In

contrast the South African government preferred a complete occupation of the German territory, thereby foreclosing its vision of long term territorial expansion.

The military campaign was launched in September 1914, but it was temporarily overshadowed by an internal rebellion led by General Maritz, a veteran from the South African war. The campaign's eventual outcome was rather predictable, as two very unequal military powers met on the Namibian

¹ See Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace, and Wolfram Hartman (eds.) *Namibia under South African Rule. Mobility and Containment 1915-1946*, Oxford/Windhoek/Athens, 1998, pp. 4-6 (Introduction).

² See for a contemporary report: W. S. Rayner and W. W. O'Shaughnessy, "How Both and Smuts Conquered German South West Africa" (London, 1916), p. 7; and for a more recent study Gerald L'Ange, "Urgent Imperial Service. South African Forces in German South West Africa 1914-1915" (Rivonia, 1991), pp. 7-9.

battle field.³ South Africa would emerge as the successful invader by July 1915. Thus, the conquest of the new territory was part of the establishment of and unification under the new South African nation.

The war's narration naturally changes from a Namibian perspective. The war marked the end of imperial Germany's colonial endeavours in southern Africa. While the majority of the African people living in the territory at the time might probably have welcomed the defeat of the German troops they preferred not to participate in the fighting. They could not anticipate that 1915 inaugurated the beginning of South African rule over their lands and a new colonial era to last for more than 70 years. The shift in colonial power did not involve a change of flags alone, but had deep structural implications. It changed the colony's legal status and geopolitical position. Namibia moved from being the flagship colonial possession of a distant European metropole, the German motherland, to become the hinterland of an emerging imperial power beyond its southern border.

Let us consider the cartoon once again. The image of the railway tracks leading into a united future bears a strong connotation of progress and modernity. The new South African nation literally penetrates into its colony via its gradually expanding railway system. As an almost nostalgic reminder of an immediate past, the old man with his scythe and hourglass, is invited to join the stream of progress and modernity by tuning his path to the railway tracks. We might read in this graphic conjunction of past and present a contemporary concern with integrating a rural agrarian Boer society, with its alleged traditionalist orientation, into the project of conquest through modernisation.

But railways invite to explore further layers of meaning. Beyond their iconic presence in discourses of modernity and progress, they were the material and tangible vehicle of imperial expansion that transformed vast parts of late 19th and early 20th century worlds. This was true both in southern Africa as much as in a broader geographical sense. Driven by a dynamic combination of political aspirations, expanding capitalism, and technical innovation a gigantic cluster of iron tracks was laid throughout many parts of the globe in a remarkably short period of time. Railways changed the flow of goods and people, the constellation of markets as well as the balance of military power. First built in Europe and the United States, railways soon played a crucial role in late 19th century imperial expansion on the African continent, though the process varied regionally.⁴

³ Marion Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, London, 2011, p. 205-206. – There is no correspondence in the secondary literature about the rate the South African troops outnumbered the German troops. (See Marion Wallace, *Health, Power, and Politics in Windhoek, Namibia, 1915-1945*, Basel, 2002, p. 71, footnote 2.) According to Klaus Dierks (*Chronology of Namibian History*, 2005) the South African troops rose to around 60'000 men and the German troops to around 5000 men.

⁴ For a discussion of the complex relation between imperialism and railways see Clarence B. Davis and Kenneth E. Wilburn, Jr., with Ronald E. Robinson, *Railway Imperialism*, Westport, 1994. The volume assembles empirical studies focusing on Canada, South Africa, Central Africa, Argentina, Mexico, India, Thailand, Russia, and China. For the South African case study see Kenneth E. Wilburn, Jr., "Engines of Empire and Independence: Railways in South Africa, 1863-1916" (*Railway Imperialism*, pp. 25-40). For a more general discussion of railways and empires see also Robin A. Butlin, *Geographies of Empire. European Empires and Colonies c. 1880-1960*, Cambridge, 2009, pp. 471-491 (in the chapter entitled "Arteries of Empire"; Butlin's title affirms the title chosen for this paper).

The cartoon published in the *South African Railways and Harbours Magazine* gained popularity with some graphic variation in the ways it used the railway and the old man.⁵ Powerfully, and it almost seems purposefully, this popular image transformed a military campaign into a mere project of technological and infrastructural opening and development. Thus, through the visual cleansing a war of conquest became a matter of pure technical operation. What is of particular interest at this point though is that the same cartoon bore in itself the seeds of an imagined geography. From the image emerged a specific vision of an imperial space: unoccupied land into which the railway tracks expanded straightforwardly and purposely, legitimised by the strength of a modern, unified South African power. Yet, the vision still drew its validity from its anchorage in very real geopolitics. As much as the railway track had its points of origin in Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, and Johannesburg, i.e. in the South African centres of economic and political power at the time, it also had its points of destination. The tracks would eventually lead the new colonial power to the mining centres in the coastal town of Lüderitz and the northern outpost in Tsumeb, as much as to the colony's political heartland in its capital Windhoek.

The Materiality of Geographical Imagination

Since a few decades there has been a gradual shift within the discipline of geography away from the positivist conception of space as a given, i.e. as an unmediated empirical reality, towards an idea of space as a socially constructed and mediated category of thought.⁶ David Harvey's work has been of outstanding importance in this context, and the writings that engaged with his argument gave way to a growing scholarly discussion of what has been termed as *geographical imagination*.⁷ This shift challenged one of the fundamental certitudes of the discipline, which had drawn its methodological legitimacy from the objective and accurate description of the physical and human world. On other grounds, it opened up ways for interdisciplinary dialogue and a stronger affiliation of geography with the humanities. The question of how space is seen, perceived, visualised and mediated came to the fore, and images – graphic, pictorial, and textual – increasingly moved to the centre of analyses.⁸ More specifically, and of importance to the following discussion, two of the classical forms of geographical representation, maps and photographs, were approached in theoretically broader ways and reconfigured within more nuanced articulations of the disciplinary field. Maps continue to be a key instrument in geographical representations of space and the art of mapping is inextricably linked to the geography as a discipline. They consist of coded graphic images which transmit a limited amount of spatial information to the knowledgeable viewer and are, as such always a reduced representation of empirical space. J.B. Harley and others have changed our understanding of maps by questioning the supposedly purely technical criteria of this process of visual reduction. Accordingly, maps are not only bearer of mere geographical information, but they also constitute

⁵ See a variation of the cartoon in *South African Railways & Harbours Magazine*, January 1915, p. 9. The cartoon shown in this paper was also used, although without discussion, by Gerald L'Ange, *Urgent Imperial Services. South African Forces in German South West Africa 1914-1915*, Rivonia, 1991, p. 15.

⁶ Peter Haggett is one of the most prominent authors of such a positivist and quantitative geography and his introduction into the discipline (*Geography: Modern Synthesis* first published in 1972 and then followed by numerous re-editions) influenced generations of under-graduated students including myself. For a short introduction of Haggett's work see Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin (eds.) *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, London 2011 (first edition 2004), pp. 205-210.

⁷ See David Harvey, „Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination“, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 80, No. 3 (Sep. 1990), pp. 418-434.

⁸ Here see Denis Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision. Seeing, Imagining and Representing the World*, London/New York, 2010 (first published 2008), p. 8.

representations of power relations. Questions of authorship moved to the fore, as much as awareness for the mutual conditionality of content and omission, message and silence.⁹ Photography, the second cornerstone of spatial representation, was likewise revised methodologically and theoretically. Hence, an empiricist approach was abandoned in favour of an inquiry into how photographic images coined the ways in which the world was seen. In view of their vast dissemination within the discipline and in popular representations of space, photographs were important in the creation of imaginative geographies.¹⁰ But it is only in recent years that geographers systematically committed themselves to explore the role of photography as a distinct and pervasive form of image-making and began to explore the complex relationship between photographic practice and geographical imagination.¹¹ The question was raised how the practice of photography influenced the way people came to know the world and situated themselves in space and time.¹²

While the debates sketched above offer valuable insights for and understanding of geographical imaginations, they have tended to remain within the framework of representation. In contrast, this analysis accounts for the fact that geographical imagination, as constructed as it might be, always remains rooted in the materiality of space. Theoretically coined as a historical materialism my analysis explores the dialectic relationship between specific material interventions in space and subsequently the way they have been imagined and represented.¹³ By balancing materiality and representation, I hope to avoid the fallacy of discursive redundancy and strive to anchor the world of ideas, visions, of utopia and illusion, of theory and abstraction in the contingency of historical time and space.

In what follows I will explore the complex relationship between the materiality and visualisation of railway system during the South African invasion of Namibia. I will ask how imperial space is constructed and appropriated through physical intervention and pictorial representation. My analysis builds on the discussion of two sets of photographs produced at the time: a photo album by the Kimberley based photographer Alfred Duggan-Cronin and a set of photographs commissioned by the South African Railways and Harbours.

Alfred Duggan Cronin's photo-album on the South West Africa Campaign

In November 2011 I was allowed to enter the store-room of the Duggan-Cronin Gallery in the McGregor Museum in Kimberley where I had the chance to have a look at the few Namibia related photo albums produced by Alfred Duggan-Cronin.¹⁴ My attention was soon drawn to a small, circa A4

⁹ See especially John Brain Harley (edited by Paul Laxton), *The New Nature of Maps. Essays in the History of Cartography*, Baltimore 2002; Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics*, London, 1997; Ute Schneider, *Die Macht der Karten. Eine Geschichte der Kartographie vom Mittelalter bis heute*, Darmstadt, 2004..

¹⁰ The term "imaginative geographies" became known through Edward Said (*Orientalism*, London, 1978).

¹¹ See Joan M Schwartz and James R Ryan (eds.), *Picturing Place. Photography and Geographical Imagination*, London, 2009 (first published 2003), especially the editors' introduction "Photography and the Geographical" pp. 1-18.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹³ Here I follow Harvey, 1990.

¹⁴ I would like express my sincere thanks to the Cape Townian artist Andrew Putter who then worked in the gallery and spontaneously invited me into to storeroom without knowing that he triggered a longer engagement with some of the photographs stored therein. I am also very grateful to the curator of the collection Robert Hart for his generous support in my research on this specific album of Duggan-Cronin.

sized and slightly worn out album entitled “DC SWA + EA Campaigns”, and I had a first look at the photographs mounted on its pages. Browsing through the album conveyed a strong sense of difference, between the photographic prints in the album and the oversized ethnographic portraits exhibited in the gallery. In contrast to the album, the images displayed in the gallery rooms had been widely published and laid the foundation for Duggan-Cronin’s popularity and fame.¹⁵ Still, my first glimpse at the album remained an encounter without further consequence. Only when I began researching the imperial expansion by the newly founded South Africa state into its future Namibian colony I decided to go back to the album kept in Kimberley.

Let us first consider the album as an object and photographic entity. It consists of 62 pages and a total of 161 photographs. The usual design consists of three photographs being placed on one page, and throughout the album, every page’s front and back side has been used. The single photograph was glued on a cardboard frame before it was eventually placed into the album and furnished with a handwritten caption. The title is misleading and while the military campaign to Namibia is extensively covered, the campaign in German East Africa, which followed immediately after the German capitulation in South West Africa, remains the album’s unredeemed promise. The mistake is obviously part of the album’s archival trajectory,¹⁶ yet it also references the original space of consumption, which was Duggan-Cronin’s private environment. The album as a visual project stems from Duggan-Cronin’s participation in the Namibian campaign between 1914 and 1915. Although in his early forties, he volunteered as a low ranking soldier in the 2nd Kimberley regiment and eventually got awarded the “1914-15 Star” for his services by the Union Defence Ministry in 1919.¹⁷ By that time, Duggan-Cronin was already well acquainted with photography and it might hence have been natural to him to take along his camera and cover the course of his regiment’s advancement to the north.¹⁸ Yet eventually, he decided not to reproduce a chronological account of the war, but rather

¹⁵ The photographer Duggan-Cronin became famous with a project to photograph the ‘native people’ of Southern Africa which was supported by private capital and state institutions. Between 1919 and he travelled over hundred thousand kilometres and produced thousands of photographs which were shown in exhibitions in South African and overseas, and which got a most prominent platform when used to illustrate the 11 volumes *Bantu Tribes of South Africa* published by the Cambridge University Press. (See on this part of Duggan-Cronin photographic oeuvre the recent contribution by Michael Godby, “Alfred Martin Duggan Cronin’s Photographs for the Bantu Tribes of South Africa: The Construction of an Ambiguous Idyll”, *Kronos* 36 (2010), pp. 54-83; see also Daren Newbury, *Defiant Images. Photography and Apartheid* South Africa, Pretoria, 2009, pp. 15-18; Patricia Hayes, “Power, Secrecy, Proximity: A Short History of South African Photography”, *Kronos*, No. 33 (November 2007), pp. 139-162, here p. 141.

¹⁶ The mistake in the title may well have happened during the archival process as the title is not inherent part of the album but written with a thick marker on a piece of scotch tape glued on the cover.

¹⁷ The McGregor Museum has just a few documents concerning Duggan-Cronin’s soldier’s career, one of which is the certificate of this military award dated 27 November 1919.

¹⁸ Duggan-Cronin, born in 1874, bought his first camera in 1904 which he soon put to use. (See Godby, 2010, p. 55) It is not known what type of camera Duggan-Cronin took along. According to Robert Hart it was most probably not his Thornton Pickard camera and he did probably not develop the photographs in the field. (Email communication Robert Hart, May 2012) – Soldiers taking private pictures with their own cameras was not uncommon, but still a rather rare phenomena during World War I especially when compared to the large scale of private photographs taken by soldiers during World War II. Along the model of the British digital Great War Archive (<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/collections/photo>) the German National Library and other European archives have recently started to actively trace private memorabilia, including private photographs, amongst the general public (<http://idw-online.de/pages/de/news415334>). For a short general consideration on private photography in World War I see for instance Detleff Hoffmann, “Die zwei Gesichter des Krieges. Offizielle und private Fotografie im ersten Weltkrieg.”, *Photogeschichte*, 5 (1982), pp. 21-28; and especially Barbara Duden, “Der Kodak und der Stellungskrieg. Versuch einer Situierung von Weltkriegsfotografien.” *BIOS* 7 (1994), pp. 64-72.

chose a conceptual visual framework. Indeed, the narrative of the album moves back and forth in time and almost randomly through space, therein elaborating on a variety of topics.

In what follows, it is this conceptual exploration, rather than a chronological narration, that will inform my reading and analysis of the album. Let me start with a set of photographs from the first few pages, which delineate the contours of the social and geographical spaces in which Alfred Duggan-Cronin's experience, perception and representation of the war emerged.



