AFRICAN FUTURES

Edited by

Clemens Greiner

Steven van Wolputte

Michael Bollig

BRILL

African Futures

Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies

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Contents

PART 4
Imagining

Acknowledgements

This project has been on a long journey. It started as part of the preparations for the ninth European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), jointly organized by the University of Cologne's Global South Studies Center (GSSC) and the Catholic University of Leuven's Institute for Anthropological Research in Africa (IARA), and due to be held in Cologne in June 2021.

The book was set up as an open access volume to inspire and lead the discussion during the conference. Therefore, from the start, we asked potential contributors to write short, crisp, provocative essays, which perhaps encouraged less conventional contributions. Our intention was to go for breadth rather than depth as we wanted to do justice to the often ambivalent and sometimes contradictory associations the word 'futures' evokes, especially on a continent as diverse as Africa.

With preparations well under way – apart from the book, the city of Cologne and various institutions and organizations were conspiring with the organizers to make it almost a month of social and cultural events focusing on the African continent and its diasporas – SARS-CoV-2 struck and paralysed the world. In the spring of 2020 the rising death toll from the pandemic made it clear that the organization of the ninth ECAS was in jeopardy and, in September of that year, the board of the AEGIS decided to postpone the conference until June 2023. Nevertheless, we decided to press ahead with preparations for the book, if only to make up for the missed opportunity to meet, discuss and exchange ideas with colleagues, artists and activists.

As our bi-weekly editorial meetings moved online, and we worried about the impact of the pandemic on our colleagues around the world, the preparations for the volume inevitably suffered some setbacks. We would thus like to thank the contributors to this volume for bearing up with us and we hope that you are all safe.

This book would not have been possible without the tireless help of Felix Engel, Victoria Witt and Nina Krömer and – importantly – the help of so many colleagues who graciously accepted our invitation to review one – or, sporadically, two – of the contributions you find here. Thanks also to the series editors Gregor Dobler and Manuel Ramos, to Franca de Kort from Brill Publishing and to Selina and Jason Cohen from Oxford Publishing Services. The Collaborative Research Centre 228: Future Rural Africa (https://www.crc228.de), funded by the German Research Foundation, generously provided funds for copy-editing; the CityLabs project – funded by the Catholic University of Leuven – graciously provided the funds to make this book open access. Steven would also like to thank the students on his 'current issues' course of the past three years for their

inspirational comments and critical questions. Clemens and Michael would like to thank the members of the GSSC and the Future Rural Africa group for inspiring discussions.

Futures indeed look very different from how they did when we started this project back in 2018. Whereas for some the most burning question seems to be when they can travel again, for many others COVID-19 is just yet another challenge to make it through the day – sometimes, unfortunately, also literally. As the world is struggling with infection rates, vaccination programmes and disbelief, we can only hope that this planet will emerge as a better place, and that this book can offer a tiny bit of relief and some prospect of meeting in Cologne in June 2023.

The editors, April 2021

Abbreviations

AEGIS	Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASASLS	arid and semi-arid lands
ATM	automated teller machine
AU	African Union
BET	Black Entertainment Television
CAS	communal areas
CBC	community-based conservation
CBNRM	community-based natural resource management
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CEO	chief executive officer
CHWS	community health workers
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CKGR	Central Kalahari Game Reserve
CNRST	Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique et Technique
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CRC	Collaborative Research Centre
DALY	disability adjusted life year
DC	Detective Comics
DCP3	Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries
DEMIAP	Détection Militaire des Activités Anti-Patrie (Military Detection of Antipatriotic Activities)
DFG	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft German (German Research Foundation)
DFID	Department for International Development
DPN	Development Practitioners Network
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECAS	European Conference on African Studies
EIA	Environmental Investigation Agency
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
EUISS	European Union Institute for Security Studies
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAVT	Future Africa Visions in Time
FGC	female genital cutting
FGCS	female genital cosmetic surgery

FGDS   focus group discussions
FIDA   Foundation for International Development Assistance
FTLRP   fast-track land reform programme
FZS   Frankfurt Zoological Society
GCI   Google Code-in
GDP   gross domestic product
GSSC   Global South Studies Center
HALE   healthy life expectancy
HIV   human immunodeficiency virus
HCPS   healthcare providers
IARA   Institute for Anthropological Research in Africa
IASA   International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives
ICTS   Information and Communication Technologies
IMF   International Monetary Fund
IMR   infant mortality rate
INRB   Institut National de la Recherche Biomédicale (National Institute of
                Biomedical Research)
INSS   Institut des Sciences des Sociétés/Institute for Social Studies
INTERPOL   International Criminal Police Organization
IPCC   Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISA-JSN   International Sociological Association Junior Sociologists Network
ISS   Institute for Security Studies
IT   information technology
IUCN   International Union for Conservation of Nature
IVF   in vitro fertilization
KAZA   Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area
KETRACO   Kenya Electricity Transmission Company
KNBS   Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KWCA   Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
LAPSSET   Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor
LGBTQI   lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
LSCFS   large-scale commercial farms
MDGS   millennium development goals
MFA   Maker Faire Africa
MIASA   Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa
MMR   maternal mortality rate
MTN   Mobile Telephone Networks
MTV   Movie and Television
NCDS   non-communicable diseases
NEPAD   New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOS   non-governmental organizations

NIC	National Intelligence Council
NTDS	neglected tropical diseases
PSC	Peace and Security Council
RCA	Radio Corporation of America
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAGCOT	Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania
SaLTS	Saving Lives through Safe Surgery
SDGS	sustainable development goals
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
STDS	sexually transmitted diseases
STEAM	science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics education
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TB	tuberculosis
U5MR	under 5 mortality rate
UHC	universal health coverage
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN IGME	United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation
UNJP	United Nations Joint Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation
USAID	United Nations Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
YARA	Young African Researchers in Agriculture
ZANU–PF	Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front

Notes on Contributors

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Michael Bollig is professor of social and cultural anthropology at the University of Cologne where his key interests lie in the environmental anthropology of sub-Saharan Africa. His current research projects focus on the social-ecological dynamics connected to large-scale conservation projects, the commodification of nature and the political ecology of pastoralism. He holds the ERC advanced grant REWILDING and is the author of *Risk Management in a Hazardous Environment* (2006), co-author of *African Landscapes* (2009) with O. Bubenzer, *Pastoralism in Africa* (2013) with M. Schnegg and H. P. Wotzka, and *Resilience and Collapse in African Savannahs* (2017) with D. Anderson.

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Inge Brinkman is professor of African studies at Ghent University in Belgium. Her fields of research include African literatures, African popular culture, and African history, focusing on autobiography in the wider context of cultural history, and on monsters in oral narratives. Together with Mineke Schipper and Daniela Merolla she recently published *Afrikaanse Letterkunde*, a Dutch-language handbook on African literature.

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Ann Cassiman is professor of social and cultural anthropology at the Institute for Anthropological Research in Africa (IARA) at the Catholic University of Leuven. Focusing on Ghana and West Africa, she has published in the fields of material culture and urban anthropology. Her current research interest is in how young female urbanites forge kinship and friendship ties through forms of care and intimacy.

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closely collaborates with a number of NGOs, civil society, community-based and grassroots organizations, such as FIDA and the Samburu Girls Foundation.

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Ute Fendler, who holds the chair in Romance Literary and Comparative Studies at the University of Bayreuth (Germany), is interested in comparative romance literature and film studies (West Africa, Indian Ocean, Caribbean), transmedia iconography, and popular culture. Her current research projects include 'Black Atlantic revisited' – African and South American UNESCO World Heritage Sites and 'Shadowed Spaces' of Performative Memory (with Dr G. Ndi Shang, 2019–23); and Multiple Artworks – Multiple Indian Ocean (with C. Vierke/R. Tchokothé, 2019–23). Her recent publications included the co-edited volumes *Revolution 3.0: Iconographies of social utopia in Africa and its diasporas* (Munich: Akademische Verlagsgemeinschaft, 2019) and *Archeology of the Future: African cinema and imaginary* (Munich: Akademische Verlagsgemeinschaft, 2018).

Clemens Greiner

Clemens Greiner is the academic coordinator of the Global South Studies Center (GSSC). He studied social and cultural anthropology and geography at the University of Hamburg, where he received his PhD in anthropology for a multi-sited ethnography on rural–urban migration in Namibia. In his current research, Greiner focuses on rural change, political ecology, translocality, and (energy) infrastructures in Kenya. His area of specialization is eastern and southern Africa, where he has and continues to conduct extensive fieldwork, most notably in Namibia and Kenya.

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Ndapewa Fenny Nakanyete is a lecturer at the University of Namibia (UNAM). She has a BA in geography and sociology from UNAM, an MA in geographic information technologies from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and an MA on culture and the environment in Africa from the University of Cologne. She is currently pursuing a PhD in geography at UNAM in collaboration with the University of Cologne. Her main research interests centre on land, indigenous knowledge, livelihoods, gender, culture, urban development, rural environments, and socio-economic factors.

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Martha Ndakalako is a PhD candidate in comparative literature at the University of Oregon. Her research engages Namibian literary culture in the context of the African literary tradition – global, anglophone, and new media. Focusing

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Jonathan Ngeh is a visiting scholar and principal investigator at the Global South Studies Center (GSSC) in Cologne. He received a PhD in sociology from the University of Umeå with a dissertation on the everyday experiences of African migrants in Sweden. He is engaged in research in the field of human trafficking within the context of migration from Africa to the Arab Gulf States. Before moving to the GSSC in 2019, he taught courses in development theory and policy at the University of Bamenda, Cameroon.

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As a scholar of African art history, Kerstin Pinther currently holds a professorship in the Art History Department of Regensburg University. At the Freie Universität Berlin she played a major role in establishing the first department of African art history in German-speaking universities. Her research focuses on twentieth and twenty-first century art, global design, fashion practices and architecture. Currently, she is completing an overview on African art and art history for C. H. Beck. With Tobias Wendl she is the author of a short film about the Malian designer Cheick Diallo, *Cheick Diallo – ou la quête de rendre les choses légères*.

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Katrien Pype is an associate professor in the Institute for Anthropological Research in Africa at the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium). Since 2003, she has been studying Kinshasa's media worlds, including social media. She is the author of an ethnography on the production of television serials, *The Making of the Pentecostal Melodrama: Religion, Media, and Gender in Kinshasa* (Berghahn Books, 2012), and, with Jaco Hoffman, co-editor of *Ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Spaces and Practices of Care* (Policy Press, 2018). She has written articles for, among other publications, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, *Africa: Journal of the International Africa Institute*, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, *Journal of African Media Studies* and *Visual Anthropology*. She co-initiated the Congo Research Network.

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Anne Storch is professor of African linguistics at the University of Cologne. Her work combines contributions on the cultural and social contexts of languages, the semiotics of linguistic practices, epistemes and ontologies of colonial lin-

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Akira Takada is an associate professor at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies at Kyoto University, Japan. His academic interests include transformation of ethnicity in the contact zone; the influence of Christianity and Western education on indigenous societies; the mutual construction of micro-habitat and habitus; and language socialization in caregiver–child interactions. He has conducted intensive field research in Namibia, Botswana, and Japan, and has published a number of books and articles, including *Narratives on San Ethnicity* (Kyoto University Press and Trans Pacific Press, 2015) and *The Ecology of Playful Childhood* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

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Steven Van Wolputte is professor of social and cultural anthropology at the Institute for Anthropological research in Africa (IARA) at the Catholic University of Leuven. He has mainly operated in the fields of political anthropology, material and urban popular culture and anthropology of the body. Also, he recently developed an interest in graphic anthropology.

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Richard Wamai, PhD, is an expert in global health specializing in research on Africa. At Northeastern University, Boston, USA, he is an associate professor in the Department of Cultures, Societies and Global Studies. He is educated in Africa, Europe and the United States. His research is published widely in leading journals in numerous areas including modelling, economic evaluation and policy on HIV/AIDS, neglected tropical diseases and non-communicable diseases and health systems research. At Northeastern, he co-leads the Integrated Initiative for Global Health and has recently opened a centre for Research on Multi-Disease and Educational Services in north Baringo Kenya to focus on neglected disease research and implementation in marginalized areas.

Thomas Widlok

Thomas Widlok is professor of the cultural anthropology of Africa at the University of Cologne. He has an MSc and PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science and has carried out several years of field research in various regions of Namibia, predominantly with ǂAkhoe Haiǁom San. His latest books include *Anthropology and the Economy of Sharing* (Routledge, 2017) and, co-edited with T. Breyer, *The Situationality of Human–Animal Relations* (Columbia University Press, 2018). His research is on religion and economics, sharing and exchange, language and cognition, cultural conceptions of space, and causality and time.

Futuring Africa: An Introduction

Steven Van Wolputte, Clemens Greiner and Michael Bollig

> Africa is to be pitied, worshipped or dominated. Whichever angle
> you take, be sure to leave the strong impression that without your
> intervention and your important book, Africa is doomed.
>
> WAINAINA 2005

∴

Africa is doomed. Africa is rising. Africa is bleeding, Africa is thriving. Africa holds the key to the future. The world's future. No future.

There is indeed no future for Africa. Or better, there is no single future. There are many roads to take, many paths to follow, each of which comes with its own crossroads and junctions, uncertainties, expectations, anxieties, imaginings, anticipations and speculations, determined and undetermined by pasts and presents, by possibilities and constraints, by past futures and by future pasts. One continuing concern, especially in the light of growing inequalities, is whose future is one talking about? Africans, like all peoples of the world, are "future-makers" (Appadurai 2013: 285) whether as inventors, engineers, scientists, planners, writers, artists, activists, or as children, mothers and fathers – albeit, paraphrasing Marx, not always in circumstances of their own choosing (Mavhunga 2017; Mbembe 2017; Sarr 2016). It is at these interstices and intersections that Africa is *futuring* – planning, imagining, making, building, expecting, avoiding, policing, preventing, writing, speculating, anticipating whatever is becoming.

Ideas, philosophies, anticipations, aspirations and expectations of the future will, obviously, also have their impact on how the past is experienced and remembered. Grand narratives such as colonialism were (and are) pretty much oriented towards the future (yet, a future made 'white' – read 'modern', 'efficient' and 'rational'), as were the various forms of resistance, such as the dream of pan-Africanism or the ongoing process of decolonization. More recently, governments throughout the continent have drafted their visions, for example 2020 (Malawi, Nigeria), 2025 (Tanzania, South Africa), 2030 (Kenya, Namibia), whereas the African Union has outlined its Agenda 2063. The high ambitions and ideas expressed in these, however, often starkly

contrast with the gloomy projections by the UN and other agencies: by 2050, and even if urbanization as such is not necessarily 'bad', half of Africa's rapidly growing population will be living in cities that already are expanding at such a rate that the much-needed infrastructure cannot keep up. For the other half, conflicts over land, water and other resources continue to fester or are announcing themselves. Overall, inequality is on the rise; and to top it off, recent climate projections predict rising temperatures and decreasing rainfall in significant parts of the continent (except, ironically perhaps, portions of the Sahel), while in other parts the frequency of extreme events, such as flash floods and landslides, will increase (World Meteorological Organization 2020). Biodiversity loss, degradation and declining agricultural yields seem inevitable.

No future, indeed. Or is there one? Population pressure remains a driver of change, but in what direction? According to the UN's World Population Prospects (United Nations 2017: 3) "more than half of the anticipated growth in global population between now and 2050 is expected to occur in Africa." This means that Africa will be hosting more than 25 per cent of the world's population by 2050. This growth is tremendous, given that since the slave trade and colonialism the African continent has been characterized by – and also suffered from – low population densities. At the same time, the data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) project devastating effects of global warming on food production (World Meteorological Organization 2020). Does this suggest a looming Malthusian nightmare, or can this turn out to be an incentive for local innovation? Will Africa be unable to benefit from its large youth bulge? Such projections do indeed start from a *ceteris paribus* assumption, though not one that takes into account the local dynamics of creativity and ingenuity. Also missing from these models are the hopes and fears, the aspirations and frustrations of the people themselves. How do *they* understand, imagine, feel and make *their* futures? What are *their* horizons against which *they* aspire, hope, create, innovate?

This, indeed, is what this volume aspires to be: nothing more or less than a scholarship of the possible (or, as Appadurai (2013: 295) phrased it, an ethics of possibility) to complement the emphasis on suffering as the common ground of a shared humanity – the dark sciences indeed (see Downey 2003; Goldstone and Obarrio 2017; Mawere 2014; Ortner 2016; Robbins 2013). Of course, such an undertaking must inevitably remain unfinished. We therefore set out to collect splinters and snippets, work in progress and food for thought, and aimed for polyphony rather than streamline, breadth rather than depth. We instructed our contributors to write short, crisp and provocative essays that challenge rather than analyse, and encouraged perhaps less conventional contributions.

This way we wanted to do justice to the often ambivalent and sometimes contradictory associations the word 'futures' evokes.

This volume is the next one in a tradition of inspiring volumes that accompanied the biannual European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), from Leiden 2007 (de Haan et al. 2007), Leipzig (Engel and Nugent 2009), Uppsala 2011 (Dietz et al. 2011). Lisbon 2013 (Engel and Ramos 2013) and Paris 2015 (Tall et al. 2015). It was supposed to appear alongside the ninth ECAS conference, to be held in early June 2021 in Cologne, and co-hosted by the Institute for Anthropological Research in Africa (IARA), Leuven. Alas, the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to break the cycle, and postpone the conference to June 2023. Despite this setback, however, we decided to continue preparing the present volume, scheduling its launch for June 2021. And even though its publication offers only meagre consolation, we can but hope that it inspires new, exciting work and that it serves as a firm starting point for the conference in 2023.

And then there is us, the editors. Among the reasons to opt for a kaleidoscope rather than a single snapshot was that we, the editors – three ageing, middle-class white men, privileged to work in two of the finest European institutions with many of the amenities of contemporary academic life – are convinced that the field of African studies is in need of a thorough overhaul. Few in this field would dispute that decolonization of the academy is adamant, but by expressly looking for young talent from the continent we hope that we may have made a modest contribution towards reinvigorating African studies with new blood.

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Few words are as much abused as 'future' and 'Africa'. To be clear, this volume is *not* about 'the future', not even when written in the plural. Admittedly, using the plural ('futures') implies downscaling, honing in on the lived experiences of social actors, doing justice to the variety and heterogeneity of life on the African continent. Yet, this still does not suffice, for it presupposes foreseeable paths and trajectories –and then, one might ask, whose trajectories? As the contributions to this volume testify, what is at stake here is that people are making their futures today. Hence, our emphasis on the gerund, on 'futuring'.

Two remarks are in place here: first, this does not mean a return to what Achille Mbembe (2006) has referred to as presentism (to present the past in an eternal unchanging present, as in 'traditional' – fixed – kinship structures, prototypical rituals and archetypical figures such as witches and chiefs). Second, we want to leave behind the idea that 'acting about' the future is the privilege of the privileged. Even if the 'bare life' (Agamben 1998) is a reality for many in

today's context of neoliberalism and the raging pandemic, this does not mean they have stopped thinking about tomorrow, whether that tomorrow features redemption in a distant paradise, or whether, as Jane Guyer (2007) so convincingly argued, we should orient our attention towards what lies immediately ahead.

Futuring then refers to subjectivation, and to the subjunctive (or optative) mood, with the latter clearly distinguished from the indicative and the imperative mood. It is an infinitive verb form (but one that acts as a noun) that always implies an actor. This also determined how we grouped the individual contributions into sections. Not taking into account the introduction and conclusion, re/thinking, living, confronting, imagining and relating all refer to a common thread we distinguished. 'Re/thinking' refers to the necessity to evaluate critically received categories (such as pastoralism, the ethnographic museum or 'the' future of Africa); under 'Living', we grouped those contributions that focus on the complexities of life under ecological constraints and economic adversity. The next section, 'Confronting', brings together contributions on the daily struggle for security, resources or meaning-making, whereas 'Imagining' concentrates on the continent's creative industries and its innovative potential. 'Relating' then refers to those contributions that elucidate intimate relationships people build and maintain with their bodies, their partners, their ancestors, or with society at large. To end, Andreas Mehler and Francis Nyamnjoh, draw conclusions on the future of academic collaboration. One finds a more elaborate one at the beginning of each section.

Having said this, it is important to note that 'Africa' is a category of practice rather than a category of analysis (Moore 2008), let alone an "axiom of unity" (Tsing 2005: 89) and that we do not subscribe to an alleged African exceptionalism. It borders – or should border – on the cliché that the inhabitants of the continent have always been pretty much part of the world, for better or for worse.

What then could such an ethics of the possible mean for the future of African studies, or, for that matter, for North American, European, or Asian studies? For scholars on the continent and their European, American and Asian allies, this first of all means to decolonize their thinking. A meme circulating on Facebook during the #RhodesMustFall campaign asked the rhetorical question of why white privilege is "your history being part of the core curriculum and mine ... being taught as an elective". While in the past such critical questions (see Crossman 2002; Hountondji 1994) were largely ignored, recent events in Africa and elsewhere have placed them firmly centre stage (Nyamnjoh 2016) of intellectual and political discourse. But decolonization of the mind (and heart) goes further than curriculum reform and clenched

fists (however important): likewise, a decolonization of knowledge (see Bristow 2017: 282) does not suffice. What is needed is a decolonial knowing that requires different modes of thinking (rethink thinking) and writing/ representing (*with* and *from* instead of *about*) and most importantly, that requires an 'epistemic freedom' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018) to decentre the deeply entrenched narratives (be they historical, political, social, economic, cultural or – even – ecological) with which we are all too familiar. Against a sclerotizing yet still dominant Western thinking and against the "Western grammar of alterity" (Mbembe 2002: 635), one can claim that "there is no better terrain than Africa for a scholarship keen to describe novelty, originality, and complexity" (Mbembe, in Shipley et al. 2010: 654).

Like other volumes on this topic (Etieyibo 2018; Goldstone and Obarrio 2017; Heidenreich and O'Toole 2016), we do indeed share a deeply rooted distrust towards depictions of the continent and its inhabitants as 'in crisis', and that these crises are particular to Africa. Yet, we are also aware of the challenges humankind is facing and of the way these challenges play out locally. Think in this regard of land grabbing, global warming, rising inequality, speculation, ethnic tensions, ID-ology (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009: 48), and so forth. In studying these dynamics, however, it is important to move from a study of essentialized states of being to an understanding of transitoriness (Larkin 2017: 49) and becoming. Such becoming is first of all relational in that it involves not only other human beings, but also other living creatures great and small, infrastructures and other features of the urban-scape and land-scape. The ambition here should be to creep into the cracks and folds of the dominant master narratives of our time (that are remarkably similar to those of yesteryear) – the holes so eloquently evoked by De Boeck and Baloji (2016: 107). Besides relational, such a study of becoming should also tune in to the ambivalences and contradictions, ambiguities and paradoxes of lived experience, not as a 'state' of human nature but as an empirical question (Berliner et al. 2016). An important issue here would be what is regarded as constituting the conditions and ethics of 'the good life'. In this, African studies needs to be concerned about both the 'up' and 'down', but should also move sideways, exploring the meshwork of the "social nervous system" (Taussig 1992) as its synapses bud and necrotize, and the meshwork changes – mutates – through experiencing and interacting with its immediate and not-so-immediate surroundings. This not only implies attention to order of magnitude – who or what are the units of analysis? – but also to the dimensionality and directionality of research, to guarantee that attention is paid to contrasts, differences and disparities within congregates once glossed over as homogenous (as in 'South Africa', 'Yoruba society', or 'the city') (see Bird-David 2017: 210).

Such a focus on becoming and emergence should also help tilt African studies so that its centre of gravity shifts away from its past and current institutional, political, epistemic, and methodological preoccupations. It could also help do away with the grand narratives on the continent's 'future', whether the latter are phrased in gloomy terms such as the "new scramble for Africa" (Carmody 2011; see also Shipway 2017), or in overtly optimistic ones such as 'Africa rising' (see Addo 2015; Edozie 2017). Increasingly, the continent is perceived as an experimental field for global tomorrows, as it was in the continent's pasts (see Bloom et al. 2014; Byerley 2012; Gewald et al. 2009; Hunt 1999; Ramutsindela 2007; Tilley 2011). And yes, many of the present realities and challenges were birthed by past futures, past understandings of what lay ahead, to past desires and past utopias (Bloch 1985). Conversely, one could also wonder what future pasts will look like once African histories are no longer optional courses of study. How will historians and artists reimagine their future heritage and history? How will philosophers think about their ancestry-to-come?

Despite this play of oxymorons, the many understandings and speculations about Africa's tomorrows are based on past, present and future materialities and, at least partly, depend on economic, social, infrastructural and political contingencies. One such contingency certainly concerns the continent's economic prospects. Whereas for decades Africa trailed behind the expectations of global planners and politicians, recent scenarios of future economic development bear a more positive outlook. It is true that after independence much of the formal economy remained dependent on the export of resources. The past decade, however, has seen enormous capital inflows into African agriculture. Land has gained in value, essentially because Africa is increasingly being seen as the only continent in which the agricultural expansion needed to feed a growing world population is still possible.