The photograph entitled "General Botha at Nonidas, Kilo 6" depicts a group of military standing next to a gig, a light open coach. The portly figure at the group's centre is General Louis Botha, the then Prime-Minister of the Union and Commander-in-Chief of the South African armed forces. Botha arrived at Swakopmund in February 1915 and personally coordinated the military campaign.¹⁹ The photograph, taken at Nonidas just outside the coastal town, occupies a prominent position within the album. It first appears on page two where it

serves as kind of narrative introduction, and is then reproduced, though in slightly changed framing, on later pages in the album. Within the context of war photography, the images of Luis Botha reference the popular *sujet* of the military leader and commander of troops.²⁰ But while the high ranks in the military often preferred to position themselves in front of the camera and consciously staged their authority and power, Duggan-Cronin's coverage of Botha's appearance and presence on the battle-field was less spectacular. It is a much more distanced view taken by an ordinary soldier, on the margin of the military hierarchy and the politics of the war, and the photographs precisely convey this sense of narrative ambivalence. As we will see, Duggan Cronin's status as a modest soldier, with limited access to the centres of power and the centre-stage of the war, would inform the entire visual production and narrative arrangement of his photographs.²¹

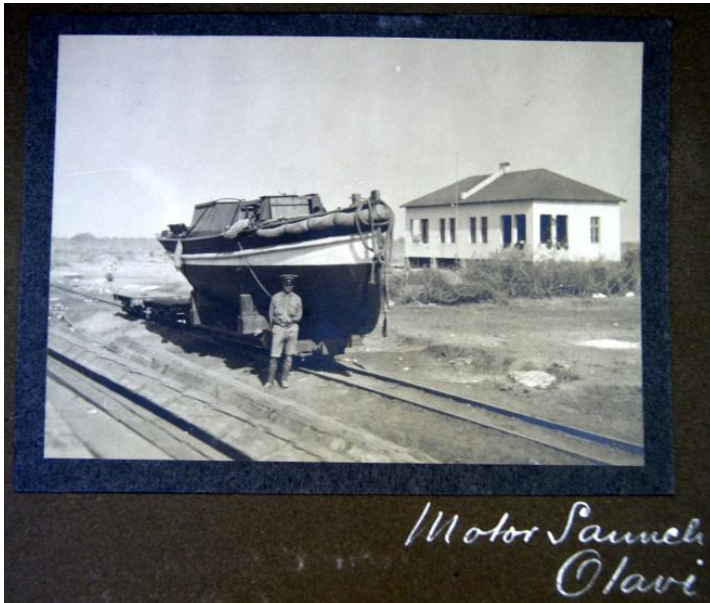
Yet there were occasions for closer encounters, e.g. when Duggan-Cronin's camera interacted with men of comparable status or equal rank. On the photograph entitled "Motor Launch Otavi" a soldier comfortably posed in front of a ship attached to a railway carriage. For whatever reasons, the ship

¹⁹ Swakopmund was evacuated months earlier after being shelled by the British navy end of September 1914. Swakopmund was not military defended against South African troops approaching from Walvis Bay in January 1915. (Diercks, *Chronology*, 2005). See also L'Ange, 1991, pp. 94-95, 138-140.

²⁰ Official photographic documentations of imperial military campaign inevitably include images of the military leaders posing for the camera. See for a respective discussion: James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire. Photography and the Visualisation of the British Empire* London, 1997, chapter 3 ("The Art of Campaigning") pp. 73-98.

²¹ According to Duden (1994, p. 68) there were almost no restrictions to German soldiers taking private photographs on the European battlefield whereas the same was strictly prohibited for British soldiers. Duggan-Cronin's photographs suggest the South African army was less restrictive than the British one, at least on the southern African battlefield.

and the military detachment had come to a halt close to an ample building, which both marked the materiality of settler-colonialism and provided an aesthetic backdrop to the photograph. The image was taken at Otavi, a small town and railway junction 500 kilometres from the coast in the Namibian hinterland. But Otavi was, significantly, the place where Duggan-Cronin's regiment was informed about the campaign's completion and the capitulation by the German troops in Otavi's vicinity in July 1915.²² The photograph appears at a very early stage in the album, on page three. In conjunction with the images taken around Swakopmund this photograph frames the album's geographical space and sketches the radius of Duggan-Cronin's further visual explorations.²³



Still, there is visual and narrative twist here, and any observer familiar with the Namibian landscape must have remained outright astonished by the photograph. There is, indeed, a disturbing visual and spatial conflation at play here, a concurrent overlapping of time and space, and an almost ridicule material dislocation. Otavi's location in the midst of the semi-arid Namibian highlands, at an altitude of around 1400 metres above sea-level with no perennial river or lake in its vicinity, made the presence of a ship unlikely and literally out of place. The

ship was a remainder of the German retreat from the coast into the hinterland, once the threat of a South African conquest of the coast had become immediate. For strategic reasons the German military had preferred to remove all the lighters, which had in the past been used to disembark ships at Swakopmund, rather than abandoning them to their invading enemy.²⁴ Duggan-Cronin and his regiment, on the other hand, had pursued the retreating German troops and, eventually, caught up with the ship at Otavi, now turned into a spoil of war. Why this photograph, then? How could it have made sense within Duggan-Cronin's visual representation of the Namibian occupation? And why, eventually, would he place the photograph of the ship at the opening of his album? If we look at the photographic composition what emerges as the visual guideline within the image are the railway tracks, and with them the denotation of a prescribed movement through the landscape. It is, indeed, the presence of the tracks that allow to translate an otherwise absurd situation – a boat in the middle of a semi-desert – into a narration of technological advancement that surpassed all

²² The troops were stationed at Otavifontein, two kilometres outside Otavi along the railway tracks to Grootfontein. General Botha had his headquarter at Otavifontein, too. Here the last big battle was fought between German and South African forces on the 1st of June 1915, the German forces officially surrendered eight days later. (Dierks, *Chronology*, 2005) See also L'Ange, 1991, pp. 322-329.

²³ A careful examination of all the photographic locations reveals that all the photographs on the following 58 pages are also taken somewhere between the coast and Otavi. I counted 21 names of places, almost exclusively railway stops, little stations for water supply as well as towns along the railway line from the coast into the interior. The names of the places are: Walvis Bay, Swakomund, Nonidas, Namib, Rössing, Arandis, Trekkopie, Karub, Usakos, E tiro, Erongo, Omaruru, Otjtua, Kalkfeld, Okadjande, Otjiwarongo, Otavi, Otavifontein.

²⁴ See Brenda Bravenboer and Walter Rusch, *The First Hundred Years of State Railways in Namibia*, Windhoek: Transnamib Museum, 1997, p. 204.

reasonable expectation. Through this photograph, in fact, Duggan-Cronin introduced a theme he would rearticulate in changing ways throughout his album, though at this point his notion of the railway as the all-dominant technological device, enabling even the spectacular displacement of a ship, might have been oversubscribed. However described, what the photograph managed to do was to identify the vectors of his and his regiment's trajectory, and thereby, frame the specific material anchorage of Duggan-Cronin's geographical imagination.



Let us hence follow the photographer on his journey along the railway lines and pause, as he does, at the many stations he introduces to his audience. Duggan-Cronin kept an eye on the large locations, the remarkable architectures of railway stations in the main towns, as much as he covered the presence of the many smaller stopping points, with singular buildings, where trains would have been loaded

with local farm products and cattle or where individual passengers might have got on. It was indeed these small stations, such as the one depicted in the image entitled "Station Etiro" on album page four, that formed important landmarks, as they added up to an expanding material grid encompassing a vast geographical space. Etiro is situated circa 175 kilometres away from the coast, and the acacia trees around the station building referenced the characteristic landscapes of the highland. Railway stations marked exceptional sites during any journey through central Namibia at the time, as the colony remained sparsely populated and devoid of major residential centres along the way. For train passengers in particular, the stations constituted pivotal temporal and spatial sequences that determined the course and duration of their voyage. The soldiers depicted in the photograph, enjoying a rest after a strenuous march from the coast towards the interior, re-enact the privileged site of the railway station, where the voyager would find food, water and some relief from the journey's strains in the shade.²⁵ But there is a strong sense of desertion and abandonment in this photograph, as if the usual industriousness linked to the railway stations, the gathering of animals and people particularly once a train would approach, had disappeared into remoter spaces and earlier, more peaceful times.

²⁵ The little stations along the railway line functioned as local transport nodal points for goods and people. In addition, they often had an important role for the operation of the railway system depended on sufficient water supply and regular maintenance of the tracks. Generally every 50 kilometres there were water supply facilities for the steam engines whereas railway gangs, responsible for maintenance of the tracks, were stationed at even shorter intervals. (See e.g. Gordon Pirie, "Railway ganging in southern Africa, c. 1900-37", *Journal of Transport History* (1993: March), pp. 64-76.)

The three photographs discussed above sketch out Duggan-Cronin's topography of the South African military occupation of Namibia. It is a visual narrative developed along the railway lines as powerful material inscriptions into the landscape and as the technological arteries of imperial expansion. For the soldier-photographer, positioned on the margins of the military hierarchy and detached from the political centre-stage, the railway emerged as a physical and narrative guideline, with its distinct temporalities and material configurations in space. It is, as we are told at the album's very beginning, this tension between the logics of the event, a war fought between two imperial adversaries, and the movements and rhythms determined by the gradual advancement of a technological device, which would configure Duggan-Cronin's visual narration of the campaign.

Along the tracks - the railway war through a soldier's lens

Duggan-Cronin's war experience needs to be understood within the broader military layout of the Namibian campaign.²⁶ On the one hand the South African forces launched a combined attack in southern Namibia in September 1915: by land the troops crossed the border from the south and from the east, and by sea they occupied the harbour in Lüderitz on the Atlantic coast and advanced along the railway line into the interior.²⁷ In the beginning, the South African penetration had slowed down due to the Maritz' rebellion troops allying with the German forces in the Orange river border region, and their control had delayed the original strategic plans.²⁸ On the other hand, the South African forces soon opened an additional front at the central Namibian coast. Here, British war vessels had bombed the town of Swakopmund and a first detachment of South African soldiers and engineers began the construction of a coastal railway line in December 1914, linking the British enclave Walvis Bay to the German system.²⁹ In January 1915 the Union forces, including Duggan-Cronin's regiment, occupied the deserted Swakopmund area and started to fight their way eastwards along the railway line the following month. The railway lines from the coast through the Namib desert to the interior highlands soon were of utmost strategic importance, both for the attackers and the defenders. Once the South African troops controlled the harbours along the Atlantic, the German colony's main chains of supply had been cut. The strategic conquest of the railway system had hence laid the grounds for a reconfiguration of the military power-play, weakening the German operational functioning and at the same time securing South African carriage of freight, material maintenance and troop logistics. Because of its crucial strategic significance, the railway system had become a bone of contention from the very beginning. The German side systematically blew up important railway infrastructure such as bridges. Furthermore, they literally broke up the railway tracks well

²⁶ A detailed military history is provided by the South African brigadier-general J.J. Collyer, *The Campaign in German South West Africa 1914-1915*, Pretoria, 1937.

²⁷ On the landing in Lüderitz see L'Ange, 1991, pp. 91-96; on the outline of the South African strategy and the first attacks by land see Collyer, 1937, pp. 22-34. See also the maps in Collyer, 1937, pp. 32, 56. – An account of the over 1100 kilometres march by the 5th S.A.M.R. regimen from Kimberley along the Kuruman river through the Kalahari to Keetmanshoop. The troops left Kimberley on 19th January 1915 and arrived at the German border police station in Hasuur in early April. ("The Firing Line. Active Service with the S.A.M.R. and S.A.P", in *The Nongquai* 1915, pp. 21-30, here pp. 24-27)

²⁸ The first attack by the Union forces into Namibian territory ended in a defeat at Sandfontein north of the Orange river in late September 1919. (See L'Ange, 1991, pp. 25-37.) On the early period of the Maritz rebellion and his alliance with the German forces see L'Ange, 1991, pp. 39-58.

²⁹ Dierks, *Chronology*, 2005.

over 50 kilometres into the interior and brought the railway material into the hinterland.³⁰ The German politics of destruction entailed that railway construction became a central task for the Union forces, which had landed on the Namibian coast.³¹ And they began, as we saw, with a coastal line between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, while later gradually re-building those tracks that had been broken.



Progress was slow and the climatic and topographic inhospitality of the desert made construction a strenuous endeavour. Sand, wind, heat and cold, the general scarcity of water as well as sudden floods delayed works, and sporadic German attacks, once the construction advanced inland, put lives and infrastructure at great risk. The photograph entitled “Burghers lying narrow-

gauge railway from Rössing to Jakals Water” (page 16) depicts a privileged moment. Most railway construction was in fact done by African labourers, but in case military intelligence required, it was exceptionally performed by armed soldiers.³² The involvement of mounted Afrikaner (Burghers) troops was such an occasion and, accordingly, worth to be captured by Duggan-Cronin’s camera.³³ The more so as it added to his visual focus on the lower ranks of the troops and, as we shall see, their continuous presence in his narrative.

But beyond this, manual labour and productive material intervention in space became a realm discursively counter-positioned to and a target of military destruction and its lethal apparatuses. The

³⁰ See on the breaking up: Bravenboer and Rusch, op. cit., pp. 204-205, 208-209. There were in fact two railway lines connecting the Namibian highlands with Swakopmund, namely the state railway line running from Windhoek via Karibib to Swakopmund and originally private railway line running from Otavi via Usaskos to Swakopmund. The two tracks run almost parallel on the circa 40 kilometres from Rössing to the coast.

³¹ The task of constructing and running the railway system laid on the specially formed South African Engineer Corps. In addition all men with railway experience were withdrawn from the various troops to form a special railway regiment. The latter comprised of maximum of 1300 men at the height of the campaign. (See Bravenboer and Rusch, op. cit., pp. 206-207. See also L’Ange, 1991, p. 103. – For internal and unpublished reports on the campaign by the South African Engineer Corp and the Railway Regiment see South African Railways and Harbours, “Railways. Annual Reports of Departmental Officers, Vol. 2 1915”, pp. 206-234.

³² Over 9,000 African labourers were employed for railway construction in South West Africa. (Figures according to South African Railways and Harbours, *Report of the General Manager of Railways and Harbours for the Year ended 31 December 1915*, Pretoria, 1916, p. 150.)

³³ The mounted Afrikaner troops, so called “Burgher commandos” played a specific role in the Union’s army and the conquest of Namibia. They were organised along the traditions of the small, rather independent “Boer commandos” in the South African War. These, in military terms unorthodox commandos did not really fit into the new Union’s army organised along British models. However, they played a crucial role due to their large numbers and due to their specific mobile warfare tactic well suited for the Namibian territory. (See e.g. Collyer, 1937, pp. 11-21; L’Ange, 1991, pp. 191-203.) How far this final success of Burgher commandos in South Africa’s military history influenced later Afrikaner perception of the newly acquired territory still has to be researched.

most powerful weapon entering Duggan-Cronin's visual frame was heavy artillery, approached by the camera with ambivalence between captivation and fear.

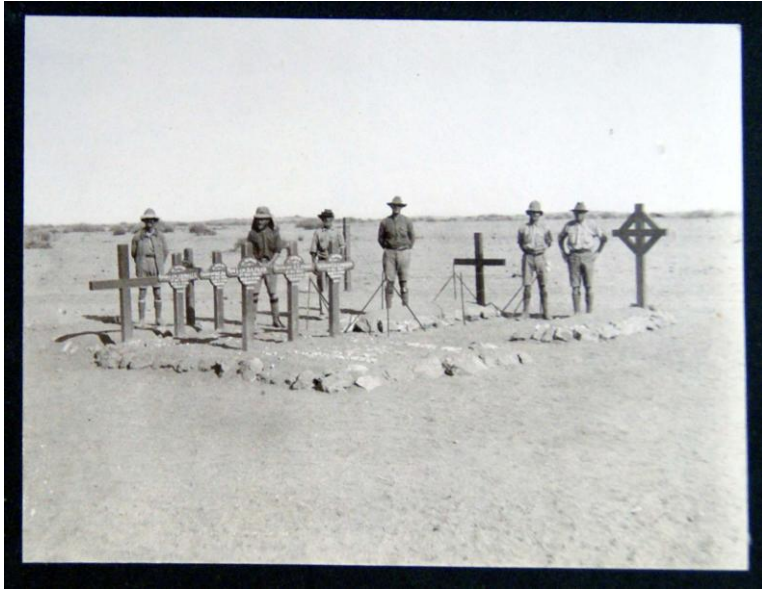


This photograph ("Naval Gun in action", page 35) evidenced the photographer's ambivalence in very tangible ways, as much as it referenced teleologies of military industrialisation and modernization. Therein, the canon more than any other weapon stood at the threshold of modern warfare, with its technological advancements and mechanised operations. As part of an ever increasing arsenal of modern artillery and

heavy machinery the canon likewise embodied the reconfiguration of the relationship between the human body and the machine.³⁴ Duggan-Cronin seems to have anticipated how the parameters of military conflict would change on the many battlefields of World War I, and though the Namibian campaign only met the requirements of modern warfare to some extent, the album sustained a continuous and deeply ambivalent visual negotiation of the technological leap.³⁵ Therein, the photographer always remained bound to the perspective of the soldier and his intimate experience of fighting and armed confrontation. This is an image of destruction, of a heavy machine firing into spatial remoteness, while causing terrible heat, smoulder, row and commotion in its immediacy, all of which condensed in a visual blurring and haziness. And it is precisely the canon's reference to a location beyond the frame, to the spatial and temporal dislocation of the bombing that allows the photograph to anticipate war's inevitable actualization - in the event of death.

³⁴ In discussing a photograph of a South African Defence Force armoured vehicle taken by John Liebenberg in northern Namibia in 1988, Patricia Hayes called this vehicle, a so-called Buffel troop carrier, "the end product of a long history of military industrialisation". For her the photograph seems "to represent the final metamorphosis of human into the machine". In Duggan-Cronin's photograph, in contrast, human and weapon are, although connect, still two distinct entities. (Patricia Hayes, "Introduction: Photographs and Ghosts in the War for Namibia", in John Liebenberg and Patricia Hayes, *Bush of Ghost. Life and War in Namibia 1986-90*, Cape Town, 2010, pp. 9-25 (19).)

³⁵ World War I was an experimental field for new technologies of warfare. So was the Namibian battlefield. Duggan-Cronin's photographs document the emergence of two of these previously unseen technologies, namely aircrafts and armoured cars. Air planes were used for aerial reconnaissance by both sides and for aerial bombardments by the German forces. Light wheeled tanks were shipped from Great Britain and employed by the South African forces. (On these technological inventions used in Namibia see for instance the unpublished, but well researched article by Golf Dornseif "Trekkopje: Afrikas erstes Gefecht mit Radpanzern. Tragikomische Aspekte neuer Waffentechnik" (www.golf-dornseif.de accessed 3 May 2012.) However, cavalry and horses in general still played a decisive role in the Namibian campaign or in the words of L'Ange (1991, p. 142): "In fact the campaign is seen by some military historians as the last great cavalry operation in military history."



The medium through which the cannon photograph enters into conversation with the next image is sound. While “Naval Gun in action” evoked, as we said, the rumbling of the heavy machine, the metallic charging of the canon, the deafening noise of the discharge and the eventual explosion, the photograph entitled “The Graves of Trekkoppie” (page 51), in contrast, absorbs the spectacular sound into an all-encompassing silence and the visual voicelessness in view of the

dead. But Duggan-Cronin’s approach to death remained beyond the immediate spectacle of the event, there is no voyeurism in his photographs, rather they evidence a respectful, humble gaze. There are no images of dead bodies, neither comrades nor enemies, in his album.³⁶ Instead, we encounter a narrative of the graves, such as the one at Trekkoppie, a little railway station in the desert. Trekkoppie had become a site of heavy fighting, where both sides involved in the war suffered casualties and buried their dead on place.³⁷ And, in contrast to the firing of the canon, the inevitable progress of the war comes to a halt. The men line up close to their fallen comrades, in a graphic correspondence between their upright bodies and the crosses marking the soldiers’ last resting place. In many ways, this was a moment of closure, as Duggan-Cronin’s regiment was gradually returning to the coast. But while men and machines would beat their slow retreat, restoring the landscape to its pre-war condition, the graves of the soldiers would remain, inscribing themselves as the visible scars of war and continue to mark the landscape far into the moment of a normalised colonial occupation.

The new imperial space

Once the fighting came to an end, images of conquered land replaced the ones on military action, although slowly and interruptedly.³⁸ Duggan-Cronin’s landscape images read as an expression of his visual curiosity, and he seems to have enjoyed those occasion that led him away from the narrow

³⁶ The range of photographic documentation taken during World War I, including mutilated and dead bodies, and its use for specific nationalist or pacifist propaganda in Weimar Germany is discussed for instance in Dora Apel, “Cultural Battlegrounds: Weimar Photographic Narratives of War” *New German Critique*, No. 76 Special Issue on Weimar Visual Culture (Winter, 1999), pp. 49-84.

³⁷ On the skirmish of Trekkoppie, end of April 1915, and the grave sites see Bravenboer and Rusch, *op. cit.*, pp226-227. - Duggan-Cronin combined on one page of the album a souvenir photo he had shot of a comrade of its unit with the very same man’s grave at Trekkoppie.

³⁸ Sometimes it is simply the caption expressing the change of focus from action to landscape. In cases when he had taken two slightly different shots of the same situation, Duggan-Cronin placed the one showing more of the surrounding land in the second part of the album. E.g. an image showing a destroyed railway bridge is placed on page 4 and titled “Railway Bridge blown up by the Germans at Kal[k]feld”, whereas another image showing the very same bridge but from a greater distance and with cattle in the foreground is placed 49 and titled “View Kal[k]feld”.

spaces of the military into the vastness of the country his regiment had helped conquer. Yet, the exploration of the new lands remained within geographies of railway locations, and the camera roamed around in the troops' vicinity never transcending the soldier's realm for good. Still, his visual articulation of space becomes persuasive in its complexity and imaginative depth.



The photograph entitled “Omaruru”, on page 28 of the album, stands out for its powerful composition. There is a strong sense of a totalizing vision infusing the way in which the camera framed the scenery and positioned the ample colonial architecture in its centre. This is, indeed, an example of how landscape photography enacted certain notions of power and imperial appropriation of land.³⁹ The photographer's perspective must

have been from the top of a solid watchtower overlooking the town of Omaruru, and the view from above favoured the qualification of space in terms of conquest. The vastness of the landscape extending throughout the frame drew from a contemporary iconography of emptiness,⁴⁰ which could be brought into a balanced visual conversation with the signs of development, marked by the material presence of the building, the roads and the wagons in the foreground. We enter the space of an imperial frontier, and are presented hence with the fruits of the military occupation, conquered land waiting to be allocated, no more to an invading army, but rather to an advancing settler community. And as fierce as the fighting between the antagonist empires had been, as much as the German colonists had been perceived as an enemy of modern governance and social progress under wise imperial guidance, the colonial occupation of land remained common ideological ground.⁴¹ It is precisely the reference to this imperial centrepiece, articulated in the photograph by the untouched building that conveyed this sense of continuity, though under new auspices.

Let us finally move away from the totalising vision of landscape into the intimacy of the close-up and engage with Duggan-Cronin's most poignant portrait of an African man, selected from the rather small group of images of the local population that found its way into the album. – Interestingly there is no photograph of the many thousands of Africans who participated as unarmed labourers, drivers, or in other position, except as shadowy, barely recognisable bystander on some of the photographs mainly documenting camp life.⁴² – “A Herero native” (on page 23) is probably the most staged and

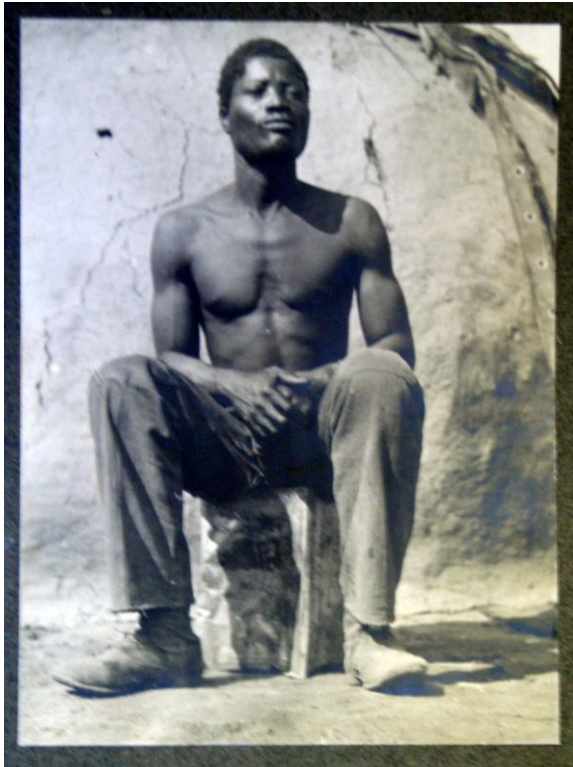
³⁹ *Landscape and Power* (Chicago, 1994). Mitchell has, in the meantime, articulated a certain critique of his original argument. See “Space, Place and Landscape” as he wrote in the preface to the second edition of *Landscape and Power* (Chicago, 2002, vii).

⁴⁰ Here I refer to Jeremy Foster, *Washed with Sun. Landscape and the Making of White South Africa*, Pittsburgh, 2008, especially chapter 9 (“Modernity, Memory, and the South African Railways. The Iconography of Emptiness”), pp. 200-237.

⁴¹ Wallace, 2011, pp. 211-218

⁴² According to the little literature on African participation in this war 33,556 Africans served as labourers in the Union Defence Force between August 1914 and August 1915 and, in addition, some were privately engaged by individuals and units. Further an unknown, but considerably smaller number of “Coloureds” and “Indians” were

constructed photograph in the Namibian campaign album and it anticipates some of Duggan-Cronin's later aesthetic concerns and politics.



The visuality is indeed quite powerful here and the young man seated on a canister in front of a hut and posing for the camera almost appears in abeyance with himself. We could argue for the photographer's concern with beauty and interpret the image as a powerful obeisance to the physicality and strength of the young male body.⁴³ But there are strong disturbances and ruptures to this aesthetics, and they are most importantly linked to the specificity of the Namibian context – referenced by the Herero label in the caption – and the political economy of South African imperial expansion and colonial occupation. Classified as a 'Herero native' the man in the photograph emerged as member of the tribalised clientele of the new colonial master, liberated from the cruelty of German tutelage and inaugurated into an era of modern South African colonial governance and guidance. But more

significantly, the aesthetics of the strong body, in conjunction with the dirty clothing, and the canister as the material reference to the industrial context, inevitably positioned the young man within a racialised division of labour. While at this point in the album Duggan-Cronin articulated his most pretentious claim to a status as professional photographer with his own aesthetic language, he relegated the man in the photograph to his prescribed role as a labouring subject within the hierarchies of the colonial economy.

The discussion of Duggan-Cronin's album on the South African military campaign in Namibia in 1915 was concerned with the relationship between materiality, visuality and the geographical imagination. The analysis moved along the railway lines, the central material intervention which determined both the trajectories and rhythms of the campaign as such, as much as it informed the photographer's perception and representation of the Namibian landscape. What emerges throughout the album is a specific articulation of geographical imagination that frames space as a technological appearance, in which the railway system constitutes both a vehicle and idiom of conquest. The geographical imagination so designed reflected the military strategy of South Africa's imperial expansion, an endeavour grounded in the geographies of power predefined by the German settler colony. In fact, the war and eventual change in colonial power concerned the Namibian heartland alone, i.e. those parts of the territory, which had been configured by the German colonial government as a settler economy based on large-scale expropriation of land and dependent African labour. And the latitude

part of the Union army. (W.M. Bisset, "Unexplored Aspects of South Africa's First World War History", in *Militaria*, Vol 6/1 1976, pp. 55-61)

⁴³ The photograph stages a specific aesthetic which Duggan-Cronin developed further in his photography on Africans. Unlike what Godby (2010, p. 71) noticed for photographs on Bavenda women here the presence of work (expressed in the clothes and shoes of the man) is not denied.

of the territory under German political and economic control had largely been confined to stretches of land along the main transport routes, i.e. roads and, most importantly, railways.⁴⁴

The specificity of the campaign's spatial regime, anchored in the materiality of the railway system, differed in fundamental ways from South Africa's subsequent military expansion to northern Namibia outside the area of colonial settlement and modern transport.⁴⁵

Railway war without fighting/Tracks into the new territory: the construction of the Prieska-Upington-Kalkfeld line

The war for Namibia was also fought on another front: An integral part of the Union's South West Africa campaign entailed the construction of a railway line that would connect the South African system with the one in the German colony. This was not an easy task. The extreme north-western outpost of the South African railway system was in Prieska in the northern Cape, where a feeder line from the important railway junction De Aar ended. An extension of the Prieska track northwards with the aim to connect the South African with the Namibian system required to cover a distance of 507 kilometres, 372 kilometres to the border and another 135 kilometres to the southern Namibian town of Kalkfontein.⁴⁶ Only days after the Union government agreed to join the British war efforts a first group of engineers arrived in Prieska on the 17th of August 1914 to locate, stake out, and make plans for the first stretch of the line, and construction work started two weeks later.⁴⁷ The efforts of thousands of labourers pushed construction ahead as fast as possible. Despite various topographical difficulties, such as the crossing of the Orange river at Upington, and despite military clashes with rebel forces under Maritz the railway tracks crossed the border on the 17th May 1915, and the railway systems eventually were linked up at Kalkfontein on the 25th June 1915.⁴⁸

South African Railways and Harbours prided itself with the fast completion of the new railway line and its crucial role in the South West Africa campaign.⁴⁹ The successful campaign was celebrated in

⁴⁴ I have discussed this elsewhere in detail. (Giorgio Miescher, *Namibia's Red Line. The History of a Veterinary and Settlement Border*, New York, 2012, see especially chapter 2 ("The Police Zone Boundary and 'Restricted Areas,' 1905-1915").

⁴⁵ See regarding the expeditions to Owambo for instance Patricia Hayes "Northern exposures: the photography of C.H.L. Hahn, Native Commissioner of Ovamboland 1915-1946", in Wolfram Hartmann, Jeremy Silvester, and Patricia Hayes (eds), *The Colonising Camera. Photographs in the Making of Namibian History*, Cape Town/Windhoek/Athens, 1998, pp. 171-187 (especially 171-175). See for the expedition to Kaoko for instance Lorena Rizzo, *Gender and Colonialism. A History of Kaoko (northwestern Namibia), 1870s to 1950s*, Basel, 2012 (especially part II).