In a similar vein, Africa has also taken centre stage in the competition over emission rights, which has resulted in international speculation in rural land (Fairhead et al. 2012). These investments – often inaptly and imprecisely described as 'land grab' or 'green grabbing' – may further boost economic activity, but they also have an impact on local small-scale farming (Hall et al. 2015b; Peters 2013), and on the continent's rapidly expanding cities where property has become the object of international speculation. While local elites and medium-scale African investors play a role here (Jayne et al. 2014), it is also vital to recognize the strength of the impact of the global political economy and of the structural local and global inequalities it creates (see Ayelazuno 2014; Hall et al. 2015a). In a parallel move, the increase in the global price of raw materials has spurred a new run on prospecting and mining rights and a quest to improve the infrastructure that transports these precious minerals and

natural resources. While Africa was and continues to be torn by international competition for its resources, which range from human labour (nowadays reflected in the brain drain from the continent) to copper, ivory and gold, new rivalries and potential threats to stability and security are appearing on the horizon. As the Global North seeks alternatives with which to fuel its economy, the quest for and exploitation of 'new' minerals such as cobalt, coltan or lithium, poses an additional (potential) risk to peace and human security on the continent (Berman et al. 2017). Water, too, has become a scarce resource, due partly to global warming and often partly also to mismanagement and over-exploitation (Naik 2017).

Furthermore, it seems that the coronavirus pandemic has tempered the widespread Afro-optimistic perspectives of the past decade. However, what seems sudden, appears to have deeper structural roots. Many have warned that the spectacular economic growth rates are due more to oil and gas exploitation, and to the infrastructure surrounding it, than to the sustainable growth of a middle class, and have thus called for "Afro-realism" (Wadongo 2014). The pandemic thus seems to have acted as a catalyst for processes that were already underway in the 2010s. Africa's foreign debt "as a percentage of GDP almost doubled from 25 per cent in 2008 to 48.5 per cent in 2017", whereby 20 per cent of this debt burden is controlled by China, which now attaches more ties to loans (Munyi 2020: 481). Zambia defaulted on its repayment obligations in 2020, and may not be the only country running into severe budgetary problems in the coming years (Williams 2020). In 2019, Mo Ibrahim's governance index for Africa turned negative for the first time in the 2010s, showing a particular decline in the 'security and rule of law', and 'participation, rights and inclusion' categories (All Africa 2020; see also MIF 2020). Democratic elections, for example, in Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi were disputed. Soldiers and/or militias rebelled against elected governments in a number of states across the continent, and civil war plagues Ethiopia as we write. As a recent newspaper article claimed, "Africa Rising may fast become Africa Uprising" (Anthony 2021).

Another such contingency concerns Africa's infrastructures. Current developments in this field are key to understanding future making in Africa (*The Economist* 2015) and may act, in their turn, as catalysts of ongoing transformations. New development corridors, such as LAPSSET in Kenya and vast agricultural intensification projects such as the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania carry infrastructural promises of roads, airports and resort cities (Chome 2020; Kochore 2016; Mkutu 2017). When or even if these mega projects, which are often cornerstones of national development plans, will eventually be realized, however, remains in question (De Boeck 2011; Müller-Mahn 2019). Recent developments in the gas and oil industry in Africa,

but also the massive investments into solar, geothermal, wind and hydro-based energies appear to be more tangible, as they also bring massive infrastructural investments into previously marginalized areas, such as roads, water pipelines, boreholes, or telecommunication boosters (Klagge et al. 2020).

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have arguably taken the key role in debates on development in Africa (Ponelis and Holmner 2015). The rapid uptake of mobile phones has particularly driven hopes for ICT-enabled leap-frogging. While the percentage of Internet users on the African continent is still low (but rapidly growing) the number of mobile phone users is impressive and has led to new markets, such as mobile payment systems. Increasingly, Africa is seen as a future digital trendsetter, which also has its repercussions in the arts (African Digital Art 2019). If indeed, paraphrasing AbdouMaliq Simone's (2004) words, people should be regarded as infrastructure, Africa's futuring by and large will depend on the creative minds and hands devising new digital and analogue applications cut to fit local needs, whether in the maker spaces in Cape Town, Lomé or Nairobi, or on the Agbogbloshie waste belt near Accra. Indeed, whereas in the past studies concentrated one-sidedly on how imported technologies were 'adapted', attention finally goes to innovation from within Africa itself (for a critique, see Gewald et al. 2012; Hart 2016; Pype 2017). As Emeka Okafor (the founder of Maker Faire Africa) remarked, "making is central to leading Africa where it needs to be: a developing, problem solving region. ... It's imperative that communities from Cairo to the Cape unfetter their populations with tools from within" (King et al. 2014).

Even if it is valid to question whether these techno-visions alone will provide the answer, there is no doubt that such locally bred solutions will be necessary. A third major contingency threatening an already vulnerable continent is certainly global warming, and in the past decade the future of African environments has become the topic of much scientific debate. What will African environments look like thirty years from now, and what will they look like at the end of the century? Nobody seems to doubt that environments will rapidly change due to the effects of global climate change, conservation and agricultural intensification. Scenarios of climatic change predict a transformation of environments: substantial parts of the continent will receive less precipitation and rains will be concentrated in fewer precipitation events (UNEP 2013, 2016). This will lead to profound changes in Africa's hydrology, and overall to a more arid environment. Conservation (Hannah et al. 2002, but also see websites of diverse conservationist NGOs, for example, AWF 2021; BirdLife 2021) and agricultural intensification (Folberth et al. 2014) are thought to be apt adaptation strategies. Indeed, Africa contributes significantly to the world's conservation

goals. While at the moment slightly more than 15 per cent of the terrestrial landscape is under conservation worldwide, a good number of African states contribute significantly higher percentages to conservation. If global targets for an increase in terrestrial ecosystems under conservation are to be met, Africa will certainly contribute majorly to this effort (Dinerstein et al. 2019). Not doom and dust but Edenic landscapes are the future, so the story goes. This future scenario rhymes well with a transformation of agriculture towards greater sustainability and higher outputs. In landscapes equipped with sufficient environmental infrastructure, large-scale irrigation, mechanization and smart agriculture may provide a future in which significantly more food and products for the global market are produced. These future visions of the landscape are likely to lead to new patterns of inclusion and exclusion, and will necessitate the renegotiation of governance and of issues relating to environmental justice (Büscher et al. 2017).

Enmeshed in these environmental changes is the dissolution of traditional livelihood patterns in many of the continent's rural areas. The search for opportunities in urban areas and abroad conjures up an image of the continent being thoroughly mobile, constantly on the move (de Bruijn et al. 2001; Steinbrink and Niedenführ 2020). The growing outflow of a predominantly young population from the continent is resulting in transnational networks and diaspora formations, and many more young Africans continue to dream of a life abroad (Piot 2010). Many – if not most – international migrants from Africa send remittances home. The financial volume has outnumbered foreign direct investments and development aid and their patterning might well be termed 'carescapes'. Based on these impressive monetary flows – often from migrants in insecure and low-paid positions – economist Felwine Sarr (2016) argues for the need for a 'homo africanus' model driven not by self-interested but by other values.

Uncertainty also governs Africa's political landscapes. Whereas in the 1970s ethnicity was thought to be on its way out (Southall 1970), nationalism and ethnic frictions (whether or not in tandem with religious movements) only gained prominence over the past few years (also see Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; Geschiere 2009; Meiu 2019). But politicians and prophets, planners and performers are of course not the only ones futuring. Also, in art, philosophy and in popular culture, in poetry and novels futures are being made, written, drawn, imagined. Nnedi Okorafor, for one, in her Binti trilogy portrays a vivid Afropolitanism that also reverberates in the 2017 release of the Black Panther epic. Speculative fiction in the form of graphic novels depicts futuristic cities populated, among others, by African superheroes, thus providing an exciting counternarrative to mainstream Western discourse. Future-making, however,

goes beyond literary or academic circles: it also implies the day-to-day inventiveness encountered in cities and villages, in designated maker spaces and in everyday households, in digital art, electronic games and mobile applications, or in novel approaches to the rural and urban built environment (Pieterse and Edjabe 2009; Heidenreich and O'Toole 2016).

These dynamics and ongoing economic, social and political changes have a huge impact on how relationships between women and women, women and men, and men and men are conceived and lived (Pauli and van Dijk 2016). To the extent that an African middle class is indeed emerging, it embraces forms of relatedness inspired by the globalizing ideal of romantic love and companionate partnerships, a process that informs how women and men conceive, experience and practice love, friendship or care, which in turn weighs in on how they think and experience family relationships (Scharrer et al. 2018). Ultimately, all these relationships involve one form or another of future feeling and future thinking –think, for instance, of the rising demand for IVF treatments; of the expectations inherent in child-raising; or of the plans that friends make to start a business venture. Needless to say, although these futures are highly gendered, and although the Western media and NGOs like to portray women in Africa as univocally powerless and poor, this may remind us that quite a few African nations have taken the lead in guaranteeing women's rights and political participation, often leaving their northern counterparts far behind. Although important questions and issues remain, a scholarship and ethics of the possible pertains with regard to these gendered futures, even if only because of the huge discrepancies between and within countries, regions, and cities. The same goes for the changing attitudes (for better or for worse) towards same-sex relationships and queer sexuality (Meiu 2017).

That said, we can only hope that the present volume will contribute to a fruitful discussion on futuring in and from Africa, and to a truly decolonial academic field. As we write this introduction, the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging, and currently has affected – and these are conservative estimates – more than 114 million individuals and claimed more than 2.5 million lives worldwide. It also casts doubt, in some circles at least, on the role of science. Regarding the future of African studies, then, a crucial question is how science-led approaches can contribute. Part of our answer is that such approaches need to be collaborative. One thing that has become clear during the pandemic is that digitalization offers many new, efficient venues in which to work towards more cooperative science practices and towards a radical rupture with past, outlived epistemologies.

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PART 1

Re/Thinking

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Introduction to Part 1

This first section explores ways to think (and, ultimately, act) differently about futures in Africa. One thing the six chapters gathered here have in common, is that they argue against an African exceptionalism, and against the evolutionary worldview that still, unfortunately, dominates thinking about Africa – as if Africa were one homogenous whole. Borrowing a phrase from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, they warn against the danger of a single story.[1]

This point is explicitly taken up by Hana Horáková who warns against the many soothsayers (from NGOs to think tanks and academics) who cling to singular (optimistic or pessimistic) views on the 'future of Africa'. Next, Detlef Müller-Mahn and Eric Kioko observe that the current COVID-19 pandemic brings with it new uncertainties that need to be addressed by new forms of collaboration (thinking *with* rather than *about*); they also subtly remark that this pandemic illustrates that the countries in Africa have no lessons to learn from their European, American or Asian counterparts (often on the contrary).

In the third chapter, Clemens Greiner takes aim at the essentializing categories of the past (such as 'pastoralists' or 'hunter-gatherers') and, instead, hones in on what people do rather than on who they supposedly 'are'. Dorothea Schulz, in her contribution, also argues against an all too provincializing view that sets the study of religion apart from the study of temporalities and of future making. She convincingly shows that these are not simply overlapping domains of investigation, but intimately intertwined domains of life.

The fifth chapter then takes us to a critical assessment of the ethnographic museum. According to Ciraj Rassool, a recognition of the museum's colonial past, and the recent efforts at restitution do not suffice. Instead, he maintains, needed is a thorough critical and ethical overhaul of the museum's methodology and epistemology to arrive at a genuinely postcolonial museum (or postethnographic).

Finally, Richard Wamai and Hugh Shirley highlight the health challenges that Africa is facing, especially when taking into account its demography. The future of health is intrinsically tied up with the continent's global interconnectedness (think for instance of the COVID-19 pandemic, or of global warming). This brings with it changing patterns of disease – as it always has – that in their turn require strengthened more robust healthcare systems.

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1 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, (2009) Tedglobal2009: The danger of a single story. YouTube video. Availaible at https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare.

African Futures: Polymorphous, Polycentric, Heterogeneous, Unpredictable (as Everywhere and Always)

Hana Horáková

> What's the Future? It's a blank sheet of paper, and we draw lines on it, but sometimes our hand is held, and the lines we draw aren't the lines we wanted.
>
> JOHN MARSDEN, The Dead of Night

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"The worst that scientists feared has happened: coronavirus is already in Africa." This recent newspaper headline published on 14 February 2020 by an online Czech news server (Mališová and Ryšánek 2020) captures the popular imagination of today's Africa (at least in the part of Europe where I live) as a pathological and disaster-prone continent. This is essentially fake news, as Africa has stayed largely unaffected, compared with other regions, especially the USA, Brazil, Russia and western Europe. Like the Czech media coverage of Ebola in West Africa (Werkman 2016), today's affected region (in this case 'only' Egypt) is depicted as a threat to 'our' European lives. In other words, Africa is perceived as a place desperately lagging behind in every aspect of 'modern' life.