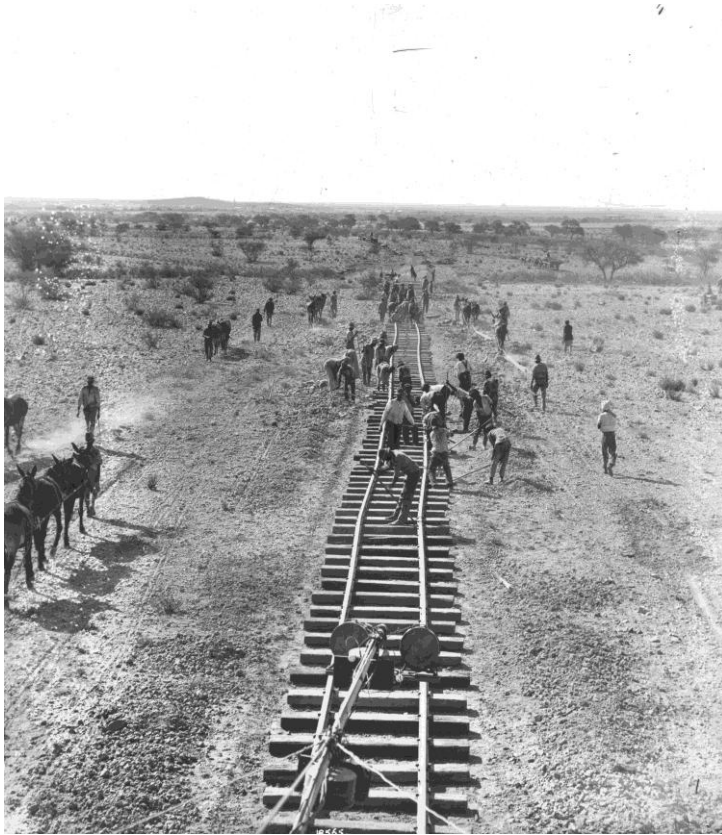
⁴⁶ See E.P. Popkiss, "Report on Railway Work in Connection with the War and the Rebellion. Prieska-Upington-Nakop-Kalkfontein: Survey and Construction" (no date); the 14 pages report was given to the South African Railways by the son of Popkiss in 1967 and is kept in the Transnet Heritage Library.

⁴⁷ The engineers arrived on 14 August and construction work started on 31 August. (Ibid.) – The Union's parliament officially decided to participate in the war on the side of Great Britain on 9 September 1914. (Rayner and O'Shaughnessy, 1916, p. 7)

⁴⁸ Popkiss, no date.

⁴⁹ The militarisation of the South African Railways and Harbours during the war is reflected in the military rank of its General Manager William Hoy who was made Director of the Military Railways in the rank of a Colonel of the Union's army. (L'Ange, 1991, p. 103) Hoy personally supervised the railway work from the coastal harbours Lüderitz and Swakopmund into the interior from April to June 1915. ("Report on South West African Campaign by Lt.-Col. J. M. Fairweather" in South African Railways and Harbours, "Railways. Annual Reports of Departmental Officers, Vol. 2 1915", pp. 226-234)

the company's monthly magazine.⁵⁰ Some traces of the construction work of 1914-15 are found in the archives kept at the Transnet Heritage Library, which keep a substantial photographic collection.⁵¹ In what follows I will discuss two examples from these archives.⁵²



One of the photographs archived in the Transnet Heritage Library documents the progressing construction work.⁵³ The elevated position of the camera allowed for a panoramic view, including both the workers laying the rails in the foreground and the immense open *veld* (savannah) framed by hills in the background. There is a strong sense of movement in this photograph. The rails in centre of image guide the viewer's eye, taking him or her on a steady progression and penetration into the land. The physical advancement is intensified by the level arm penetrating the image's immediate foreground and the mules entering the frame alongside the tracks.

The image captures but a moment during construction work, which eventually lasted for several months. Yet, the open frame allows for immanent reference through time and space, producing an endless repetition of action, namely the operation sequence performed by the men.⁵⁴ First a team of engineers, surveyors and workers had to define the course of the new tracks, accounting for the shortest route, the topographical conditions, ruling grades, curve radiuses and costs. Once the course of the track was delimited, so called "earth work gangs" had to clear the bush and build the solid roadbed. The "earth work gangs" were followed by the "plate laying gangs" who operated just in front of the railhead loaded with sleepers and tracks. Once unloaded, the sleepers and tracks were carried by mules, keeping the construction material in constant flow. The constant repetition of these operation sequences and thus the progress of works depended on complex logistics that guaranteed supply of construction

⁵⁰ See for instance South African Railway and Harbour Magazine for June 1915 (p. 568), July 1915 (p. 609), and August 1915 (p. 699).

⁵¹ The Transnet Heritage Library, the former South African Railways Heritage Library, holds a collection of seemingly 200'000 negatives of photographs alone. Unfortunately the Heritage Library is not accessible to the public but I was lucky to have been able to get at least some access thanks to the energetic and helpful head of the Transnet Knowledge Centre, Yolanda Meyer, in March 2012.

⁵² Yolanda Meyer enabled me to trace a good two dozens of photographs documenting the construction of the line thereby I did not include the ones dealing with the construction of the bridge over the Orange river. I am quite convinced that a more careful research, which was not possible due to closure of the library, would reveal much more photographs.

⁵³ The photograph is entitled on the back side "Construction Prieska-Upington", the photographer's name is not known.

⁵⁴ For the detailed description of the various operational sequences see Popkiss, op. cit.

material, water and food for the many people and animals involved. Railway construction was a labour intensive endeavour and heavily dependent of African labour. When the work in Prieska began around 1200 men, of which 1000 were African labourers, had been recruited. The number of African workers soon increased to 2500, and later to 3000 men.⁵⁵

This photograph echoes an imaginary of space articulated through movement. And it is a very specific *kind* of movement, one which is grounded in the technology of sleepers and trails, of trains and locomotives. Movement here means penetration, exploration, and appropriation, and it entails a lasting imprint, leaving a physical, permanent mark on the landscape. But the photograph remains hesitant, anticipating a future but remaining on the threshold. The presence of the drought animals, following the course and pace of the railway's advancement, takes us back into earlier times, when moving through the *veld* was slow and cumbersome. And while in the image past, present and future seem to meet, the advancing tracks bear the promise of acceleration into a modern future. This modernity is given a shape, a presence in the photograph, through the men building the railway tracks. Indeed, the railway authorities responsible for the project prided themselves with the vigorous organization of labour and its efficient use. The use of artificial light, a remarkable technological innovation at the time, allowed for organising "the plate laying gangs" into three shifts of eight hours, and thereby kept construction work going around the clock. The artificial light literally transformed the outdoors construction site into a factory space.⁵⁶



This photograph, taken during night time documents the use of artificial light during the railway construction process.⁵⁷

Technically there was a long open bogie truck at the extreme railhead on which a simple

trench with a set of lamps was fixed. The open bogie truck was immediately followed by a covered van containing a dynamo driven by an oil engine. This generator supplied the electricity for illuminating both the actual plate laying in front of the railhead, and the constant flow of

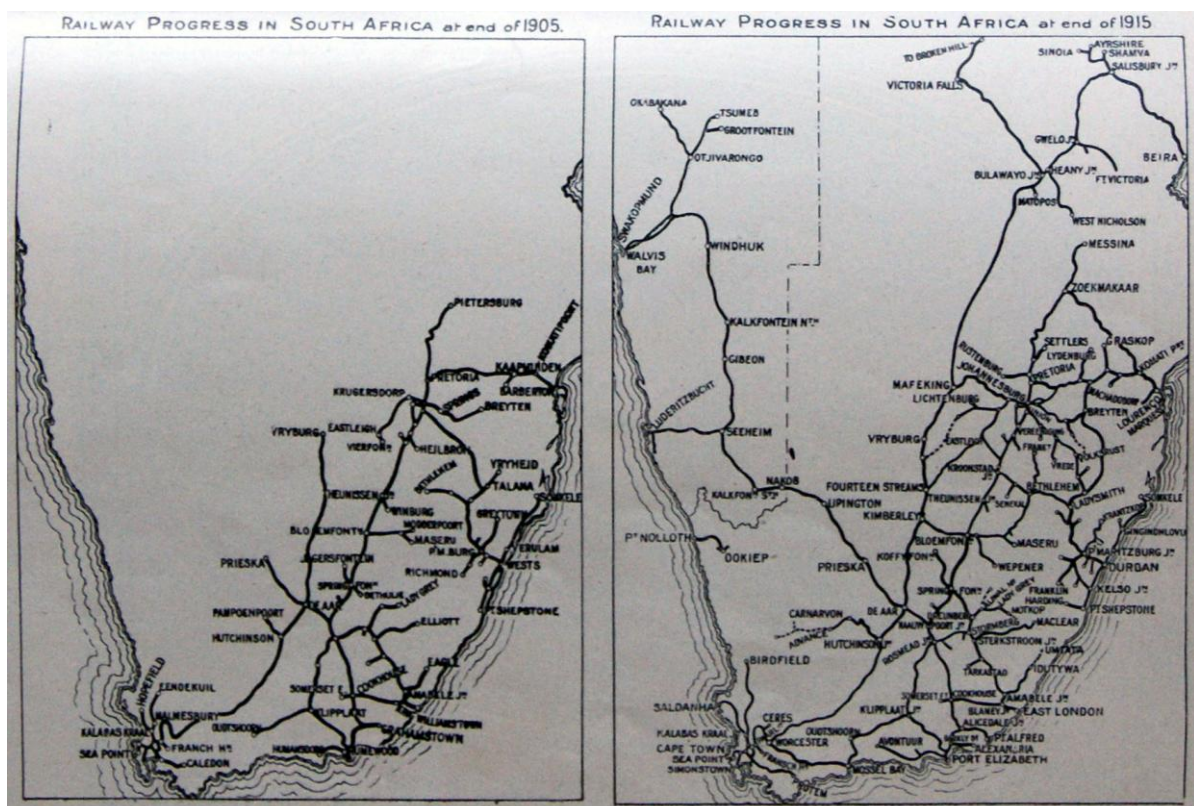
⁵⁵ Figures given by Popkiss, op. cit.- The total of African labourers specially engaged for the construction of the Prieska-Upington line consisted of 6,288 men and for the railway construction in the German colony (including the section Upington-Kalkfontein) 9,029 men. These figures do not include the African labourers necessary for the normal operation of railways and harbours. (Figures according to South African Railways and Harbours, *Report of the General Manager of Railways and Harbours for the Year ended 31 December 1915*, Pretoria, 1916, p. 150.)

⁵⁶ See Popkiss, no date.

⁵⁷ On the backside the photograph is entitled with the words "an innovative contraption generating electric power for floodlights to facilitate night working – Prieska".

construction material from the wagons behind.⁵⁸ The men lined up under the floodlight embody the division of labour and the hierarchies in rank, based on a racial order and visualized in the clothing and the tools. It is precisely the grouping in front of the camera that made hierarchies and labour relations more explicit than in the photograph before. Taken together the two photographs signify a colonial economy of labour; one that was also able to reframe space through modern modes of transport and technology. As if the progression of the railway system north-westwards towards the future Namibian colony would carry along the compulsory inclusion of the African population into the expanding imperial frontier. Thus, Africans' entrance into the visual frame needed careful orchestration and eventually took the form of recruited labour.⁵⁹

The Empire's New Tracks – A Conclusion



In December 1915 the *South African Railways and Harbour Magazine* published a set of four maps that illustrated the growth of the railway network in South Africa. The double page prints depicted the changing network in 1875, 1895, 1905, and 1915.⁶⁰ The image above, showing the page with the railway system of 1905 and 1915, provide an idea of the visual dynamism produced in this comparative series. The railway extended over the whole width of the subcontinent, and had grown into the southern African interior blurring the image's frame. The self-assured formula "Railway Progress in South Africa" in the title echoes South Africa's expansionism in the region, which is

⁵⁸ The technique is described in some details the report by Popkiss. (Ibid.)

⁵⁹ Interestingly I could not find an image depicting African workforce in the visual representation of this railway construction in the popular *South African Railways and Harbours Magazine*, although these works are well documented in the company's archives.

⁶⁰ *South African Railways and Harbour Magazine* December 1915, pp. 1074-1075.

further enforced by the map's silence on the existence of borders. The thin dotted line marking the threshold to the former German colony signifies the residue of an imperial barrier overcome by the war. In an even more ambitious gesture, the map incorporated the British and Portuguese colonies into an imagined South African space, grounded as it was in the railway system. The visual articulation of such geopolitical aspiration would indeed find quite explicit narrative enforcement, and by 1917 general Jan Smuts ambitiously stated that "We have started to create a new white base in South Africa, and to-day we are in a position to move forward towards the North and the civilisation of the African continent".⁶¹ Plans to incorporate the German colony north of the Orange river had materialised at a very early stage. Officially, British imperial requirements had been limited to the destruction of the German wireless stations, yet the construction of the railway connecting Prieska and Kalkfontein foreclosed the South African intent for permanent occupation. Correspondingly, the military campaign was conceptualised as a long-term territorial expansion right from its beginning in August 1914. It came as no surprise hence that in the weeks after the campaign had shown success, the South African Railways administration formally took over the former German railway system.⁶² This material incorporation meant an extension of the South African network by more than 2000 kilometres (1285 miles) by one blow.⁶³

As argued throughout the paper, photographs played an important role in boosting the imaginary of South Africa's imperial expansion. Because the war for Namibia was fought for, along, and through railway tracks it is best described as a "railway war". Engaging with Alfred Duggan-Cronin's album produced in the war's aftermath has enabled me to illustrate one way in which the railway defined the spatial articulation of the war and the new territory was imagined. Duggan-Cronin's photographic representation *along the tracks* was later reformulated in the South African railways company's policy to commission photographers and filmmakers to document the expanded system, its infrastructure, and, most importantly all the towns, villages, places and landscapes the railway had made accessible.⁶⁴ As a result of this policy the company managed to acquire "quite a representative collection of negatives" in 1922. All these photographic representations materialised during journeys with and along the railway lines⁶⁵ and the tracks kept a fundamental influence on the constitution of a distinct imperial geographical imagination for years to come. The Prieska - Upington - Kalkfeld line remains the only railway connection between Namibia and the rest of the continent until today.

⁶¹ The quote is taken from a speech by Smuts, then South African general and later prime minister, given in London on 22nd May 1917. (J.C. Smuts, *War-Time Speeches*, London, 1917, p. 85).

⁶² The South African Railways administration was officially running the railway in Namibia from 1st of August 1915. (See National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria, file "Railways in South West Africa Control. 1915-1922"; SAB-SAS-1073-P12/45 part I.)