Widespread media representations of the continent indicate that the ways in which African places and peoples are portrayed as quintessential objects, ahistorically frozen within a web of dualities (light–dark; found–lost; civilized–savage; tame–wild), continue to shape forecasts. In other words, the existing African realities, largely viewed in dichotomous categories, are equally subject to either/or (positive–negative) effects and forecasts. Above all, a growing futurism business (for example, SingularityU South Africa 2019) on Africa perpetuates, in both overt and covert forms, the discourse of Africa as the Dark Continent. The list of negative tropes on Africa stressing irrationality, brutality, primitiveness and an overall incapacity of Africans to transform into 'modern' citizens is channelled through diverse media, such as film, mass print or social media, literature and travel accounts, exploiting 'Africa' in the same way as colonial authorities, anthropologists and historians did in the past (Horáková 2016: 31).

The new millennium witnessed a shift in international perceptions of and interactions with Africa. The view of the continent as devoid of much strategic relevance during the cold war gave way to the idea of Africa as a 'significant other'. Daniel Bach points to three perceptions, all of which are more than a hundred years old – the image of Africa as the Dark Continent embodying poverty, war and overpopulation; the more recent philanthropic concern (transnational 'celebrity humanitarianism'); and the new scramble for Africa (Bach 2016: 55–6). Given that such viewpoints are widely accepted throughout the EU, they still shape the way in which people perceive and debate African politics. The reactions of European leaders to the EU–AU conference in Vienna in December 2018 show that the three viewpoints are indeed still prevalent in Europe (EU/AU Partnership 2019). The idea of using development cooperation to combat terrorism, migration and growing Chinese influence has roots in all three perceptions described above. The Czech Republic's foreign minister Tomáš Petříček is no exception, for he thinks that development cooperation should not be a charity, but an investment in our companies and in our security in particular.[1] The three perceptions may provide a useful simplification, but they all share one major problem. In none of them are Africans envisaged as independent actors. All that remains are 'objects' that need to be feared, shown compassion and helped.

In his introductory speech in Vienna, the president of Rwanda and current president of the African Union, Paul Kagame, criticized the European notion of solidarity with Africa. He said that cooperation should be mutually beneficial and that African states did not want to engage in false solidarity or to focus on European issues such as migration and terrorism. Meanwhile, the view that Africa is posing a threat not only to herself but also to the other – the 'civilized' world – becomes a hidden agenda in today's public, political and even academic discourse. Security studies point to a threat of mass illegal immigration as well as terrorism from Africa to Europe resulting from Africa's failed states.[2] The public in the West fears the spillover of dangerous endemic diseases from Africa, such as Ebola, or dengue fever. The historical tendency to represent Africa as an amorphous place that erases the particularity of African realities, has so far failed to be deconstructed. What is more, Africa represented as a source of concern and danger (disease, war, savagery, famine, poverty and widespread corruption) and a place in need of salvation by the West, is being replicated in more or less nuanced forms of diverse future scenarios.

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1   Czech Foreign Ministry, www.mzv.cz.

2   Now newly conceived as fragile states, according to the updated Fragile State Index. https://fragilestatesindex.org/.

The comparative judgement is structurally implied in so-called trajectorism,[3] which is a "deeper epistemological and ontological habit, which always assumes that there is a cumulative journey from here to there, or more exactly from now to then" (Appadurai 2013: 223). In other words, how we see our future depends on how we see the past. If the past is interpreted as single and homogeneous, the future will equally be viewed as predictable. If, however, the past is approached as culturally constructed through negotiation and dispute by various social actors, there will always be a diversity of future visions.

The discourse surrounding Africa's dark otherness, which is modelled largely on outdated modernization theories, persists and has a huge influence on present public perceptions of Africa and on prospects for Africa's futures. There are two sets of mutually related binary classifications, which are either externally or internally oriented. The former juxtaposes Africa with the 'Western' other, creating a false dichotomy between Africa as an object of world history, always deficient and lagging behind, and the West as Africa's mentor, advisor, and saviour. The latter tends to 'divide' African places and people internally into those who are successful in complying with (neoliberal) rules and regulations, and those who fail.[4] The comparative criteria for both evaluations remain the same, reminding us of the late nineteenth-century social evolutionism.

Thus, irrespective of the lived reality of a polymorphous, polycentric, and heterogeneous Africa, the interpretation of events and dynamics in Africa has largely been captured in dualist terms – one positive, one negative. The former has to do with the apparent benefits of economic and political liberalization, the belief that only the transition to multi-party democracy will lead to 'proper' development. This optimistic strand includes the recent concept of 'Africa rising', reflecting a vision of a makeable future – a utopia that tends to ignore complex contemporary realities (Edozie 2017). Prognostication is aimed at trying to find a 'success story' (like Botswana) within the optimistic outlook.[5] It is always viewed as an exception to the rule in terms of successful liberal democracies on the continent.

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3   The broader concept of trajectorism used in this text serves as an umbrella term for any types of insights into the future, be they predictions or scenarios.

4   There are numerous examples: societies with a state and segmental societies, paganism and Islam, subsistence societies and market societies, or societies with or without monetary exchange (see Amselle 1990).

5   While this idealized view of Botswana as the positive exception is rather common, it is not exempt from critical scholarship related to, for example, ethnic and class divides or to Khoisan peoples and issues of land appropriation and displacement. (I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for making this valuable comment.)

The latter prevailing current of opinion comes from the theory that Africa's 'new barbarism' produced what the French call 'Afro-pessimism', which international think tanks and the media came to draw on extensively to provide gloomy scenarios on the future of what *The Economist* called the 'hopeless continent' (Bach 2016: 54).

Needless to say, both views are flawed, simplistic, and built on faulty analytical and historical premises (Chabal 1996). They are just two sides to the perennially dichotomized vision of Africa as unable to take into account the hopes, fears, aspirations and frustrations of the very people who are going to make *their own* future. The Afro-pessimist tends to pathologize Africa,[6] while the optimist tends to praise Africans for meeting the political and economic standards imported from the West.

When it comes to Africa, it is arguable that there is no single future for the continent, just in the same way as there was no single past, and there is no single present. One cannot tell a single story of Africa and its future. There are many routes along which African futures are being forged and apprehended (Goldstone and Obarrio 2017: 4). There can be contentious futures (Weiss 2004), as there are contentious pasts and presents. The future thus remains subject to consideration, negotiation, and contestation.

People around the world have different access to future-making practices. The 'capacity to aspire', a notion that links culture, voice, and future (Appadurai 2013: 295), depends on many variables, such as local systems of values and meanings, and is always unevenly distributed. The pursuit of "the not-yet-known" (Appadurai 2013: 271) is a standard endeavour made by diverse actors –in both academic worlds and public domains. On the one hand, thinking about and planning for the future is a universal, human capacity, done by ordinary people everywhere. As the future is a "routine element of thought and practice in all societies" (Appadurai 2013: 292), imagination, anticipation and aspiration become components of the future. Future-making practices entail different forms at the grassroots level. Some people read palms to tell one's future. People interested in knowing their future can listen to prophecies, get in touch with oracles, or make use of any future-telling means and instruments they trust. In South Africa, for example, *sangomas/invangas* often influence people's future behaviour. No matter how they strive to get the verdict on the future, nothing is predestined. The future is unpredictable, there

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6   Needless to say, recent debates on Afro-pessimism point to its misconception as a field of thought in contrast to black optimism (Lethu 2017). Exploring these debates, however, goes beyond the scope of this text.

are best-case scenarios, and there are worst-case scenarios. However, neither of them quite reflects the realities in the world.

On the other hand, there are some gatekeepers in forecasting the future. On the macro level, 'futurework'[7] is a sphere of specialized institutions and disciplines. With some simplification, we can say that future making is being done by (a) diverse (inter)national organizations, institutions, think tanks, and NGOs, and (b) certain academic disciplines such as security studies.

The former approach to the current business of future making largely perpetuates the optimist–pessimist dichotomy describing the future of the continent in extremes, either as a gloomy, apocalyptic vision, or as a paradise of booming investment. Contradictory forecasts and presuppositions fit well within the dichotomized image of the continent, thus positing a single image of future Africa. Diverse verdicts and diagnoses of such external forecasts look indisputable or even inescapable.

Predictions are made by international organizations, such as the UN (UN 2016) or EU. African futures are also dealt with by African-based and international NGOs and think tanks, such as the Institute for Security Studies (ISS n.d.). The impetus for those kinds of prognoses is the meaning of Africa for the future of humankind, for instance Africa's importance to the internal and external dimensions of Europe's security and prosperity. The common thread of contemplating the future of Africa is thinking about development, or progress, revolving around a seemingly magical term, 'transformation'. The assumption is that, as in recent years, the continent has undergone significant economic, socio-political, and technological transformations, and that this process is likely to accelerate over the coming decades.

An illustrative example of 'trendspotting' through specific and selective lenses is a report on an EU platform entitled 'African Futures: Horizon 2025' (EUISS 2017). Though reluctant to make accurate predictions on future trends in Africa, under the categories of socio-political, structural and security transformations, the report identifies what dominant trends are most likely to have an impact on Africa's economic, political and security futures. The report also sets out six challenges to Africa, namely (i) ageing rulers, which present an obstacle to democratization; (ii) the expanding youth bulge; (iii) resource depletion and land pressures; (iv) diverging patterns of growth and inequality; (v) a multi-layered security environment; and (vi) religious extremism as a vector for violent mobilization. All themes are well-thought through and substantiated, but they revolve around an illusionary unity of modernity as a

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7   A term coined by Gary Alan Fine (2010) to describe the work done by meteorologists in the West.

'package' originating in the West. Much is predicted by the neoliberal agendas that hold sway in Africa, such as growing inequality, youth unemployment, or conflicts over resources. The normative look is strengthened by examples of positive transformations taking place in a number of African countries, promoting 'good governance' and the 'rule of law', but not yet exerting inclusive or sustainable growth or achieving 'standard' democracy.

The topic of African futures has recently become popular in scholarly monographs[8] (for example Carbone 2018; Goldstone and Obarrio 2017; Heidenreich and O'Toole 2016; Hino et al. 2019; Khannous 2013; Sall 2003; Weiss 2004). There is a belief that especially an "ethnography of the future" (Clammer 2012: 129), or an anthropology of the future (Appadurai 2013: 3) is fully designed to study the aspirations of the people when envisaging the future.

Brian Goldstone and Juan Obarrio's edited book *African Futures: Essays on Crisis, Emergence, and Possibility*, is an illustrative example of an approach that successfully avoids the assumptions derived from the Western conception of modernity for Africa. The term 'futures' used in the book's title, like Eisenstadt's term 'multiple modernities', tries to undermine and overcome normative teleological assumptions of a unilinear trajectory derived from the West. In the Introduction, the editors challenge a tendency to forecast a future that "could only reiterate the tragic contours of the present", perpetuated by the media, humanitarian organizations, and agencies of global governance (Goldstone and Obarrio 2017: 16). They argue against unidirectional programmes of 'transition' and their mandatory phases and stages, with regard to democratic transition, or transition to capitalist accumulation and critique predetermined teleologies of government. Those who confidently pronounce on Africa's future should be challenged. Goldstone and Obarrio doubt that there can be a single trend towards which the whole continent is or will be moving. Instead, they emphasize the idea of Africa on the move and in the making – an 'untimely' Africa. According to them, the futurity of Africa resides in an irreducible set of questions and potential answers depending on who is raising the question. The book presents an array of localized vantage points embedded in the global debate on African futures that contrasts sharply with the above-mentioned external forecasts. The message is clear: different kinds of futures in Africa have to be grasped through different concepts, originating either in Africa or in the encounter between Africa and the rest of the world.

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8   On the other hand, some scholars in the social sciences and humanities have come up with a substantial critique of the term 'future' (for example, Berardi 2011) because of its conflation with concepts such as 'development' and 'progress' that have been imposed on Africans through the export of modernization theories.

As multiple modernities are observable on the continent, there are equally multiple emerging futures.

Briefly assessing the potential of the two sources of data – international bodies and academic debates – on predicting the major trends in Africa's future, I would suggest that any reliable account should *avoid* the following traps: (a) believing in a single African future based on a simplistic and unidirectional understanding of social processes; (b) trusting distorted and twisted representations of Africa in public and political discourse; (c) securitizing African places and people; (d) exoticizing African places and people; (e) exceptionalizing African places and people, namely seeing African communities as *radically* different. By saying that Africa is special, unique, *sui generis*, we fall into the tautological interpretative pitfall – what happens in Africa, such as 'tribalist' violence, is due to the 'Africanness' of African politics (Chabal 1996). Africa is a region that faces various issues in our globalized world that are not so diametrically far away from ours; (f) understanding (African) modernity in dualist terms, as a blessing or a curse; and (g) any trajectorism based on macro data. In sum, it is necessary to avoid schematic and ideological interpretations that are incapable of comprehending all the nuances of African realities.

Instead, by promoting "the ethics of the future", any predictions and forecasts should take account of the "interweaving of worlds" (Mbembe 2007: 28), thus creating Africa as a cosmopolitan space in which the transnationalization of its societies and cultures and the reconstruction of its multiple institutional and ideological patterns are ongoing. The lives and identities of Africans constitute multiple, heterogeneous and hybrid trajectories and so must the reports on their future.