⁶³ Figures according to Bravenboer and Rusch, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

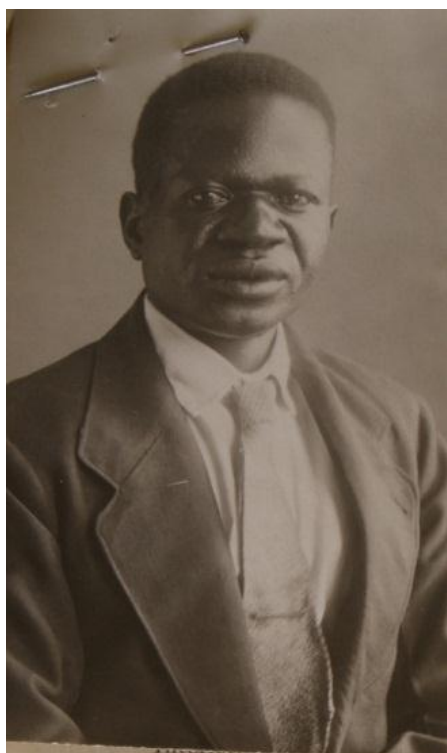
⁶⁴ See e.g. Foster, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 212-214. The annual report for 1915 by the Manager of the Publicity Department, for instance, carefully notes that 1127 new negatives were added to the stock and that 20,525 feet cinematographic film were taken. (See South African Railways and Harbours, "Railways. Annual Reports of Departmental Officers, Vol. 2 1915", p. 143) – The circa 200,000 photographic negatives stored in the Transnet Heritage Library are the tangible outcome of this photographic demand. (Personal information Yolanda Meyer, March 2012)

⁶⁵ Manger Publicity Department to General Manager, 8 November 1923. (National Archives of Pretoria, SAB-SAS-178-G4/4/42) The Heritage Library indeed holds a voluminous undated photo-album with photographs depicting South West Africa in the early period of South African occupation.

**Visual Aperture - bureaucratic systems of identification
and photographic subject-hood in colonial southern Africa**

*

Lorena Rizzo, University of Basel & University of the Western Cape



On the 24th of November 1930, a man named David Chidanda submitted a declaration form required for the issuing of a passport to the commissioner of oaths at Kub, a police station northwest of Mariental in central Namibia.¹ The printed form provided information about Chidanda's nationality, his place of birth and residence, his profession, and his travel destination. Furthermore, the form contained a column with the personal description of Chidanda and, stitched to it, the applicant's black and white portrait photograph. Based on the information given, David Chidanda was hence a man born on the 15th of August 1903 in Limbe, British Nyassaland (Malawi), and at the time of the application a resident of Kub, where he worked as a teacher. Chidanda's travel destination was England, where he intended to stay for a six months

educational training, a project supported by his metropolitan mentors.² With the application form, Chidanda had been required to submit two personal photographs certified by the civil servant in charge of his case, and most probably, deposit a bond of 50£ covering his costs of maintenance abroad or the expenses involved in case he would have been repatriated.³ Eventually, on the 19th of February 1931 he was issued a passport by the South West African authorities in Windhoek, yet with the prospect of not being accepted into the territory again.⁴

The formal straightforwardness of the circumstances just described is delusive, and it marked the bureaucratic closure of a process that ranged over a period of four years. Indeed, Chidanda submitted his first application to the Department of Native Affairs in Pretoria in October 1926, an

¹ The application is kept in the National Archives of Namibia (NAN) and filed as SWAA 422 A 50 34, Native Affairs. Passports for Natives'. In the document the surname is alternately spelt as Chitanda, Chatanda and Chidanda. The signature on the form reads as David Chidanda. All the photographs shown here were taken by myself.

² NAN SWAA 422 A 50 34, Application letter by David Chidanda to the Native Affairs Department in Pretoria, 9.10.1926. The mentors in England are mentioned but remain unidentified.

³ NAN SWAA 422 A 50 34, J.F. Herbst, Secretary for Native Affairs, Union Circular No. 29/1928, Pretoria, 20.8.1928. The circular went to all officers of the native affairs department and to magistrates. Among other things the circular fixed the amount for the compulsory deposit at £50.

⁴ NAN SWAA 422 A 50 34, Magistrate Rehoboth to the Secretary for South West Africa, 3.12.1926 and the Secretary for South West Africa to the Magistrate Rehoboth, 4.11.1930.

attempt that failed due to the negative evaluation by the secretary for the interior in Pretoria.⁵ It seems as if Chidanda insisted on his plans and in February 1928 the Windhoek authorities avowed that, as Chidanda was neither a South West African nor a South African 'native', and a British subject by birth, they were not entitled to refuse him a passport.⁶ The case was handed round between Pretoria, Windhoek and regional officers in southern Namibia for quite a while, but all attempts to find a pretext justifying a negative finding failed, and eventually gave way to the successful application.

David Chidanda's passport application is kept in a file entitled *Native Affairs. Passports for Natives* in the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek alongside with the documentation on six men and one woman who applied for passports, and originated from South Africa, Angola, Namibia and Liberia.⁷ All complete applications included the same standardized form, a certified photograph and, occasionally, the applicant's fingerprint. These documents filed throughout the 1930s proved to be complicated, entrenched as they were in a bureaucratic confusion of imperial and national legislation, and diplomatic procedure. Most of all they read as elliptical reflections of a colonial bureaucracy's anxiety, perplexity and suspiciousness towards a group of Africans claiming official recognition for their residence, mobility and citizenship.

There was indeed some rationality in the bureaucratic alienation. In the 1930s the political geography of Southern Africa was well established, Namibia had been gradually incorporated into the political economy of the South African segregationist state, its mandatory power since 1921.⁸ African residence and mobility was heavily curtailed and ideally restricted to labor migration, and residence in the entire South African territory based on the relegation of Africans to reserves, compounds, locations and townships.⁹ Citizenship, i.e. the inclusion of the individual in the political body, was organized along racial lines and excluded the African population as much as it privileged those classified as 'white'.¹⁰ Against this backdrop David Chidanda's and his fellow applicants' claim to be issued passports in order to travel through Southern or to West Africa and even overseas, must

⁵ SWAA 422 A 50 34, Magistrate Rehoboth to the Secretary for South West Africa, 14.2.1929.

⁶ SWAA 422 A 50 34, The Secretary for South West Africa to the Administrator, 14.2.1928.

⁷ The men were James Dzoye from Malawi, Peter Dennison and Jeremiah Charles Warner from Liberia, Antonio Neto from Angola and Martin Brown. The case of Martin Brown was particular, as he resided then in Frankfurt, Germany, and his nationality was unclear, though he claimed to be born in Namibia. The only application by a woman was by Maria Weiss, born in Upington, South Africa, and widower of a Ghanaian. Last but not least, two men, Loster Job and Johannes Tau, applied for passports in order to travel to Zimbabwe. Once the police traced the two men's identification pass numbers, they were merely given travel permits. We'll come back to the various kinds of documents later in the paper.

⁸ See the introduction to the volume edited by Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace and Wolfram Hartmann (1998), *Namibia under South African Rule. Mobility & Containment, 1915-46*. Oxford, Windhoek, Athens.

⁹ See e.g. William Beinart and Saul Dubow (2003), 'Introduction: The historiography of segregation and apartheid', in *ibid.* (eds.), *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa*. London, New York, pp. 1-24.

¹⁰ Sally Peberdy (2009), *Selecting Immigrants. National Identity and South Africa's Immigration Policies 1910-2008*. Johannesburg, pp. 37-46; Michael Neokosmos (2006), *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners'. Explaining Xenophobia in Post-apartheid South Africa: Citizenship and Nationalism, Identity and Politics*. Dakar, p. 38.

have at least caused some official annoyance. Still, how do we make sense of this minor number of successful applications that were eventually filed in the Namibian archives? Are these few men and one woman peripheral figures, exceptional occurrences in an otherwise firmly engraved political system, individuals who slipped through the knitting of an otherwise tight net of state policies and institutions of control? And why, finally, does David Chidanda invest himself in a bureaucratic process lasting over a period of four years, only to be issued an exorbitantly expensive passport that indeed enabled him to leave but equally prevented him from ever returning to Namibia?

This text is about passes, permits, passports, identity certificates, and reference books issued by the state in early 20th century southern Africa with intent to identify and control men and women *on the move*. It is as much about the constraints put on African men and women required to carry a plethora of official papers certifying their identity or their labor condition, and configuring the latitude and disposition of their mobility. In contrast to most of the scholarship concerned with histories of the passport as a modern state practice aimed at registering, classifying and regulating citizens and subjects, the argument developed here shifts attention away from the disciplinary gesture of the (colonial) state towards paying attention to the place of visibility in the practice of applying for and issuing documents of passage. This will allow me to complicate three historiographical problems in early 20th century Southern Africa: first, the differentiation of policing as a site for the configuration of colonial subjectivities; second, the problem of citizenship, nationality and belonging and their entrenchment with specific articulations of race; and third, the problematic narration of history within the framework of a universalized idea of the modern nation-state.¹¹ Theoretically, the paper engages an approach that interrogates passes, passports, permits and identity certificates in view of the regimes of personhood they depend on and the spaces they provide for the manifestation of subjectivity. Visibility, as I will argue, proves of utmost importance at this point.

Passports, Nationality and Race

Histories of pass-ports concurrently speak to histories of identification and mobility. Conventionally, the emergence of the modern passport system is anchored in the convergence of modern regimes of registration, classification and identification of individuals and population groups throughout the 19th

¹¹ Etienne Balibar (1990), 'The Nation Form. History and Ideology', *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center), Vol. 13, No. 3: 329-361.

century with the salience of nationalism during and after World War I.¹² In view of the increased mobility of entire populations, many of whom had been dislocated by the war itself, European nation-states sought to consolidate their control over territories and populations, now increasingly being classified in terms of nationality and citizenship.¹³ This European-centered narrative has been critically revised in the work of Radhika Viyas Mongia, who argued that inquiries into the modern nation-state and its concern with controlling mobility have to attend to its creation in a global context of imperialism and racism.¹⁴ Based on her analysis of early 20th century Indian immigration to Canada, Mongia suggested that the modern economy of migration was fundamental to the creation of a geo-political space dominated by the nation-state.¹⁵ By anchoring the emergence of the modern passport in an imperial context, her analysis most importantly exposed how the metropolitan nation-state became implicated and pervaded with discourses of race, although racial difference was judicially produced as an implicit and unnamed attribute of nationality.

Mongia's work facilitates the move into Southern African history in many ways, not only by resonating throughout the British Empire, but because of the ways in which her discussion complicates the entrenchment of race, nation and empire in the process of political subject-formation. Still, Southern African debates concerned with the control of mobility and the bureaucratic registration and administration of mobile people have produced their own narrative skeins. Undoubtedly, the historiographical focuses have been on the internal pass system and legislation, imposed by the South African segregationist and later apartheid state on the African population throughout the 20th century. A broad body of scholarship has accounted for the ways in which the pass system enabled the state to force African men into migrant labor used in the mining industries or in agriculture, while at the same time keeping the unemployed, men and women alike, away from the urban centers and relegating them to the rural reserves.¹⁶ Because of its economic rationale¹⁷ and the brutality with which the apartheid state imposed its policy, the pass-system developed as one arena of fierce contestation and resistance by social movements and opposition

¹² The edited volume by Jane Caplan and John Torpey (2001), *Documenting Individual Identity. The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*. Princeton and Oxford, remains a classical text. See more recently Thomas Claes (2010), *Passkontrolle! Eine kritische Geschichte des sich Ausweisens und Erkenntwerdens*. Berlin.

¹³ John Torpey (2001), 'The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System', in Caplan and Torpey (eds), pp. 256-270.

¹⁴ Radhika Viyas Mongia (1999), 'Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport', *Public Culture* 11(3): 527-556.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 528.

¹⁶ See among many Deborah Posel (1987), *Influx control and the construction of apartheid*. Oxford; Saul Dubow (1989), *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1910-36*. Oxford; Jonathan Crush (1992), 'Power and Surveillance on the South African Gold Mines', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18(4): 825-44; Yvonne G. Muthien (1994), *State and Resistance in South Africa, 1939-65*. Aldershot; Keith Breckenridge (2004), 'Lord Milner's Registry: the origins of South African exceptionalism', seminar paper published online, accessed on 18.1.2012, www.history.humsci.ukzn.ac.za/files/sempapers/Breckenridge2004.pdf

¹⁷ The question of the state's strategic transformation of the reserves into 'reservoirs of cheap labor' has been extensively debated in South African historiography. For a critical summary of the debates see Ivan Evans (1993), *Bureaucracy and Race. Native Administration in South Africa*. Berkeley, p. 15.

parties.¹⁸ Much less attention, however, has been directed towards the design of pass-ports, permits and certificates used in colonial southern Africa, and the ways in which these documents articulated citizenship. Saul Dubow's contribution to the latest volume of the *Cambridge History of South Africa* is one of the few attempts to explore issues of nationality, belonging and citizenship from a historical perspective, and consider political, social and intellectual trajectories of ideas about South Africa and South African-ness in a concise way.¹⁹ Dubow's retracements provide important insights, particularly through the ways in which notions of belonging are evoked, yet they problematically continue to rest within the narrative framework of the South African nation state. And while Dubow rightfully insists on the racial disposition of South African unification in 1910, grounded as it was in the idea of a white nation with its politically disempowered and disenfranchised African and Asian subject populations, the implicitness of 'white citizenship' can be troubled in more unflinching ways.

It is against the backdrop of the scholarship mentioned that this paper tries to bring the debates around the internal pass-system, the backbone of internal colonialism, in conversation with the recent historical explorations of nationality, citizenship and belonging in South Africa. It argues that internal projects of colonization mirrored processes of imperial formation, and that it was precisely the migration of people throughout and beyond *Southern* Africa that informed and precipitated a particular South African articulation of nation and nationality.²⁰ Concerns about race went to the core of the matter, but could take shape, as I will show, in *un-imag(in)ed* ways.

Historizing the archive

I am concerned here with documents from the first half of the 20th century, which will allow for an exploration of the imperial roots of a modern pass-port system in the southern African context. This is also the period in which the notion of a South African nation and nationality gradually consolidated.²¹ Still, the bureaucratic practices attached to the qualification of individuals in terms of citizenship remained marked by fluidity in form and design, with various official papers continuing to be in use and circulation. This diversity would disappear by the late 1950s, when passes, identity documents, and photographs were eventually broadly standardized.²²

¹⁸ See e.g. Julia C. Wells (1993), *We now demand: the history of women's resistance to pass laws in South Africa*. Johannesburg.

¹⁹ Others are Peberdy (2009) and Neocosmos (2006).

²⁰ Mongia (1999), p. 528; Prem Poddar (2007), 'Passports, Empire, Subjecthood', in Graham McPhee and Prem Poddar (eds.), *Empire and After. Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective*. New York and Oxford, pp. 73-86, here p. 74.

²¹ See Jonathan Klaaren (2010), 'Citizenship, Xenophobic Violence and Law's Dark Side', in L. Landau (ed.), *Exorcising the Demons Within: Xenophobia, Violence and Statecraft in Contemporary South Africa*. Johannesburg, pp. 135-149, here p. 137.

²² The standardization of identity documents and photographs in the 1950s and 1960s was a global phenomenon. In South Africa the formal transition happened in the context of the monumental population registration project and the introduction of the so-called reference books. For the general question see Lily Cho (2009), 'Citizenship, Diaspora and the Bonds of Affect: The Passport Photograph', *Photography & Culture*, 2 (3): 275-88; for the South African context see Keith Breckenridge (2005), 'Verwoerd's Bureau of Proof: Information in the Making of Apartheid', *History Workshop Journal*, 59: 83-108.



The photograph selected here is an example from the Western Cape Archives.²³ It is part of a personal file on Marie Schiffer Lafite, who in 1914 applied for an identity certificate which would enable her to travel via Durban to Mauritius in order to visit her relatives. Lafite, a shop assistant by profession, seemingly originated from Mauritius but had lived for twelve years in Port Elizabeth. When her husband deserted her, she moved to Cape Town where she remarried a French hairdresser called Lafite. In view of the affidavits she was able to produce, the immigration officer in Cape Town eventually granted Lafite the certificate, which both approved of her journey and, more importantly, granted her the right to return to the Cape after a year of absence. Marie Schiffer Lafite's case points to the problem of defining what a pass-port is in the first place and, accordingly, the kinds of archives we consider for a history of identification practices in early 20th century southern Africa. Thus, in a historical synopsis compiled for the *South African Institute of Race Relations* Ellison Khan noted:

*"One of the major difficulties confronting the would-be analyst of the Union's pass laws is the definition of the word 'pass'. Statutes, proclamations, and by-laws avoid definitions. Thus in the South Africa Act, 1909, the foundation of the Union's constitution [...] the tendency was to equate a pass with a document controlling movement [...] the Committee on the Native Pass Laws, 1920, [...] appears to have construed the word very widely, so as to cover not only documents controlling movement, but also those aiming at the enforcement of contractual relations, maintenance of order, and identification of bearer".*²⁴

Kahn's hesitance in providing a conclusive definition mirrored contemporary inconsistency in the terminologies used to denote these documents, and throughout the 19th century up until the late 1940s bureaucratic language used pass, passport, permit and certificate rather interchangeably. Obviously, the different legislations in place in the Cape Colony, the Boer Republics and Natal complicated matters even more, yet unification had not eased conditions at all. Furthermore, several bodies within the state bureaucracy were, depending on formal procedures, the purpose of the document and the political status of the future bearer, entitled to issue passes and passports, among them the magistrates, the department of interior, the immigration offices, the police or the native affairs department. And while Kahn kept a critical eye on the twists and turns of legislation and its

²³ Western Cape Archives, PIO 1, J 147 E, File on Marie Shiffer Lafite, application for a certificate of identity, 1914.

²⁴ Ellison Kahn (1948), 'The Pass Laws', in *Ellen Hellman (ed.), Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa*. Cape Town, London, New York, pp. 275-291.

deployment, what eventually remained fully beyond his concern was the dramatic radiation of the system into the southern African region as a whole, first and foremost into the Namibian colony.

All these bureaucratic ramifications had a bearing on the origins of the archives and the ways in which they have been organized.²⁵ The most tangible textural feature remains the classification along the lines of racial segregation, and the archival files enclosing documents of identification and state sanctioned mobility remain grouped as *European/white, Indian, Chinese and Native applications*. Within the logics of the segregationist paradigm and tuned to the concerns of a South African nation-state constituting itself within a specific racial layout, the administration of people considered to be *different* and who, accordingly, fell under distinct legislations seemed sensible. More so, the bureaucratic practice *itself* rationalized the management of mobility and neatened hybrid forms of living. Most historical analyses of identification, citizenship and belonging in South Africa have, unfortunately, taken the bait and reproduced the categories of the colonial archives in problematic ways by narrating histories of Indian immigration, Chinese expulsion and Jewish stigmatization.²⁶ Ironically, the historical debate has remained fairly narrow with regard to yet another group of classifications - *whites* and *natives*, and while it echoes the former's generic unity with citizenship and nationality enforced by the archive, it likewise presumes the political minority of the latter.

Two ways of unsettling the archival and narrative reproduction of colonial classifications emerge from the cases of David Chidanda and Marie Schiffer Lafite. First, the photographs impress with their quality and the ways in which the subjects present themselves. While we do not know the photographers and the studios where the portraits were taken, it is clear that both images were the property of the applicants. Since the mid-1910s photographs were part of the specific *evidence* to be submitted with the standardized form²⁷ and the only instance where the person applying for a passport, permit or certificate had a substantial say in the fabrication of his or her *file*. It is therefore the visual part of the practice of applying for and issuing documents of identification that troubles the archival order and gives way to alternative readings. Second, David Chidanda and Marie Schiffer Lafite position themselves in the slippages of the political geography of a South African nation in the making, through the diversification of their personal trajectories and uncontained personalities.

²⁵ Craig Robertson (2005), 'Mechanisms of Exclusion. Historicizing the Archive and the Passport', in Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Archive Stories. Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*. Durham, London, pp. 68-86; Ann Laura Stoler (2002), 'Colonial Archives and the Art of Governance: On the Content in the Form', in Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Raziah Saleh, Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive*. Cape Town, Dordrecht, Norwell, pp. 83-102.

²⁶ This is the case for e.g. for Gary Kynoch (2003), 'Controlling the Coolies: Chinese Mineworkers and the Struggle for Labour in South Africa, 1904-1910', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 36(2): 309-329, Klaaren (2010), Peberdy (2009) and Neocosmos (2006), and Uma Dhupelia-Mestrie (2011), 'The Form, the Permit and the Photograph: An Archive of Mobility between South Africa and India', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 46 (6): 650-662.

²⁷ Robertson (2005), p. 74.

Respectability, subjectivity, and personhood

The following discussion of pass-port applications draws from Roberto Esposito's essay on the modern conception of the category of the person.²⁸ Based on an examination of Christian theology, Aristotelian metaphysics and Roman law, and echoing Michel Foucault's thinking, Esposito traces the historical genesis of modern subjectivity and personhood. Referencing the etymological root of the word person in the actor's mask, and thereafter its transition from a theatrical context to public life and the framework of the law, Esposito unravels the performative qualities of the concept resting on the epistemological differentiation between the notion of the person as a legal and moral entity and the idea of an objectified, naturalised body. It is thus the subjection of the body to the category of the person which generates the modern sense of subjectivity, i.e. the specific *dispositif of the person*.²⁹ At the same time – and here Esposito pushes the argument further into the space of coloniality³⁰ - it is precisely this modern, legal notion of person that becomes the prism through which human beings are divided into what he calls *differential thresholds*, encompassing those who are and will be fully entitled to the statutes of person and those kept in the servile condition. In his critical conversation with Esposito, Peter Goodrich uses the performative argument to elaborate on the importance of vision and the visual in the constitution of modern systems of governance targeting the subject.³¹ In his reading, Esposito's person – and the non-person - hence proves to be a concept emerging within specific modalities of appearance and manifestation.³² It is this reference to the mechanisms by which the person, in the legal and moral sense, is staged and comes into view which, at this point, serves as a critical entrance to the southern African material.

²⁸ Roberto Esposito (2012), 'The Dispositif of the Person', *Law, Culture and The Humanities*, 8(1): 17-30.

²⁹ Michel Foucault (1980), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Edited by C. Gordon, New York. Esposito references the elaboration of the *dispositif of the person* in Giles Deleuze's and Giorgio Agamben's writings. See Esposito (2012), p. 20.

³⁰ For a discussion of the concept of coloniality see Walter D. Mignolo (2007), 'Delinking. The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality', *Cultural Studies*, 2-3: 449-514.

³¹ Peter Goodrich (2012), 'The Theatre of Emblems: On the Optical Apparatus and the Investiture of Persons', *Law, Culture and The Humanities*, 8(1): 47-67.

³² Goodrich (2012), p. 55.

Distinctive mise-en-scène

This photograph is among a group of three images stitched together and loosely added to a small file related to a man called Sheik Balla, a resident of Cape Town in 1910.³³ On the back of the photographs, each of which has been delicately placed in a cardboard image frame, a stamp revealed their provenance from *Grant Brothers Photographers*. The file furthermore contains a permit issued to Balla in that same year, which according to the Immigration Act of 1906 set the terms of his intended travels to Bombay and his return to Cape Town the year after. The permit used yet another photograph and contained a standardized, brief physiognomic description of Balla, and determined his age, sex and

nationality. Most importantly, though, the permit testified that the principal immigration officer in Cape Town had been convinced of Balla's law-abiding residence in the Cape Province and had seen no reason to impede the man's intended journey. Though we lack further information about Balla's social and personal environment the archive places him in the context of a growing immigrant population from Europe, Asia and Australia attracted by Cape Town's booming economy since the late 19th century.³⁴ Among them, many Indian men, with diverse social backgrounds, strove to earn a living as factory workers, shop keepers, hawkers or craftsmen.³⁵

This group of photographs, precisely because of its unstable material position within Sheik Balla's file, is an example of how images flipped from one domain to the other, moving first between pages, files and boxes and then categorical entities within and beyond the archives.³⁶ As much as these photographs somehow remained in a state of abeyance inside the file, they likewise oscillated between a bureaucratic and a subjective framework, and hence became 'potentially destabilizing points of fracture within the archive itself'.³⁷

The South African state prescribed a crude reading of these files, their production and management. In the early decades of the 20th century, the control and restriction of the mobility and immigration of people classified as 'Asiatics' became an imperative within the definition of South African

³³ Western Cape Archives IRC 1 72 A, File of Sheik Balla.

³⁴ Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2011), p. 655.

³⁵ Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2011), p. 659. Mesthrie importantly critiques the conventional writing about these so-called passenger Indians (as opposed to indentured laborers) and their class implications.

³⁶ Marcus Banks & Richard Vokes (2010), 'Introduction: Anthropology, Photography and the Archive', *History & Anthropology*, 21 (4): 337-349, here p. 339.

³⁷ Christopher Morton & Elizabeth Edwards (2009, eds.), *Photography, Anthropology & History. Expanding the Frame*. Aldershot, p. 10. Banks and Vokes (2010) reference this passage in a slightly different vein.

citizenship.³⁸ The post 1910 South African state continued to promote racialised notions of personhood, grounded on hierarchical differentiation of the entitlement to nationality and political rights. But the legal framework, determined by the statutes of a dominion within the British Empire and hence by British Common Law, remained complex.³⁹ In theory every person born in the territory was a British subject, and from the late 1910s onwards entitled to a Union passport.⁴⁰ Still, a complicated body of regional legislation and a repressive policy on immigration curtailed the political rights of vast sections of the population.⁴¹ Under the Immigration Regulation Act No. 22 of 1913 any person considered to be undesirable could be refused residence and citizenship. 'Asiatics', among others, became prohibited immigrants⁴² and increasingly subsumed under the problematic category of alien, with its strong extraterritorial connotation.⁴³ The archival files accordingly reproduce and enforce these imperatives of exclusion and fragmentation along racial lines. Grouped into distinct entities they mirror segregationist divisions both on the level of the collective as well as the individual.⁴⁴ The powerful archival evocation of segregation based on discrete racial groups remains an almost hegemonial gesture concerned, in the first place, with concealing the dynamics of racial classification and non-racial socialization in the inter-war period.⁴⁵ Still, within the logics of a South African nation in the making, with its explicit imaginary of a 'white man's land', the presence of 'non-whites' became an alleged question of proportion, numerically as much as symbolically,⁴⁶ and hence a contested issue of political narration.

But the visuals add a twisted layer to the discursive fermentation. They constitute a complicated and rambling visual archive that transcends the bureaucratic shuffling. Precisely because they had been annexed into a state archive on 'Asiatics', produced by reason of their political alienation and foreclosure, the portrait photographs entered a dissonant dialogue with a fundamentally different kind of visuality fabricated within the very same bureaucratic framework.

³⁸ Dubow (2011), p. 34. The term Asiatic (rather than Asian) was used in bureaucratic and legislative language, referencing racial classification rather than geographical provenance.

³⁹ See e.g. F.W. Mills (1927), *South African Citizenship. Its Rights and Duties*. Cape Town; K. Steinberg (1955), *Das Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht der Südafrikanischen Union (einschliesslich Südwest-Afrika)*. Frankfurt a.M., Berlin.

⁴⁰ See the case of Ebrahim Ahmed in the Western Cape Archives filed under IRC 1 1 4 as No. 92 A, who was issued a Union passport in 1917; also Steinberg (1955) and Peberdy (2009).

⁴¹ Dubow (2011), p. 48.

⁴² Dhupelia-Mestrie (2011), p. 657.

⁴³ Mongia (1999), p. 528. Mongia adds reference to an extraterrestrial imaginary contained in the word alien.

⁴⁴ In the IRC files this is expressed in the letter I added to each File on a person classified as Indian, a C for Chinese, and an E for European.

⁴⁵ Dubow (2011), p. 49. For a related argument though concerning an earlier period see Vivian Bickford-Smith (1995), 'Black Ethnicities, Communities and Political Expression in late Victorian Cape Town', *Journal of African History*, 36: 443-465.

⁴⁶ Statistical approaches to the 'Asiatic question' surface both in contemporary accounts as much as in recent scholarship. See e.g. Mills (1927) or Peberdy (2009).



This is an example of a photograph with fingerprint published in the *South African Police Gazette* in late 1926.⁴⁷ While it appeared within the context of criminalization and policing in the Cape, the graphic arrangement echoed a long history of compulsory registration that had affected people classified as Asiatics since the early 20th century, particularly in the former Boer republics and colonial Natal.⁴⁸ Yet, as the period after Union showed, state practices of surveillance and registration had become less an issue of the political geographies than of the requirements of a racially grounded process of nation-building and social engineering. Whether the portrait photograph of Sheikh Balla and the search warrant designed by the police marked the extreme poles of an uneven visual field, they spoke to each other in a bureaucratic space of legibility, where any image, fingerprint and description of an individual was blended into the *shadow archive* of segregation and racial difference.⁴⁹

These archives, it seems, epitomize colonial governmentality. As we saw, the passports, permits and certificates constituted an appropriate matrix on which specific relations of power and domains of knowledge about individuals could be articulated. But to focus solely on legislation and bureaucratic procedures would confine historical interpretation within their realm.⁵⁰ Paying repeated attention to the visual interventions of individuals required to apply for these documents offers a circular way to destabilize the constraints set by the colonial archive and unearth some lines of dissent.



This family photograph allows to explore facets of the visual contestation of the notion of personhood and subjectivity imposed by the state bureaucracy. It is part of an entire series of photographs taken on the occasion of the Wing family's visit to a photographic studio in Port Elizabeth in the early

⁴⁷ South African Police Service Museum and Archives, *Police Gazette*, 10.November 1926, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Peberdy (2009), p. 42; Uma Dhupelia Mesthrie (2000), *From Cane Fields to Freedom: A Chronicle of Indian South African Life*. Cape Town.

⁴⁹ The concept of shadow archive is taken from Allan Sekula (1982), 'The Body and the Archive', *October*, 2: 311-19.

⁵⁰ Lesley Higgins & Marie Christine Leps (1998), "'Passport, Please': Legal, Literary, and Critical Fictions of Identity', *College Literature*, Special Issue on Law, Literature, and Interdisciplinarity, 25(1): 94-138, here pp. 95-96.