Be that as it may, forecasts, even those for the near future, will always be problematic. The future is uncertain and unpredictable as there are always multiple prospects in Africa (and elsewhere). Various social and cultural forms are emerging on the continent today: the reconfiguration of the urban, signalling signs of prosperity, diverse techniques of legality and illegality, apocalyptic visions, a longing for exile, and many other phenomena (Goldstone and Obarrio 2017). Things can change abruptly and profoundly. African futures have never been more uncertain.

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COVID-19, Disrupted Futures, and Challenges for African Studies

Detlef Müller-Mahn and Eric Kioko

1   The Corona-Shock in Africa

In Africa, as elsewhere in the world, COVID-19 reminds people that the future may sometimes turn out quite differently from what they had previously expected. It indicates that 'futuring', that is the way individuals and societies think about and act upon their futures, inevitably involves an element of uncertainty. The crisis resulting from the pandemic discards many of the optimistic outlooks that have been prevalent in recent years ('Africa rising'). This raises the question of how COVID-19 challenges African futures, and what this implies for African studies in general.

The work of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC-TRR 228) at the universities of Bonn and Cologne in Germany on *Future Rural Africa: Future-making and social-ecological transformation*, together with that of several partner institutions in Africa (see *www.futureruralafrica.de*), provides the background to this contribution. The COVID-19 outbreak struck the CRC in the middle of its first funding phase, which had a paradoxical effect. On the one hand, the pandemic brought ongoing field studies in Kenya, Tanzania and Namibia to an immediate stop. On the other hand, it brought the CRC's research topic to the centre of public attention. The CRC's key concept of future-making (Appadurai 2013) elucidates how anticipation, imagination and aspiration turn the future into an issue in the present, making it a contested field, where controversial visions are negotiated, performed, advocated – or silenced. The COVID-19 containment measures disrupted existing contacts with informants in the study areas and shifted international collaboration to the Internet. Yet, and this is the point we want to make here, it may also be taken as an opportunity for a fresh look at research approaches. In the following sections, we want to revisit some of the conceptual assumptions of the *Future Rural Africa* programme regarding the relationship between anticipation, uncertainty and hope.

It may appear symptomatic that the virus was imported from outside Africa, just like other foreign influences that have crippled the continent since colonial times. The pandemic started with the internationally mobile elites, before it spread from the urban centres into the hinterlands. The external origin of the disease reinvigorated resentment against foreign influence in general, and

against Western remedies and Eurocentric visions of development in particular. What had previously been hailed as gateways to modernization and prosperity – airports, roads, and trade corridors – became entry points for a potentially fatal threat. Similarly, the profound shift of development partnership from the West to the East (particularly China) among many African nations came into sharp critical focus following the spread of the pandemic (Schindler et al. 2020). This observation applies not only to the geography of trade and travel, but also to the position of Africa in the world, and it certainly deserves further attention in research. The question is how the threat from outside raises awareness of locally embedded future visions. Can the corona-shock provide opportunities for alternative African futures?

Development organizations soon switched their imaginations of African futures from positive to negative, from the worn-out *Africa Rising* rhetoric back to the well-known apocalyptic scenarios of failing health systems, poor agricultural production, food crisis, economic decline, and social unrest. Viewed from the Global North, Africa was once again portrayed as a continent of despair and disaster. However, national responses and infection trajectories in Africa are just as diverse as in the Global North. Some countries, like Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa, apply a policy of strict lockdowns and infection control, others, like Tanzania, reject social distancing and rely on traditional medicine. High-income countries and wealthy people are generally better able to protect themselves against infection, cope with the lockdown, and survive the crisis, than the poor, for whom the pandemic presents an existential threat. As a consequence, COVID-19 enhances inequality and stratification in the Global South (Obeng-Odoom 2020a), thus aggravating the effects of economic globalization (Baldwin and Weder di Mauro 2020). There is reason to fear that global asymmetries and vaccine nationalism will disadvantage Africa in the same way as during earlier global campaigns to combat HIV/AIDS or influenza pandemics.

At a local scale, the COVID-19 crisis severely disturbs social relations and economic exchange, as our own ongoing studies in Ethiopia and Kenya indicate. The study in Ethiopia is conducted mainly through telephone interviews and local field assistants in the district of Bahir Dar. It indicates that the pandemic causes multiple distortions in rural–urban linkages. Farmers complain about collapsed supply chains, disturbed market relations, and insufficient government services. People are well aware that the threat comes from outside, which makes them suspicious of anyone not belonging to their community, such as traders and government officials. At the same time, in local communities, religion and spirituality play an important role in coping, since people refuse to obey the government's calls for social distancing. The study gives an impression of the enormous burden the pandemic puts on rural households, and

especially the women, as also reported in a similar study in Nairobi (Schmidt et al. 2020). Many families have had to cope with the return of household members, mostly students and migrant labourers, who previously lived in town and were now forced to take refuge with their families in the countryside. The case of Ethiopia is also a telling example of how national governments are using the crisis to further their own agenda by postponing parliamentary elections and strengthening authoritarian rule. In Africa, this coincides with the geopolitical competition between China and the West, and further enhances Chinese leadership in development on the continent (Schindler et al. 2020).

In early 2021, the future outcome of the COVID-19 crisis in Africa remains highly uncertain, with infections rising sharply in the worst-affected countries, but generally lower mortality rates than in the Global North. There is hope that the continent will not be hit as hard as initially feared, perhaps due to the high proportion of young people. Even so, the crisis has already had an impact on African futures and how they are envisioned.

2 Rethinking African Futures

Ethnographic studies give evidence of the multiple risks and uncertainties encountered by many Africans in their daily lives (Bloemertz et al. 2012). Uncertainty may be understood as a 'lived experience' (Cooper and Pratten 2015: 1), and at the same time a condition emerging from structural causes like political instability, social insecurity, or ecological disturbance at different scales (Scoones 2019). The specific experience of complex uncertainties influences the way futures are conceived, as can be seen by the way COVID-19 forces African governments to revise long-term programmes. Whether national development plans like Kenya's Vision 2030 or the African Union's Agenda 2063 will still be feasible in the coming years will be seen when the dust has settled. In a similar vein, millions of ordinary people are forced to adjust their individual expectations, and to shorten their envisioned futures from a distant horizon to an 'extended present' (Amoo-Adare 2020).

COVID-19 brings the intrinsic dilemma of futuring to the surface. On the one hand, futuring builds upon forward-looking orientations consisting of dreams, visions, forecasts, anticipatory politics, and other attempts to gain control over the future. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that any of these dreams will ever materialize as planned. It seems that futuring has often overestimated the capacity of risk assessment and prognosis, and underestimated the relevance of uncertainty (Scoones and Stirling 2020). While "fictional expectations" do play an important role in capitalist dynamics of the Global North,

as Beckert (2016) points out, it appears at least debatable to what extent this applies to economies in the Global South. In Beckert's argument, imagined futures are considered drivers of economic transformation, primarily based on the hypothesis that they become real when a sufficiently large number of relevant actors share the same expectations and act accordingly. This hypothesis implies that wishful thinking can help overcome a feeling of uncertainty when it becomes a collective belief, and that it has the potential to turn visions into self-fulfilling prophecies. Yet, concerning the example of big national programmes like development corridors or other megaprojects in Africa, one wonders who actually believes in the promises of such "dreamscapes of modernity" (Jasanoff and Kim 2015, Müller-Mahn 2020). In this regard, COVID-19 may perhaps serve as a moment of truth.

Uncertainty stands in stark contrast to a contemporary mode of policy-making dubbed as "politics of anticipation" (Granjou et al. 2017), which aims at governing the present through prognostic methods, scenarios and anticipated futures. In Africa, such approaches have become increasingly influential in recent years, especially in the field of environmental governance. The proliferation of anticipatory politics was facilitated by technological advances, big data, climate modelling, and improved forecasting. This has, however, marginalized the recognition of unpredictable changes beyond long-term trends like climate change and population growth. The COVID-19 crisis reveals where these approaches went wrong: the politics of anticipation is built upon forecasts and probabilities, but it is not well prepared for the unthinkable, that is for unexpected nonlinear change. Under these conditions, it will be important to scrutinize how transitional management can better acknowledge the limitations of anticipatory strategies, and be prepared for unexpected changes in the sense of a "politics of uncertainty" (Scoones and Stirling 2020). Futures always emerge in an interplay between probabilities and possibilities, as Appadurai (2013) argues. Africa may be a good example of how the relationship between probabilities and possibilities provides opportunities for future-making. In this sense, the case studies collected by Cooper and Pratten (2015) and Goldstone and Obarrio (2017) are interesting to note, because they illustrate how quotidian uncertainties in Africa provide a productive potential for innovation and change, and an opportunity for pluralistic futures.

3   Decolonizing the Future

Decolonizing the future can be understood as the liberation of future visions from hegemonic influences and deterministic thinking. Regarding the African

continent, foreign dominance in science and technology has led to a teleology of imagined futures, which takes the example of the North as the ultimate goal of development. This state of future coloniality, as it may be called, has been increasingly criticized by African scholars. Franklin Obeng-Odoom (2019) observes an inferiorization of the knowledge of the South, and an "intellectual marginalization of Africa", which, as he argues, includes a marginalization of African scholars in research funding, publication policies and, as a consequence, scientific recognition and merits. In a similar vein, George Bob-Milliar (2020: 5) criticizes the prevailing asymmetries of knowledge production and "the extractive character and ethical dilemmas of North–South research endeavours". This grave critique links the silencing of African voices to the deficiencies of future-making. Epifania Amoo-Adare (2020) holds Northern hegemony in science responsible for the planetary crisis, which therefore must be overcome by the "decolonization of current modes of academic knowledge production". Northern hegemony in science-based practices of future-making becomes evident in the preference many researchers give to big data and quantitative methods (Bob-Milliar 2020: 11). The hegemonic research policy cherishes "generalities and simplistic forecasts" instead of complexity and uncertainty, as Obeng-Odoom (2020b: 5) remarks. Remote sensing technologies, climate models and forecasts provide the backbone of anticipatory governance strategies, which have become increasingly influential in African future-making. Yet, there remains an unsolved problem: anticipatory governance views the future as an extrapolation of the present by focusing on long-term calculable processes like climate change and demography, while neglecting non-linear change especially in social contexts. Such approaches seek to gain control over societal transformation by "taming an uncertain future" (Stockdale 2016), which is just another name for colonization.

However, uncertain futures may also be understood differently, insofar as they leave room for alternatives. If the future is not fully determined, there remains a possibility for change. Conceiving futures as open and undecided leaves space for hope to influence change for the better, to foreground utopian visions, and to unfold desirable futures (Kleist and Jansen 2016). Hopefulness, understood as the "disposition to be confident in the face of the future" (Hage 2003: 24), is essential for governing the future in uncertain times, because it serves as "a means to navigate towards an unknown future in a precarious present" (Turner 2015: 189).

Decolonizing the future starts with a critique of dominant development discourses and the search for alternative visions. What is needed to overcome the limitations of a deterministic reading of the future is perhaps a new form of 'futures literacy' (Miller 2007), which will enable humans to learn from events

like the COVID-19 shock. African scholars have repeatedly insisted that the current crisis should be used in this sense, that is as a space of hope and a turning point. Science itself is not excluded from this call for change. As Amoo-Adare (2020) affirms, "This global crisis is a significant opportunity to stop and engage in an (un)thinking of the science that makes the world churn." In that sense, the crisis may be seen as an opportunity for a paradigm shift towards new forms of knowledge production in Africa and beyond, for an emerging 'Afrotopia' (Sarr 2016) and a struggle for epistemic freedom (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). While some scholars see the COVID-19 crisis as "another opportunity for the working people to reimagine alternatives and struggle to realize them" (Nyamsenda 2020), others call for an intellectual paradigm shift, which, as Amoo-Adare argues, should be radical, not just rethinking, but 'un-thinking' epistemologies by acknowledging indigenous temporalities and future imaginations. In the same vein, Obeng-Odoom (2020b: 12) adds that, "the time has come to develop Afro-centric policies that make Africa self-sufficient, self-sustaining, and self-flourishing." This message is well formulated, but the next step would be to make this endeavour more concrete, and to translate vision into action. This does also include African studies.

4   African Studies after COVID-19

Not only conceptual frameworks of futuring are caught in a dilemma, but also the everyday practices of research in and with Africa. On the one hand, COVID-19 has severe consequences for empirical fieldwork due to continued health risks and travel restrictions. Meeting informants in person is a risk for the researchers, regardless of whether they are African or non-African, and even more so for the people who are met. On the other hand, there is great interest in investigating the current impact and future consequences of the crisis. There is obviously a dilemma in deciding whether researchers should stay away or get involved in on-site studies, or transition towards remote approaches to doing research.

We believe that responses to this dilemma should distinguish between short- and long-term activities. At the moment, research is more or less confined to studies from a distance. In the above-mentioned project in Bahir Dar in Ethiopia, we carried out a survey based on telephone interviews with informants who had already taken part in a household survey immediately before the outbreak of the pandemic. Personal encounters in this study are kept to a minimum because our local research assistants live in the area and are therefore able to meet village officials and community members. Where

such contacts need to be established, our African partners become even more fundamental to moving forward.

It seems that scientific research in Africa will be unable to return to business as usual for quite a while. The ethical concerns described above will require alternative forms of empirical studies – even after the pandemic. In this regard, the present emergency constitutes a strong impetus for innovative approaches to African studies, with regard to both methodologies and theoretical concepts. International research activities will have to formulate appropriate project designs, reduce the frequency of travel, and respect the leading role of African scholars. The CRC *Future Rural Africa* is not alone in its attempts to develop new forms of collaboration with African partners. Such innovative approaches may also lead to new understandings of future-making, and not only in Africa. This includes the question of what the world can learn from Africa, and from African scholars. What if the vitality of African societies, the lived experience with multiple uncertainties, and the creativity of finding diverse strategies encourage a renewed search for alternative futures? If the COVID-19 shock results in a rethinking and reshaping of African futures, if it brings us closer to a common future, it will at least have one positive side effect.

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African Pastoralism: *Plus ça Change*?
From Constant Herders to Social Differentiation

Clemens Greiner

1   Introduction

Concern about the future and survival of 'pastoralists' has been a pervasive and recurring theme in research on African pastoralism (Hodgson 2001). Starting from Sidney and Hildegarde Hinde's *The Last of the Maasai* bemoaning the "fast approaching extinction of the *pure stock*" (Hinde and Hinde 1901: 109, my emphasis), to the conference held in Nairobi in 1980 on the *Future of Pastoral Peoples* (Galaty et al. 1981), and to a recent *Lands of the Future* initiative (Abbink et al. 2014), researchers have been voicing their concerns about the future of people engaged in livestock herding in Africa.

This concern, I suggest, derives partially from an analytical gap in the research literature on the conceptualization (or lack thereof) of transformation processes. A key reason for this blind spot lies in an overemphasis on socio-ecological relations and a persistent framing of pastoralism as a pre-capitalist mode of production embraced by egalitarian, close-knit, environmentally adapted communities exploiting a unique ecological niche – in other words, 'pastoralists'. As a result of this narrow and homogenizing focus, change is mainly conceived of as a threat to the survival of 'traditional' livelihoods, typically triggered from outside forces that are largely uncontrolled by local people.

Research on East Africa in recent decades shows that many people who live predominantly from herding suffer from a range of factors that have led to increasing constraints on their rangelands and livestock-based economies (Anderson and Broch-Due 1999; Catley et al. 2013). The marginalization of such communities can often be traced to early colonial policies, with significant continuity under many post-independence governments. Yet, in recent decades, conservation projects (Homewood et al. 2009), land privatization (Galaty 1994), infrastructural development (Lind et al. 2020), and violent conflicts (Mkutu 2008) – together with massive environmental changes – have contributed to a dramatic loss of open and accessible rangeland, as a crucial basis for extensive livestock herding (Galvin et al. 2008). Livelihood diversification (Little et al. 2001), sedentarization, and migration to towns (Fratkin and Roth 2005), as well as crop farming (McCabe et al. 2010), have all been described and analysed as major alternatives to specialized (nomadic) pastoralism.

This is neither the place to expand on these studies nor to offer a comprehensive literature review. Rather, I take the liberty to address the research literature on 'pastoralists' as a genre to diagnose an epistemological problem and to argue that change is too often analysed within narrow frameworks. More precisely, transformation is often examined as an adaptation to externally imposed structural or ecological conditions. By contrast, themes of agency, internal social differentiation, and indigenous commodification have been largely overlooked. With some notable exceptions (for example Little 1992), this blind spot in the literature has only recently come into focus (Caravani 2018; Holtzman 2003; Korf et al. 2015; Scoones 2020). Scholars working on population growth and intensification (Moritz 2012), land-tenure change (Lesorogol 2008), poverty (Little et al. 2008), and gender relations (Hodgson 2000) have problematized these conceptual tendencies. Dorothy Hodgson, for example, critically remarks that the culture and gender relations of livestock herding people are often "presented as fixed immutable, outside of history and beyond change" (Hodgson 2000: 16)

In neighbouring fields, approaches in political economy have fundamentally shaken concepts of homogenous communities or ideas of isolated development. The 'Kalahari debate' in hunter-gatherer studies (Wilmsen 1989), or the epic debates on class formation in peasant studies (Bernstein 2010), are cases in point. The epistemic community of pastoralism researchers appears to lack such fundamental controversies over the nature of pastoralist communities and related issues of socio-economic change. Part of the problem is the self-referentiality of established research literature. Although research on 'pastoralists' embraces a wide field, including identity studies (Schlee 1989), Marxist approaches (Rigby 1985), new institutional economics (Ensminger 1992), or risk management (Bollig 2006), pastoralism is often considered to be a field of research in its own right, particularly in anthropology. As a consequence, the study of pastoralism (or pastoralists, for that matter) "has become isolated from wider developments in the discipline and related fields", as Peter Little (2014: 2) critically observes (cf. Scoones 2020). Another challenge, I argue here, is the predominance of research focusing on environmental adaptation, which has come to characterize the field of pastoralism studies. The following brief review of anthropological literature on (predominantly East African) pastoralism summarizes these trends.

This short chapter concludes with a suggestion to reflect critically on homogenizing tendencies of categories such as 'pastoralists', and instead to analyse socially differentiated societies engaged in agrarian livelihood strategies. Pastoralism, on the other hand, should be understood as a strictly descriptive term that refers to sets of practices that can be carried out to varying degrees, and

in diverse forms, in rural as well as in (peri-)urban settings. This reframing can offer a more nuanced understanding of transformation dynamics among people engaged in pastoral livelihood strategies.

2   *Plus ça Change?* Anthropology and the Constant Herder

Anthropologists have for many decades portrayed 'pastorlists' – particularly East African ones – as generally egalitarian, self-regulating, persistent and conservative autonomous groups (Herskovits 1926; Schneider 1959; Spencer 1965). Interestingly, this has applied less to ethnographic accounts of pastoralism in other regions. Studies of Middle Eastern and circum-Mediterranean pastoralism, for example, tend to emphasize class stratification, shifts between different livelihood strategies, and interactions among nomads, sedentary populations, and the state (Barth 1961; Salzman 1980, 2004).

Ideal type descriptions of East African pastoralists as strongly bounded groups is at least partially due to the lasting influence of British structural functionalism and, as Rada and Neville Dyson-Hudson (1980: 16) observe, its "assumptions about the boundedness and stability of local systems". Structural functionalism, as the Dyson-Hudsons note, which had a particularly strong impact on studies of East African pastoralism, also "generally underestimated the impact of colonialism and involvement in the nation-state" (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980: 49). Written in 1940, E. E. Evans-Pritchard's seminal ethnography of the Nuer is certainly among the most prominent examples, especially as it relates culture and livelihoods to 'oecology' (Evans-Pritchard 1987: 51) or environmental conditions. This ecological connection, as I show below, is a thread that runs through research on pastoralism.

Julian Steward's idea of cultural ecology, which gained prominence in the 1950s and 1960s, buttressed this tendency with neo-functionalist assumptions and ecosystem approaches (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980). Following the work of Rappaport (1984) and others, human adaptation to ecological niches became a prominent focus. In a nutshell, the cultural ecology framework posits that environmental conditions in drylands are such that mobile livelihoods can only flexibly exploit resources that are sporadically available. Under such constraints, herders and their animals emerge as perfectly adapted units (Schareika 1994), with drylands appearing as the 'natural habitat' of pastoralists. The adaptation framework thus attributes the allegedly sturdy conservatism of pastoralists to the smooth functioning of their specialized culture, which is thought of as so deeply bound up with local ecology that every innovation potentially threatens this balance.

This image of the constant herder started to crumble in the 1980s, when scholars increasingly observed a profound crisis among many African pastoral societies, triggered at least in part by catastrophic droughts that plagued many parts of Africa throughout this decade. Drought often occurred in tandem with steep demographic growth rates (Spencer 1998), which were further compounded by other factors, such as state intervention into property rights, restricted movement, and failed development projects (Fratkin 1991). Poverty and social differentiation came into focus (Little 1985), and Rada Dyson-Hudson (1980) suggested a 'general theory of stratification' for pastoralist societies, according to which access to arable land played a key role. These changes in the African drylands were famously termed the 'new pastoralism' by Richard Hogg (1986), to refer to marginalization and poverty.

During the 1990s, non-equilibrium ecology emerged as a paradigmatic shift in ecosystems research (Zimmerer 1994). This new ecological thinking diverges from earlier perspectives that viewed ecosystems as balanced, equilibrium-oriented, and characterized by linear succession and gradual change. By contrast, non-equilibrium approaches argue that ecosystems are generally characterized by variation, uncertainty, and dynamic change. These approaches explicitly included human activities, moreover, and were quickly adapted to research on pastoralism, for example, in the multidisciplinary South Turkana Ecosystem Project (McCabe 2004). Such interdisciplinary projects, focusing on savanna ecosystems and involving anthropology, ecology, and other sciences, became very prominent in research on (East) African pastoralism (Little 2003). Almost by default, they required a focus on relatively isolated, self-contained – but now ecologically dynamic, rather than stable – systems.

With the new ecological thinking and resilience theory, which became important in the 2000s (Anderson and Bollig 2016), the adaptation framework regained prominence in research on African pastoralism. In the most recent contribution on pastoralism in the prominent *Annual Review of Anthropology* series, Kathleen Galvin (2009) bases her analysis on the adaptive capacity framework and informs readers that "pastoralists have adapted for centuries to climate, social, political, and ecological processes. … They are still adapting" (Galvin 2009: 193).

As Michael Watts (2015: 35) notes, the adaptation concept, with its functionalist notions, was washed away with the rise of political ecology in the 1970s and 1980s. The adaptation concept, however, was 'rebooted' with the resilience and adaptive systems approaches since the 1990s, and has – as Thomas Bassett and Charles Fogelman (2013) observe – experienced a strong déjà vu moment in recent literature on climate change. This observation resonates with mainstream research literature on pastoralism, which has

shifted from approaches ranging from cultural ecology and political ecology to socio-ecological resilience, most recently. Informed by earlier functionalist assumptions about stability and aversion to change, this has shaped the genre's perspective on social and economic change as primarily triggered by forces apparently external to and largely uncontrollable by local actors. Such framings tend to deny history and conceal the (well-established) fact that today's 'pastoralists' have historically navigated a wide variety of livelihoods and identities (Waller 1985). *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*?

To be sure, adaptation is also understood as an outcome actively shaped by communities. Yet, the underlying notion is that of stable, closed-knit communities, often envisioned – as Edwin Wilmsen (1989: 3) puts it for foraging societies – in "an endless, aboriginal continuity of social relations". Adaptation, Wilmsen (1989: 62) notes, "becomes in such a schema merely a retrospective assessment of survival, or perhaps of Tylorian Survivals". I do not want to insinuate that contemporary researchers of pastoralism have fallen into the trap of linear evolutionary thinking. However, the problem persistently reappears when we speak about, try to define, or categorize 'pastoralists'.

It has long been recognized that it is difficult, even impossible, to define who is and who is not a pastoralist, since narrow definitions tend to ignore enormous variations over time and across space (Homewood 2008). The inherent flexibility – or 'strategies for survival' (Anderson 2002: 80) – involved in livelihoods primarily based on herding should serve as an objection to any simple definition. Based on his study of nomadism in Iran, for example, Philip Carl Salzman dismisses any sort of ideal definition of pastoralism as an 'oversimplification' that "ignore[s] the many subtle and gross variations" (Salzman 1972: 67). Already in the 1980s, the Dyson-Hudsons proposed removing 'nomadic' from the analytic category 'nomadic pastoralism' to foster more dynamic perspectives on the phenomenon (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980).

While the "association with domestic grazing animals" is certainly key to pastoralism, as Katherine Homewood (2008: 1) stresses, more recent approaches move away from purely production-related definitions. Dorothy Hodgson (2000: 6), for example, uses pastoralism "to refer to those people for whom pastoralism is an ideal, if not a reality", while Michael Bollig and Michael Schnegg (2013) propose a set of indicators – labour, capital, and worldview – to identify degrees to which a person, a household, or a community could be defined as engaged in predominantly pastoralist livelihood strategies. Such attempts to escape narrow production-related determinism, however, still suggest that we can meaningfully equate identities, social organization, and economic practice. Such categories – useful shortcuts as they sometimes may be – tend to reify, essentialize, and create alterity, and ultimately (re)create the image of

the constant herder. I could not therefore agree more with Salzman (2004: 40), who insists that "nomads [or for that matter pastoralists] are not a kind of people but different kinds of people who use a particular strategy."