1920s.⁵¹ Group portraits assemble with individual portraits of each child and of the mother. They are kept in envelopes enclosed in a file which was opened in early 1922, when Eva Wing, a 32 years-old woman originating from the Cape,⁵² applied for an identity certificate for herself and her children in view of her intended visit to China. The photographs and the additional information she submitted to the immigration department in Cape Town read as a multilayered and very strategic display of herself, her family and her personal status. Within the classificatory logic of the bureaucracy every portrait of an individual was coined as a racial tracery of physis,⁵³ and it seems as if Eva Wing, as did many of her fellow applicants, carefully re-composed the frames of reference, by offering nuanced glimpses at the personal. Indeed, her photographs nurture the narrative formation of status and respectability and an articulation of subjective ideas about style, personal attire and elegance.⁵⁴ The Wing family's anchorage in early 20th century Cape Town society reflects the dynamics of a hybrid cultural field which, in spite of legal restriction on immigration⁵⁵ developed within a social milieu of small entrepreneurship, trade and specialized artisanry.⁵⁶ In contestation of the bureaucratic imperative of registration, identification, physiognomic description and racial classification, the many family portraits delineate the social worlds and living environments of this urban middle-class community with cosmopolitan orientation, epitomized by the image of the nuclear family as the site of belonging, prosperity and well-being.⁵⁷

As a whole the applications for passports, permits and certificates merge into an archive of visual congestion, precisely and somehow ironically around those whose subjectivity and personhood troubled the emerging notion of South African-ness in the early decades of the 20th century most: be it men and women classified as 'Asiatic', and, as the cases of Lafite and Chidanda show, 'Coloured' and 'Native', though the alien status of both remained important. In fact, by the early 1920s, once the debates had fully absorbed the terms of an increasingly nationalist argument, the category of the *alien* began to play itself out in conjunction with, but also across classifications based on race.

⁵¹ Western Cape Archives, IRC 1 2 3, file 73 C, Lai Wing.

⁵² Eva Wing originated from the Western Cape and was classified as 'coloured', but filed in the Chinese group because of her marriage to Lai Wing.

⁵³ See Ivor Powell (2007), 'The anxiety of identity and Some Afrikaners', in David Goldblatt, *Some Afrikaners Revisited. Roggebaai*, pp. 19-28, here p. 21; also Max Kozloff (2007), *The Theatre of the Face. Portrait Photography Since 1900*. New York, p. 105.

⁵⁴ See Santu Mofokeng (1998), 'The Black Photo Album', in Revue Noire Editions (ed.), *Anthology of African and Indian Ocean Photography*. Paris, pp. 68-75; Kathleen Grundlingh (1998), 'The development of photography in South Africa', *ibid.*, pp. 243-53.

⁵⁵ Such as the Chinese exclusion Act 1904 (Cape Colony) and later immigration laws mentioned before.

⁵⁶ Yoon Jung Park (2006), 'Sojourners to Settlers: Early Constructions of Chinese Identity in South Africa', *African Studies* 65 (2): 201-23. Here again, the nuancing of ideas about Chinese indentured labor and independent immigration remains important.

⁵⁷ The many marriage and birth certificates submitted with the photographs enhanced these concerns. See for the familial Gilian Rose (2003), 'Family photographs and domestic spacings: a case study', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28(1): 5-18.

The dynamics in the visual language emerging within the practice of applying for and issuing documents of transit and of identification gave way to antagonistic articulations of personhood and subjectivity. The segregationist state on the one hand forced the photographs, as part of a body of evidence, into an investigative framework aimed at identification, surveillance and political prohibition. Those applying for these documents on the other hand used photography as a space for self-staging, by articulating notions of subjectivity beyond the bureaucratic grid, but certainly in view of an entitlement to citizenship and belonging, based on longstanding residence and sustainable socio-economic integration. As we shall see in a moment, these terrains remained likewise contested for those placed at the heart of the South African nation-building process since the early 1900s.

Fragilities of whiteness

A number of scholars have acknowledged the constitution of the category of whiteness as a historical process in South Africa,⁵⁸ with the South African war of 1899-1902 marking a pivotal moment in the articulation of notions of South Africa and South African-ness.⁵⁹ Clearing the ground for the emergence of an ideology of 'the white man's land', the war inaugurated a period of intense negotiations between British and Boer polities aimed at the constitution of a unified white identity within an integrated nation-state.⁶⁰ But the lines of fraction and division were kept up tenaciously and continued to threaten the white enclaves for decades to come.⁶¹ The gradual move away from an imperialist towards a national framework had to account for the tensions within a conglomerate of socially, culturally and politically diverse segments of the 'white' population. Boer-British antagonism had long been coined as a racial problem⁶² and the constitution of *Afrikanerdom* as a circumscribed ethnic identity by the early 20th century hampered integration into a stable, self-explanatory category of whiteness.⁶³ Hence, as many authors have argued, the strategic importance of defining whiteness in negative ways, and the common cause found in handling the so called 'native question' in terms of the exclusion of the African population from any form of political participation eventually favored social cohesion.⁶⁴ But there were further sites of contestation where the contours of whiteness began to show, one of which came into strong focus in the post-World

⁵⁸ Among them Saul Dubow (1992), 'Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'', *Journal of African History*, 33: 209-237, and Hermann Giliomee (2003), *The Afrikaners. Biography of a People*. Cape Town, Charlottesville.

⁵⁹ Dubow (2001), p. 33.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Giliomee (2003), pp. 300ff.

⁶² Dubow (2011), p. 31.

⁶³ See the introduction to Shula Marks & Stanley Trapido (eds.), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*. London.

⁶⁴ Martin Legassick (2003), 'British Hegemony and the Origins of Segregation in South Africa, in Beinart & Dubow (eds.), pp. 43-59, here pp. 50ff.

War I period, with the so called 'Jewish question' gaining new prominence within an increasingly nationalist and racist framework.⁶⁵ Growing antisemitic sentiment in the 1920s was part and parcel of a larger debate concerned with the impact of undesirable immigrants on the racial purity of the white South African nation, and it affected all immigrants who were broadly classified as white but remained ineligible due to specific political, cultural or racial prejudice.⁶⁶ While this line of argument is firmly established in South African historiography, another disturbance of the political geography of whiteness has largely been faded out. Sure enough, the occupation of Namibia in 1915 had nourished Union imaginaries⁶⁷ but the territory's incorporation as a mandate in 1921 inevitably dehisced fractures on the imperial periphery, which complicated the notion of whiteness and the envisioned prosperity of South African nationality anew.⁶⁸

We hence move to the nation's margin and into the Namibian archives again. All applications for passports, identity certificates and permits by people classified as whites in the period after South African occupation were filed together under a single European rubric. These files include documents on Eastern European applicants (some of which are identified as Jewish), American, British, Italian, Dutch, French, and German (both from Europe and from the mandate territory). They all merge in a common bureaucratic and archival space, in which some files contain photographs and personal letters, while others include but a few pages of correspondence. The forms used for the applications share many formal characteristics with the ones discussed before: printed forms that provided information about names, places of birth and residence, age and civil status, and included a column for short physiognomic description. The forms were accompanied by certified photographs and, in case the procedure required so, affidavits by respectable members of the colonial society, family and business partners. The only device that consistently remains absent in all the applications classified as European was, significantly, the dactyloscopy.⁶⁹

The main group present within this body of archival material consists of members of the German settler society in colonial Namibia, and most applications fall into the period after 1924, when all Germans became naturalized British subjects and hence reacquired their rights as citizens.⁷⁰ The naturalization act marked the end of a period of strong hostility between the mandatory power and the remaining representatives of the former colonial regime, and it inaugurated a phase in which the parameters of 'whiteness' within the territory had to be renegotiated, not without emanating into

⁶⁵ Milton Shain (1994), *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*. Charlottesville, London.

⁶⁶ Peberdy (2009), pp. 73ff.

⁶⁷ See e.g. Marion Wallace (2011), *A History of Namibia. From the Beginning to 1990*. London, p. 216.

⁶⁸ See the introduction to Hayes, Silvester, Wallace & Hartmann, (1998).

⁶⁹ I'll come back to this point later in the paper.

⁷⁰ Israel Goldblatt (1971), *History of South West Africa from the beginning of the 19th century*. Cape Town, Wynberg, Johannesburg, p. 220.

the South African heartland.⁷¹ Schmidt-Lauber has framed the process of German identification in the 1920s and 30s as an oscillation between ethnic self-containment on the one hand, and the propensity to assimilate into a larger settler-identity with a strong orientation towards Boer ethnic nationalism and ideologies of racial supremacy on the other hand. Yet, by the late 1920s socio-economic shifts linked to the immigration of numerous impoverished Boer settlers from the Union and the seepage of National Socialist thought and activity into the Namibian colony would, once more, dislocate the vectors of white unification and complicate questions of belonging, loyalty and nationality in enduring ways.⁷²

While we have to contextualize the applications for passports and identity certificates by Germans in the 1920s against the backdrop of unresolved questions of belonging and ethnic or racial identification, reading the archives should resist the logics of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more so if we keep in mind that the applications and the photographs in particular bore upon a variety of social, cultural, political and symbolic repertoires.



These photographs are kept in the National Archives of Namibia as part of a passport application by Johanna and Johannes Carl Hubrich in 1929.⁷³ Hubrich was at the time a photographer in Lüderitz, the main southern Namibian mining town on the Atlantic coast. The Hubrichs, both of whom had been naturalized in 1924, planned, as it seems, to spend an extended holiday in

Berlin and wished to leave via Cape Town as soon as possible. Each of them applied for a personal document, submitting the required information on personal history, profession and residence as well as a sample of certified portrait photographs to the magistrate in Lüderitz. Their photographs rank among the more sophisticated and elegant ones and Hubrich's profession obviously favored a familiarity with the photographic medium and the iconographic conventions characteristic of middle-class portraiture at the time. Indeed, the photographs anchored the applicants in a specific social milieu and entrepreneurial middle class based in the major towns of the Namibian colony and

⁷¹ The Naturalization Act No. 30 of 1924 opened the way for integration. Yet while through the act Germans in Namibia became British subjects, their status was originally only recognized within the Union and had no validity in other parts of the British Empire. See Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber (1993), *Die abhängigen Herren. Deutsche Identität in Namibia*. Münster, Hamburg.

⁷² Schmidt-Lauber (1993), pp. 74ff; Goldblatt (1971), pp. 231-237; Wallace (2011), pp. 238-40.

⁷³ NAN SWAA 1875 A 406 3, applications for passports by Johanna and Johannes Carl Hubrich, Lüderitz, 18. Juni 1929.

engaged in a lively culture of voyage. The journey to the European metropolises, which included trips to the main German cities as much as to France, Italy or Greece, probably remained exclusive events in the lives of most, though repeated overseas voyages by wealthier individuals do occur in the archives.⁷⁴ But travelling also included more regular journeys within Southern Africa, to various cities in the Union, as much as to Zimbabwe and, occasionally, to Mozambique and Angola. Reasons given for the envisaged mobility ranged from business obligations and educational purposes to more familial concerns, and often simply included leisure and cultural interests. Within this framework of mobility and voyage the photographs of the German colonial middle and upper classes read as visual ingredients to a performative practice of self-representation, they become suggestive of a self-righteous (petty) bourgeoisie, in which individual men and women confidently and at ease with themselves displayed their economic, social and cultural capital.⁷⁵ Indeed, some of the portraits kept in the application files allow glimpses at imposing architectures, profusely furnished living rooms and commodious studies with lurking references to national affinities.⁷⁶ Yet most photographs resembled the portraits deposited by the Hubrichs, in which the individual was highlighted against a dim backdrop. While common style in portrait photography,⁷⁷ it potentially acquired further meaning within the specific context of the 1920s, when the German colonial community continued to negotiate its place within the framework of South African occupation and, in the aftermath of the Naturalization Act of 1924, the terms of assimilation into a broader Southern African settler-society.⁷⁸ Against this backdrop, the blank space of the photograph transpired the subject's condition in abeyance and imperial volatility, conveying a sense of how undetermined the points of reference within the colonial and metropolitan political landscapes remained.



The style and elegance of middle and upper-class portraiture converse with photographs of a fairly different kind, such as the one submitted by Maria Woll to the magistrate in Karibib in 1926.⁷⁹ Woll was at the time a resident of the central Namibian town, halfway between the capital and the coastal centers at Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. She was at the time of her application a widower and intended to travel to the United States, without indicating the particular reasons for her journey. Her file remains equally silent about Woll's socio-economic or familial

⁷⁴ See e.g. the applications by the Voigts family, wealthy traders based in Windhoek, filed under NAN SWAA 1875 A 406 3.

⁷⁵ See Suren Lalvani (1996), *Photography, Vision, and the Production of Modern Bodies*. New York, p. 60.

⁷⁶ See e.g. the applications filed under NAN SWAA 1875 A 406 2, particularly the ones from the late 1910s and early 1920s.

⁷⁷ See Liz Wells (2009), *Photography. A Critical Introduction*. London, New York, pp. 122ff.

⁷⁸ Wallace (2011), p. 239.

⁷⁹ NAN SWAA 1856 A 406 2, Passport application by Maria Woll, Karibib, 20.10.19.

environment, nor are we told about her means of subsistence. In the archives she emerges as a rather common individual among an agrarian population in central Namibia who lived in and around small towns along the railway lines and included farmers or town-dwellers, shop owners, carpenters, missionaries, former soldiers or teachers by profession. Many among the photographs they submitted to the nearest magistrate's office were not portraits in the strict sense, but fragments or cuttings from larger images taken in outside locations, in front of a farm house, in a garden, on a field, where the person was literally placed in the center. The photographic practice these images emerged from was essentially different from the ones popular among the more cosmopolitan urban classes. The rigidity of pose echoed common iconographic styles among Southern African settler and farming communities in the 1910s and 1920s,⁸⁰ but it also hinted at less sophisticated photographic technologies and visual economies. For most photographs kept in the Namibian archives, the photographers remain unknown and while common people might have benefitted from services offered by traveling photographers occasionally servicing their area⁸¹ or asked wealthier acquaintances who owned cameras to take pictures, most of them would not have owned photographic equipment themselves. What clearly emerges from the archival material though is that for most rural dwellers applying for identity documents or passports would rarely entail the visit of a studio photographer, be it because the closest town did not offer such service or because they preferred to submit, for economic and strategic reasons, photographs already in their possession. Woll's photograph encourages a reading in terms of photographic informality and situational conditionality. Her simple attire, her unrobed body and her modest presence strongly reference domesticity, as if she had, just for a moment, placed herself in the image and then resumed her daily duties in the house, garden or field. Such staging and embodiment of simple rural life and female moral integrity echoed strong ideological concerns among the settler community,⁸² and while outside locations might have been chosen for lightning reasons, the presence of the land helped establish a powerful emotional register and evoke a token of identity.⁸³ In stark contrast to the ideological fuzziness pervading the visual self-representation of the German colonial middle and upper classes, the photographs submitted by the rural and farmer communities in central and southern Namibia constitute a quite coherent inscription of a gendered moral discourse of domesticity and simplicity associated with the harshness and aridity of the landscape. But beyond the symbolism of such framings, the presence of the land was as much a reinforcement of the certainty that being 'white' in the Namibian colony continued to be invested with the privileged right to *own* land.⁸⁴ It is at this

⁸⁰ Marijke Du Toit (2001), 'Blank verbeeld, or the incredible whiteness of being: amateur photography and Afrikaner nationalist historical narrative', *Kronos*, 27: 77-113, here p. 99.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Schmidt-Lauber (1993), pp. 53ff.