3   Towards Differentiated Societies and Pastoralism as Practice

My point should be clear: I am suggesting that we drop the term 'pastoralists' from our analytical frameworks. I not only suggest this because it is increasingly problematic to confine people into imagined forms of social membership (Ferguson and Li 2018), or because of recent debates in anthropology that problematize the use of predefined concepts and categories altogether (Rees 2018). I argue that the social category, 'pastoralists', is intimately connected with reductionist notions of pre-capitalist livelihoods and problematic notions of environmental adaptationism. To arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the social transformations affecting the people formerly known as pastoralists, I propose to speak of (socio-economically) differentiated societies engaged in agrarian livelihood strategies, and of pastoralism as a continually shifting set of practices and livelihood strategies. In short, pastoral practices, not people, are distinct.[1]

The suggestion is inspired by contemporary hunter-gatherer research, which reveals that there are elaborate ways of addressing the problem of outdated categories. Thomas Widlok (2016: 141), for example, suggests that scholars "treat 'hunting and gathering' as a property of situations and not of groups or economic systems at large". This opens up research perspectives beyond the traditional field, for example on urban foraging in post-socialist Poland (Rakowski 2016), and allows us to build models that clarify the links between various environments and human lifeways over space and time (Widlok 2016). Such proposals, however, are beyond the scope of this chapter, and I conclude with my modest suggestion to qualify pastoralism as a situated set of socio-economic practices. These practices are employed by different people at different times and to varying degrees. They include, among others, spatial mobility, specific ways of coping with uncertainty, and flexible institutions – in short, practices that take advantage of environmental variability (cf. Krätli 2019; Scoones 2020).

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1 A similar argument is made by Mustafa Babiker (2001: 141). I am well aware that it is often difficult to avoid the use of short-hand terms such as pastoralists. Sometimes people also self-describe or even self-essentialize as pastoralists. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of the critical distinction between shifting practices and reified kinds of people.

Many current as well as future developments in the African drylands raise new analytical challenges for which the classic literature on pastoralism is of limited use. New research and debates are necessary, particularly with regard to changes in land tenure, inequality, or 'de-pastoralization' (Caravani 2018). New perspectives, such as those offered by critical agrarian studies (Bernstein 2010; Borras 2009), are needed to address – among other things – issues of accumulation, poverty, class formation, and the increasing integration of pastoral practices into (global) markets.

To speak of differentiated societies, rather than of pastoralists, encourages researchers to think outside the box and to consider socio-economic change as a series of possible paths to take, rather than a priori threats to the future.

Acknowledgements

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Religious Practice and/as Future Making in Africa: Some Cautionary Remarks

Dorothea Schulz

1   Introduction

Are the notions of 'futurity' and 'future making' productive heuristic devices with which to study religion in Africa? More specifically, are they good thinking tools for examining the nature of religious engagement and aspirations in sub-Saharan Africa? If so, what new insights does a focus on futurity and future making yield?

In response to these questions, I propose three points for further debate. First, much anthropological scholarship on religion in Africa, and on Christianity in particular, has not explicitly addressed the future as an object of reflection and investigation. Still, and this is my second point, a number of anthropological investigations into close thematic affiliates to the future, such as 'time', 'temporality', and 'memory', have generated important insights into diverse, sometimes overlapping, and historically determinate conceptions of temporality and historicity in African societies. Third, the contrast between studies that touch on questions of futural orientations (Bryant and Knight 2019) and those that directly address religious practice *as* future making raises the question of how an explicit focus on the future might enrich scholarly understandings of religious aspirations and controversies in sub-Saharan Africa, past and present.

As an entry point into the discussion, I shall sketch out dominant trends in contemporary anthropological scholarship of the future, and then ask how this scholarship has thought about the relationship between religion and the future.

2   Anthropological Perspectives on Future Making: A Sketchy Literature Review

Several authors claim that the mushrooming of anthropological investigations of futurity and future making since, roughly, the turn of the century, marks a significant departure from anthropologists' long-time neglect of the topic. Drawing on Nancy Munn, the authors argue that this neglect reflects foundational assumptions of the discipline (Munn 1992; cf. Gell 1992), in particular a

conceptual contrast between 'modernity' and 'tradition' that locked the sub-
jects of enquiry as 'others' in an alleged orientation towards the past, denied
them 'coevalness' (Fabian 1983) and future-oriented agency (Bryant and Knight
2019; Robbins 2001; Salazar et al. 2017; Strzelecka 2013). In contrast, Valentine
and Hassoun (2019: 244), harking back to an older debate on the discipline's
theoretical and methodological foundations and to a social science futurol-
ogy of the 1960s that addressed the future as something to be studied through
actors' present actions, maintain that anthropology's interest in the future is
far from novel. In so doing, the scholars recognize that human actors situate
their actions within ordering schemes comprising visions of the past and of
the future (see also Adam 2004).

Regardless of whether we frame these antecedents of present anthropologi-
cal scholarship through the temporalities of continuity or rupture, an evident
departure from these predecessors consists in a firm (though not always suc-
cessful) disengagement from the normative assumptions and modernization
agenda that informed the earlier social science futurology and its concern
with 'development planning' and promoting social change towards a future
aligned with a Western-style modernization paradigm. Sociological reflection
on future making posited a dichotomy between a 'modern', future-oriented
(industrialized) West and a tradition-bound 'rest of the world' for which a
promising future needed to be orchestrated and facilitated.

Anthropological work on the future since the 2000s also differs from the
earlier futurology in its varied conceptual approaches to and analytical per-
spectives on culturally specific and changing conceptions of futurity and of
orientations towards the future. Various authors draw on existing work on
temporalities, historicities and memory politics, to study how people's con-
ceptualizations of the future orient and shape their daily lives and struggles
(for example Cooper and Pratten 2014; Pandian 2012). This in turn has refu-
elled debate on how investigations into the future could redefine the future of
the anthropological discipline (for example Pandian 2019; Strzelecka 2013). In
making people's orientations towards the future a guiding empirical concern,
anthropologists propose complementary analytical lenses (Appadurai 2013;
Bryant and Knight 2019; Salazar et al. 2017). Appadurai conceives of the future
as a cultural horizon, which is moulded by cultural values and thus never a
neutral space. Values and perceptions, formulated at the individual level, mir-
ror collective perceptions, choices, and preferences. This imaginary frame-
work, Appadurai argues, is "shot through with affect and with sensations" that
generate "various configurations of aspiration, anticipation, and imagination",
configurations that jointly produce "the future as a specific cultural form or
horizon" (Appadurai 2013: 286f). By highlighting aspiration and anticipation
as modalities of future orientation, Appadurai prioritizes an empirical focus

on culturally variable value repertoires that inform and delimit social actors' aspirations and projections of a desirable future. Yet, according to Bryant and Knight (2019), for scholars to reclaim "the future as a central dimension of our temporality", they also need to consider the diverse modalities, directionalities, and temporalities inherent in future making. Bryant and Knight single out expectation, speculation, potentiality, hope, and destiny as modalities that, while not always clearly distinguishable from each other, need to be understood as different 'futural orientations'. Drawing on Theodore Schatzki's (2010) notion of 'vernacular timespaces', they stress historical variation and specificity of these futural orientations and their inherent affective qualities and teleologies (Bryant and Knight 2019: 12–19).

Authors also ask what historical dynamics fuel the renewed social science interest in the future (for example Appadurai 2016; Kleist and Jansen 2016; Ortner 2016; Valentine and Hassoun 2019). They disagree on whether or not the new preoccupation with the future should be read as mirroring the *zeitgeist* of the neoliberal world order, a *zeitgeist* characterized by a one-sided insistence on 'open ended' futures that are replete with possibilities of individual choice, responsibility, entrepreneurial undertaking and success.

As much as these different strands of scholarly debate have expanded our analytical perspectives on the future, they have, with few exceptions (such as Roman 2019) made little effort to discuss religious practice *as* future making. That is, rather than recognize the existence of an interstitial domain co-constituted by people's futural orientations and religious engagements, little room has been given to how the individuals or collectivities highlighting religious concerns integrate their visions of futurity into their daily mundane and eschatological aspirations and considerations. The blind spot is striking in that, for obvious reasons, practitioners of religious traditions, in Africa and elsewhere, view a connection between these two dimensions of their everyday struggles, and tie their expectations and projects of future making to religious aspirations.

How, then, have anthropological studies addressed actors' futural orientations in connection with their religious practices? My response to this question centres on a particular field of anthropological scholarship, namely investigations of Christianity in Africa.

3 Africanist Scholarship on Christianity: Religious Practice *as* Future Making?

In discussing how the future has figured in scholarship on Christianity in Africa, for the purpose of clarity, I propose to distinguish conceptually between

two understandings of futurity and the distinct temporalities of the future they imply. The conceptual distinction is relevant for discussions on religion and future making in Africa, for appreciating how scholars of Christianity address the future in their studies and how a disregard of the conceptual distinction might limit some of their insights.

The first understanding of futurity, which I call 'life-trajectory future', refers to what actors envision as a (desirable or potential) future in the here and now, and to related aspirations, such as achieving prosperity, well-being and a good reputation.

The second ('eschatological') future designates what religious actors consider the ultimate reference point of their aspirations, actions, and struggles to conform to religious prescripts, a reference point that in the Christian, Islamic and Jewish traditions is located in the afterlife. Drawing a distinction between the two notions of futurity affords a nuanced understanding of the aspirations of actors who highlight the importance of religious and ethical ideals to their everyday life (see Schulz 2012, 2020).

If at all, it is studies on millennial Christian movements in Africa that have explicitly engaged questions of futurity and temporality. The studies demonstrate that people's expectations of an eschatological future shape their efforts, individual and collective, to align their lives with religious prescripts and to follow a particular leader (Dekmejan and Wyszomirski 1972; Peires 1989; Vokes 2009). However, these relatively few case studies of millennial Christianity in colonial and postcolonial Africa do not systematically address interconnections between religion and future making, for instance by asking about actors' understandings of futurity, how they inform their religious engagements, or what tensions might emerge between immediate and eschatological concerns and aspirations.

Even if other work on Christianity in Africa rarely thematizes future making per se, there are authors who address questions of temporality and of believers' aspirations towards personal improvement and social progress. Particularly noteworthy are studies that, based on a historically contextualized account of plural African religious landscapes, address the 'why and how' (Robbins 2004: xxvii) of conversion to Christianity. Peel (1995), Jean and John Comaroff (1991, 1997), and Meyer (1999) have shown that missionary education and the acquisition of literacy offered converts important incentives for and trajectories of future making. Scholars also argued that Christian conversion entailed a 'conversion to modernity' (for example, van der Veer 1996), involving broader personal and social transformation tied to the prospect of becoming 'modern' Africans (for example, Engelke 2004; Luig 1997; Maxwell 2007; Maxwell and Lawrie 2013). Regardless of the variability of forms and degrees of

conversion, Africans' decisions to adopt elements of Christian teachings and religious practices, past and present, were and are tied to visions of possible and desirable futures and to specific temporalities that inform these visions (for example Engelke 2014). Whereas Pentecostal conceptions of a future of redemption rest on a rhetoric of radical discontinuity with past practices and social obligations (van Dijk 2000; Meyer 1999), mainline churches often envision Christian futures along a linear time line stretching seamlessly from the present to the future.

All these studies describe Christians' futural orientations as integral elements of their religious sensibilities without, however, asking how each of the two distinct understandings of futurity informs believers' daily mundane struggles, ethical and religious aspirations, and decisions to convert to Christianity. All authors *implicitly* give analytical priority to believers' immediate material and social concerns and hence to their aspirations to a 'here and now' future. Even scholars who mention that believers' secondary conversion to Pentecostal Christianity is prompted by their fear of damnation and related eschatological considerations, ultimately explain the attraction of Pentecostal churches in terms of the immediate economic advantages and prospects of upward social mobility offered by these churches (for example Marshall 2009; Ukah 2008). It is not always evident that the analytical prioritizing of the here and now future reflects actual preferences of those whose religious concerns are described. To ask anew which understanding of futurity fuels believers' actions, and to address their possibly conflicting aspirations as 'future making' could generate nuanced accounts of their self-understandings as religious subjects.

4   Future Directions

How might scholars of religion in sub-Saharan Africa draw on insights from recent scholarship on the future? And how might they, in turn, enrich this scholarship by exploring the intersections between religion and future making? Three lines of future investigation fall into place, each of which capitalizes on comparative work on the intersections between religious aspirations, temporalities and future making.