⁸³ Powell (2007), p. 25.

⁸⁴ Sarah Nuttall (2001), 'Subjectivities of Whiteness', *African Studies Review*, 44(2): 115-40, here p. 133.

point where the photographs allowed for a powerful ascertainment of German colonial subjectivity and personhood within the reconfiguration of an extended South African nation.

Yet the Namibian archives refuse an overstatement of the polarization between a rural ideology of agrarian settler-colonialism versus an urban-based bourgeois affinity to the opportunism of imperial capitalism. On the contrary, it is precisely the shifting heterogeneity, the coexistence of diverse cultural, ideological and symbolic registers within the performative practice of the German settler society in Namibia in the 1920s which discloses unevenness, fragmentation and disjuncture within the process of socio-political repositioning as part of an imagined category of whiteness. The visualities articulated in the context of bureaucratic identification and legitimization in terms of an integrated South African nationality and citizenship convey a textured sense of their alienation from clear and unambiguous ethnic, nationalist or even racial identification.⁸⁵ While Germans in Namibia remained classified as Europeans and hence kept their privileged property rights,⁸⁶ their perspective from the imperial margin necessarily added problematic layers to the certitudes of contemporary South African debates on race and the 'white nation', and it unhinged the narrative axis of British-Boer antagonism in significant ways. In their individual negotiations of citizenship and political inclusion, the men and women applying for, *nota bene*, British subjects' passports reconfigured the modality of class, they unsettled the teleologies of South African nation-building and British-Boer reconciliation and, in view of the well-grounded anxieties about the German population's loyalty, they corroded the very foundation of 'white' eligibility for citizenship.⁸⁷

But the colonial periphery offered productive narrative pastures as well, and while in some sense the Namibian files trouble the comforts of colonial hierarchies and bureaucratic classification, they reinforce racial order in others. At its heart the archive of applications filed in the 1920s and 1930s uncovers a bureaucratic practice which eventually produced whiteness, as much as it might have been questioned otherwise, through highlighting certain cultural practices such as literacy and photography, while omitting others. It is through the inscription of this cultural register where the category of whiteness eventually distinguished itself most visibly and tangibly from its main racial antagonist – the category of the native.

⁸⁵ Daniel Joseph Walther (2002), *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Namibia*. Athens, pp. 185ff.

⁸⁶ Though this was not the case for the many people of 'mixed' heritage. See e.g. Wallace (2011), p. 238.

⁸⁷ There were historical precursors to the unsettling of the category of whiteness, though under different auspices. Afrikaner immigration into Namibia during the German colonial period had caused similar concerns about diverging notions of whiteness. See Robbie Aitken (2007), 'Looking for "Die Besten Boeren"'. The Normalization of Afrikaner Settlement in German South West Africa, 1884-1915', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33(2): 343-360.

Visual reduction of the native

Let us go back, once again, to David Chidanda's application which opened our discussion. As noted, the colonial authorities were at the time rather reluctant to issue a passport to the man, and indeed the secretary for Native Affairs in Pretoria, J.F. Herbst, had been quite explicit about the policy in place:

*"The policy of the Union Government is to discourage Natives from proceeding overseas unless for very special reasons, and then only on production of a written financial guarantee to cover the possible cost of maintenance and repatriation should the applicant become stranded overseas."*⁸⁸

Herbst's statement was a twisted account of the state of affairs, in view of the fact that African mobility within *and* beyond the Union had long been subjected to a vast array of documents required. As mentioned earlier, applications for passports by those men and women classified as 'native' from the inter-war period are by large absent in the colonial archives.⁸⁹ It is as if there was a kind of bureaucratic amnesia, a purposeful hiding and an indiscernible mechanism at work, through which the archive swallowed those, who were not meant to be.⁹⁰ But it is precisely the failure of such archival retrievals which invites to think about how a material absence and narrative silencing might become historically meaningful.⁹¹

The documentation produced in the context of surveillance of African mobility materialized in an array of travelling passes, residential permits, service contracts, tax receipts, exemption certificates and so forth, scattered throughout the files produced by different departments of the South African state bureaucracy throughout the first half of the 20th century.⁹² And while many historians of southern Africa have addressed the so called internal pass system in a number of contexts,⁹³ less attention has been given to the materialities and visualities that arose from the bureaucratization

⁸⁸ NAN BIN 46 E 8, Immigration Non-Whites: Secretary for Native Affairs to Secretary for SWA, Pretoria, 6.10.1926.

⁸⁹ This is a very preliminary statement. I was not able to locate such documents in the National Archives in Pretoria, the National Archives in Windhoek, nor the Western Cape Archives in Cape Town. Repeated inquiries with the archives' staff and head archivists couldn't change this. It remains unclear if applications for passports submitted by those classified as 'natives' are couched within the Native affairs department records or those filed under the principal immigration offices. Up to date I was able to locate the Canadian passport of Sol Plaatje (issued in 1920) and the copy of a passport issued to Josiah Tshangana Gumede (in 1919) kept in the archives of the London Missionary Society at SOAS.

⁹⁰ See Charles van Onselen (1996), *The Seed is Mine. The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper 1894-1985*. Johannesburg, Cape Town, p. 3.

⁹¹ Stoler (2002); Rodney G.S. Carter (2004), 'Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence', paper presented at the annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists, Montreal.

⁹² M. Savage (1986), 'The Imposition of Pass Laws on the African Population in South Africa, 1916-1984', *African Affairs*, 85: 181-220; Crush (1992), p. 829.

⁹³ See footnote 16.

and rationalization of African mobility in the interwar period.⁹⁴ Reasons for this might be found in the complexity and inconsistency of papers in use at any one time, but also the ephemeral and volatile nature of the documents themselves. Most passes and permits indeed consisted of unattractive, standardized and printed paper forms, which varied in shape but usually wouldn't exceed the size of a postcard. They would varyingly include information on names, gender, tribal classification, place or area of residence, the name of the employer and the nature of employment, reason and destination of journey, the date and place of issue and the signature of the officer and colonial department that authorized the relative document, be it the Native Affairs Department, the police or the magistrate. At the time of Union in 1910 there had been attempts to simplify the pass system and design an encompassing policy and procedure with nation-wide validity.⁹⁵ Yet, for the sake of political balance, state-makers rather opted for the integration of the various systems that had been in operation within the former colonies of the Cape, Orange Free State, Transvaal and Natal.⁹⁶

Simplification and the uniformity of pass laws was prominently re-advocated for in the *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Native Pass Laws* (Godley Commission) published in 1922.⁹⁷ While many of the committee's recommendations remained unheard,⁹⁸ what is of particular interest here is the report's elaboration on the question of the visibility of passes, permits and papers of identification. The committee's position is worth quoting at length:

“Registration certificates are of no practical value unless the identity of the holder can be established with the document in his possession. Amongst civilized peoples the practice usually adopted is to include the signature and, or, the photograph in the document. Some such provision is necessary in regard to similar certificates given to natives and the absence of ready means of such identification would necessarily cause much inconvenience to natives whose certificates had been stolen or interchanged or whose identity came under question. The large majority of natives cannot write even their names in a hand sufficiently formed to be of real value, and apart from the practical difficulty of taking photographs, witnesses best qualified to judge, have stated that photography is not in itself a ready means of identification and particularly of natives. // The personal description of the holder has been suggested as a means of getting over the difficulty, but it is generally admitted that only in a minority of cases would this be sufficiently conclusive and it has notably failed in Natal [...] The impression of the left thumb print on the document is recommended by experts as a sure means of

⁹⁴ Keith Breckenridge's work has been exceptional here. See Breckenridge (2004).

⁹⁵ Evans (1993), p. 13.

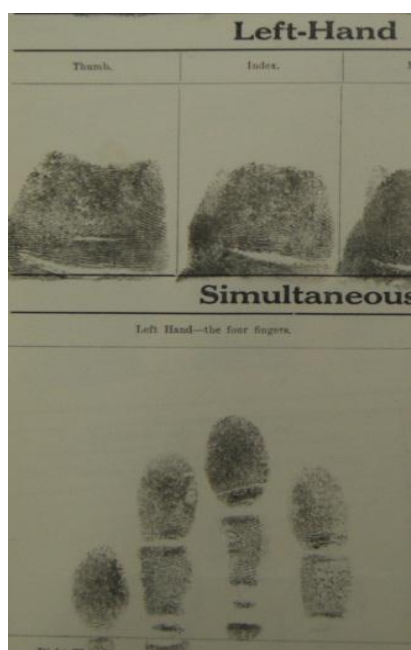
⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Union of South Africa (1922), *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Native Pass Laws 1920*. Cape Town. For a broader discussion of the report's place within native administration see Saul Dubow (1989), p. 123 and Ashforth (1992), introduction.

⁹⁸ See Kahn (1949), p. 283. Some of the recommendations were included into the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 which led to a certain uniformity throughout South Africa, at least in terms of legislation.

*establishing identity and the evidence in opposition to this proposal is based solely on the alleged association of the practice with criminology. For this allegation we find no foundation in fact.*⁹⁹

While the report remained unheard in terms of its advocacy for a single, unified practice, on the level of the visual it successfully reinforced the parameters of 'native' registration, and the thumb print became the icon of the bureaucratic visualization of the native subject, with an implicit narrative of criminalization.



Fingerprinting affected all men, and to a much lesser extent women,¹⁰⁰ classified as non-whites, though its implementation varied according to more and more diversified categories, 'Asiatic', 'native' and 'alien' remaining the main ones. A veritable iconography of the thumb emerged and expanded throughout the subcontinent, and by the mid-1920s fingerprinting established itself as the symbolic item of South African imperialist hegemony in the region. The narrative punch line of its regional proliferation was the imaginary of latitude 22, particularly in the context of industrial labor recruitment to the Witwatersrand.¹⁰¹ Drawing its official logics from the geographies of disease management it eventually defined a geo-political space in which the South African state imposed its visual nomenclature of policing, 'native' labor

recruitment, identification and registration. The bureaucratic practice of dactyloscopy obviously targeted and literally absorbed any movement of so-called 'Union natives', i.e. South African *and* Namibian, but likewise affected migrants from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi.¹⁰² The ever growing bulk of documents and files derived their bureaucratic and material coherence from the image of the fingerprint, systematized into an archive which, through the deconstruction and atrophy of the individual to a mere visual residue and technical effect, con-figured a powerful iconography of the *non-person*.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Union of South Africa (1922), p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ See Kathy Eales (1989), 'Patriarchs, Passes and Privilege. Johannesburg's African Middle Class and the Question of Night Passes for Women, 1920-31', in Philip Bonner, Isabel Hofmeyr, Deborah James & Tom Lodge (eds.), *Holding their Ground. Class, Locality and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa*. Johannesburg, pp. 106-138; Julia Wells (1993), *We Now Demand. The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa*. Johannesburg, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ There is a large series of documents at the National Archives in Pretoria filed under CIA M130 „Immigration of Natives. North of Latitude 22" which cover the years from Union to the late 1920s. Obviously the technical term referred to the Limpopo River as the relevant border. See Martin Murray (1995), 'Blackbirding' at 'Crooks' Corner': Illicit Labour Recruiting in the Northeastern Transvaal, 1910-1940', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21(3): 373-397.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ According to Esposito's argument the non-person would epistemologically collapse into mere physicality, i.e. body and thereby the *object* of power. See Esposito (2012), pp. 25-26.

Conclusion - The biopolitics of imperial personhood

This paper explored archives of passage, files that materialized within bureaucratic practices enforced by the colonial state and aimed at regulating the mobility of men and women placed under its rule. The analytical lynchpin of my reading has been to retrieve specific notions of personhood and subjectivity that condensed in the applications for passports, permits and certificates submitted to various South African state departments in the interwar period. Within this context, personhood and subjectivity proved, as I have argued, contested fields of knowledge production and negotiation, in which a bureaucratic matrix of racial difference and political disenfranchisement sprawled onto the lives and bodies of those classified as political minors, undesirables and aliens. But the archives give way to narrative fissure and do so by disclosing dissonant visualities produced in the course of applying for and issuing documents sanctioning mobility.

Two distinct forms of visibility, photography and fingerprinting, began to show in the analysis, and their conversation within the archives proves complicated. While they constituted different modalities of bureaucratic registration and classification, they remained entrenched in one and the same regulatory regime, in which the visual manifestation of the individual emerged as a texturing pattern. As we saw, photographs became a formal requirement in many applications filed in the period after Union in 1910 and they added to a diverse body of documentary evidence submitted to the various state departments. In the context of a growing concern with the constitution of a discrete category of South African nationality and citizenship, the official reading of these photographs was tuned to hardened notions of racial difference. For the state, the portraits hence became iconic images evidencing an individual's qualification and eligibility for the category of the person entitled to the statutes of citizenship. In real terms the bureaucratic practice eventually produced a hierarchical grading, in which the white (male) citizen came to occupy a privileged position and all others the status of racial deviation and political minority. The imaginary of a 'white man's land' and the racial categories it implied materialized in the archival order and continues to reproduce and enforce readings according to racialised inscriptions of the colonial subject. Yet, as this paper has argued, the photographs interrupt and trouble the politics enforced by the segregationist state. While the portraits of individuals and families suffered the narrative constraints of the application framework, they remained uncontained, transcending the category of race and offering spaces for subjectivity. It is the individuality of faces, postures, selected attire and carefully chosen backdrops that became idioms of self-articulation and re-inscribed the person into the bureaucratic space. These portrait photographs marked the entrance of nuanced understandings of belonging, of social well-being and integration, and because the photograph produced its own epistemology, highlighting the moment and a selected view on a person's life, the image helped

interrupt the teleologies of the nation and the trajectories of alienation. It is precisely by referencing different temporalities and alternative spaces of social, cultural and political articulation that the photographs resisted the bureaucratic reading in terms of the generalized and the typical - i.e. race and nationality.

But the bureaucratic system's tolerance remained limited and its mechanisms of classification and exclusion persistent. The regime of nationality and citizenship hit, as we saw, those classified as 'natives' in most rigorous ways. Most Africans drawn into the logics of segregation, political disenfranchisement and economic exploitation were excluded from subjective self-representation and political articulation. Their presence within the system of regulated mobility and bureaucratic registration foreclosed photography and instead materialized in the fingerprint system. In contrast to the spaces offered by the portraits, the thumb prints reduced the 'native' to a functional liminality and technical effect. The technicality of the fingerprint and its visual abstraction concealed any reference to the person's social, cultural, and political environment, and likewise epitomized the individual's reduction to his or her physicality and the status of non-person. The fingerprint became, moreover, an ambitious, rather pretentious device, once it travelled beyond the South African nation and proliferated into vast parts of the subcontinent. Precisely in its imperial deployment, the submission of Africans to fingerprint registration sustainably engraved the visual epistemologies of racial segregation and offered an ideal nomenclature to the biopolitics of nationality, citizenship and the South African nation-state.