First, scholars should bring the perspectives developed for contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity to bear on other forms of lived religion, regardless of whether they pertain to Christian, Muslim, Jewish or any other religious traditions. For instance, drawing a clear distinction between the immediate, current future and an eschatological future could enrich analysis of the – possibly generation-specific – ways in which Muslims narrate their

religio-ethical aspirations and biographies. For scholars who focus on Islamic 'reform' or 'renewal' movements, considering the distinction between the two notions of futurity will elucidate how each of them informs Muslim decisions to break with established Muslim religious practices and return to allegedly more authentic interpretations. Given the religiously plural character of African settings, scholars should consider how protagonists of these different religious traditions formulate their visions of the future and ethico-religious aspirations in dialogue with and simultaneous contradistinction from each other, within and across boundaries of religious traditions.

Second, while the current anthropological 'moodswing' (Appadurai 2016; see Ortner 2016) towards the future has been productive and promising, one should not lose sight of the fact that future making involves specific constructions of the past, of continuities with or departures from the past and, in this sense, of 'historiopraxy' (Coleman 2011). Exploring religious actors' constructions of their relationship to the past should remain an overarching concern for scholarship on religion, in Africa and elsewhere. Understanding people's ethico-religious aspirations necessitates delving into their – often fraught – orientations towards the past (for example, van Dijk 1997, 2000; Meyer 1999; Prince 2007; see Appadurai 1981) *and* the future. We need to explore how each of these temporal and spatial relocations serves as a framework within which to envision collective futures.

This brings me to a third line of investigation: scholars should *explicitly* address *as* a matter of future making the temporalities involved in actors' religious engagements; and probe which one of the understandings of futurity – a here and now as opposed to an eschatological future – inform these temporalities. This will enhance scholarly understanding of how each of the envisioned futurities inform, yet also limit, actors' struggles to build a future as well as their self-understandings *as* agentive subjects. This enquiry involves consideration, first, of the different constructions of temporality involved in people's religious engagements and aspirations; and second, of the possibility that notions of temporality inform actors' future aspirations in possibly paradoxical ways. Taking up Coleman's insights on 'historiopraxy', we can show that actors' orientations towards the future involve specific forms of history making (Coleman 2011) and evolve along the imaginary movement or 'emplacement' along social, spatial and temporal axes and 'timespaces' (see Schatzki 2010). Believers conjure up specific visions of individual relational and collective futures, in relation to broader constituencies of believers 'around the globe', and by locating their individual and collective efforts within specific constructions of the relationship between past, present and future.

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Rethinking the Ethnographic Museum

Ciraj Rassool

1 Introduction

Over the past five years or so, a new official willingness has emerged in European countries to enquire into the ethics of their museum collections acquired under colonial conditions, to face up to a new era of restitution of human remains, and the possibility also of the restitution of colonial artefacts, artworks and documentation, especially those assembled within a 'context of injustice'. At present, these advances have been contained in separate enquiries within disciplines and disciplinary museums. Yet, deliberations have paid insufficient attention either to how these collections were often acquired together, during the same expeditions and often by the same collectors, or to how they were distributed thereafter between collecting institutions and disciplines, and how these disciplines were later reorganized. While it might now seem more reasonable to consider colonial collections of skulls and skeletons as being marked by violence, the time has arrived to reconsider the frameworks of preservation and stewardship that have attached themselves to all aspects of the ethnographic, including the ethnomusicological. Colonialism's violence took the form of plunder, rapaciousness and defilement of the human body through physical anthropology but it was also an unacknowledged and repressed characteristic of the ethnological.

2 Vienna and the Sounds of Violence

Among the significant collections of the Phonogram Archive of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna are audiovisual recordings by medical scientist and anthropologist Rudolf Pöch, made in Kamelpan in the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland and in Oas and Gobabis in German South West Africa in 1908 during a field expedition to the Kalahari. He recorded songs and speech, expressed mainly in Naro, with an Archiv-phonograph and an Edison phonograph, and he also photographed and filmed occasions and subjects to show hand clapping and dance movements of the feet. This was a time of significant disciplinary development and institutional formation, which brought closer unity between field collecting and scholarly research and which saw the Phonogram Archive itself formed in 1899 as the world's first sound archive

concerned with audiovisual research, documentation and collecting (Rassool 2020).

Looking back at its more than 120-year history, the Phonogram Archive is one of the most important repositories for preserving a large part of the international heritage of orally conveyed cultures before the impact of 'Western civilization'. Its main work has been to generate, collect and catalogue audiovisual research recordings from many disciplines and regions, to ensure their long-term preservation, and to make them permanently accessible. The recordings made by Pöch, which are now part of this audiovisual collection, were initially stored on copper negatives, wax moulds and galvano-plastically manufactured positive discs, as well as on cinematographic film. Between 1909 and 1913, before his appointment as the first professor of anthropology and ethnology at the University of Vienna in 1913, Pöch had worked as a research assistant at the Vienna Phonogram Archive, where he took responsibility for archiving his own collections, making revisions and additions, and working in close cooperation with Erich M. von Hornbostel of the Phonogram Archive in Berlin.

In 2003, on the occasion of the 34th Annual Conference of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) held in Pretoria, South Africa, the Academy of Sciences published CD and CD-ROM recordings made from surviving negatives of originals lost during the Second World War. This edition contained the historical material of the sound recordings, of language, shouting and music, as well as the image files that Pöch made of the original protocols. At the IASA conference, Pöch was celebrated as one of the pioneers of field sound recording. The intention behind digitization and publication was to make the early holdings of the archive "easily accessible, especially in the countries and regions of their origin" (Lechleitner 2003: 12).

Pöch's Kalahari recordings were included in the 'historical' (1899–1950) collections at the Phonogram Archive and, to underline their 'universal significance', were also incorporated into the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register. The value of these phonographic collections is that they are seen as representations of early audio recordings, in fact the oldest such recordings, or 'sound documents' (*tondokumente*), of Khoisan languages, and of the animated testimonies of the Bushmen and of their polyphonic singing (Lechleitner 2003: 7–46). Rudolf Pöch's 1908 Kalahari recordings were incorporated into an institutional and disciplinary edifice of preservation and an ideology of stewardship and permanent availability through care, digitization and scholarship under the aegis of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. This discourse of museum and archival stewardship and preservation resonated with the celebratory view of the significance of Pöch's work of recording sounds in the Kalahari.

In 2008, as part of a multi-institutional Viennese cultural project, the Austrian Research Fund financed the digital assembly of Pöch's "fragmented and almost forgotten estate". In a celebration of his stewardship and heroism, many who gathered around this project saw in Pöch a groundbreaking and pioneering media scholar noted for his phonographic, photographic and cinematographic fieldwork in New Guinea (where he had undertaken an expedition between 1901 and 1906), in the Kalahari and, still later, in prisoner of war camps during the First World War. Teschler-Nicola (2009: 347) went on to describe Pöch as "one of the last to lead multidisciplinary, scientific expeditions on a large scale", and as someone who undertook documentation through "a wide range of media that were state-of-the-art at the time." The project aimed to integrate and reconnect different media formats "scattered across different Austrian institutions".

This preservationist paradigm came unstuck when it became apparent that Rudolf Pöch's sound documentation and collecting activities in the Kalahari had taken place in a climate of heightened violence and colonial disruption in the first decade of the twentieth century. Moreover, Pöch's phonographic legacy of Kalahari recordings needed to be understood as part of the wider multidisciplinary collecting project, key components of which had been carried out unlawfully and through concealment from the authorities. Pöch's expedition conducted on behalf of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna between 1907 and 1909 occurred in the violent and disruptive transfrontier colonial landscape of the Kalahari – the borderland between Namibia, Botswana and South Africa – still in turmoil from the genocide in Namibia.

Spurred by the possibility of their disappearance and extinction, during the expedition, in addition to providing the phonographic documentation, Pöch undertook ethnological and physical anthropological research on the Bushmen, as well as botanical, zoological and geological studies. These generated a large collection of ethnographic material, cultural documentation, skeletons, skulls, corpses and body casts that came to be separated and distributed across a number of institutions in Vienna. Pöch had covered 6000 kilometres of southern Africa and, apart from the 67 phonogram recordings, 1000 metres of film and 2000 photographs that were created, the expedition generated 1500 letters, 30 parcels and 100 boxes. In these boxes and parcels were 1000 ethnographic objects, 4 rocks with historic art images and inscriptions, 80 skeletons, 150 skulls and 2 corpses (Rassool 2015).

Rudolf Pöch's Kalahari recordings need to be reassessed alongside this wider collection of ethnographic objects, stolen rock engravings, and illegally disinterred corpses, skeletons and skulls that cast doubt on the pioneering and preservationist framework for understanding his legacy. The suspicion initially arose

from research into how Pöch and his assistants acquired human remains and rock engravings, which became the subject of a legal inquiry immediately after his departure from southern Africa. As a result of this research and subsequent negotiations between the South African and Austrian governments during 2012, the remains of Klaas and Trooi Pienaar, which had entered the Academy of Sciences collection as corpses, were returned to the Northern Cape in South Africa, where they were reburied at Kuruman (Rassool 2015).

Subsequent research in South Africa and Vienna has resulted in matching the records of the illegal disinterment of the remains of three more named persons from the Kuruman area with skeletons held by the Department of Physical Anthropology at the University of Vienna. In addition, two of the stolen and illegally exported rocks, now with faded art images, have been identified in the collection of the newly rebranded World Museum. When considered against this background, the phonographic records of the African past in Austrian and German museums should not be seen as the sounds of lost or disappearing cultures. Rather, they represent the sounds of violence (Rassool 2020).

3   Ethnographic Contests

As we consider the contested nature of ethnographic objects and other forms of documentation in Austrian, German and other European museums, we also need to consider how much the world has changed since the modern museum and its fundamental features first emerged. The creation of a world after colonialism might have occurred for the most part in political terms. However, we are still deeply immersed in the epistemic struggle to change the colonial frames through which we understand societies and people. The same goes for institutions – such as museums – through which the societies and people of the world have been collected, classified and made knowable. And we all live with the legacies of colonial violence that led to the appropriation of African bodies, artworks and artefacts and that accompanied the birth of the ethnographic museum. Far from being the institution of care as proclaimed by museum discourses, we are learning just how much museums were part of the weaponry of death (Hicks 2020).

I want to suggest that the frames of the stewardship of collections for future generations are insufficient to maintain and defend the old museum. New, powerful approaches argue in favour of restitution and understand the museum as a process and as an interrogative project (Karp and Kratz 2015; Rassool 2006; Silverman 2015). These approaches need to accompany urgent programmes of restitution through which African artefacts and artworks are to

be returned. But restitution is not just the geographic reorganization of collections. It represents new possibilities for rethinking what we mean by museum. It is in these restitution claims, consultations and negotiations that the new concept of 'museum as process' will be found as a way of settling the dilemmas of the unsettled (and unsettling) objects in the modern museum of coloniality.

As I have argued before, the museum is not only an institution of modernity and ordered citizenship, but is the primary institutional form of empire and coloniality (Rassool 2015). It was made and is being remade and adapted through both sides of colonialism's history – by a rapacious and violent empire of plunder and pacification, as well as by empire as 'benevolent colonization', humanitarianism and trusteeship over people and things. This was a simultaneous expression of collecting, documenting and governing (safeguarding and preserving) things and people through appropriation and stewardship. While it has become more widely accepted that collecting human remains and conducting research in physical anthropology were part of the violence of colonialism and racism, it is important also to re-examine the humanist and caring associations of collecting and preserving material culture.

Ethnography has come to mean many things at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It is part of the discipline of anthropology, which also embraces folklore and ethnology (*volkenkunde*, *völkerkunde*, *ethnologie*), each with its own colonial and postcolonial histories, and research methods based on closely observed, detailed and long-term field-based research. While different anthropologies have undergone significant self-scrutiny and reassessment since at least the 1970s, this self-analysis has been uneven between different colonial histories, and between the academy and the museum.

In the German-speaking world, despite their shared historical methods of collecting skeletons, material culture and other forms of cultural documentation, collections were separated and spread across different museums. This is because the Germans divide anthropology into *ethnologie* and *anthropologie*, with the former denoting social and cultural anthropology and the latter physical anthropology. As a consequence, human remains and evidence of the material culture from the colonial era have artificially occupied separate spheres of debate and policy formulation in Germany.

In Germany and Switzerland, ethnographic museums have begun to rebrand themselves as museums of world cultures, while remaining museums of the arts and material cultures of the societies of former colonial empire. Others, such as the Tropenmuseum in the Netherlands (incorporated in 2014 into a bigger structure of a National Museum of World Cultures), had chosen to turn its museum methods on itself, making its own histories of collecting the focus of its 2008 museum renovation project (Faber et al. 2007; Van Dartel 2010). In

France, the shift at the Musée du quai Branly, founded in 2006, was to elevate non-Western works of primitive art and *arts premiers* into masterpieces, aestheticized by placing dramatic spotlights on individual objects in a generally dark environment as a "homage to peoples who [had] suffered conquest". This museum's fine art displays, "remarkable examples of … masks and statues from Africa and Oceania", among other things, sought to confirm "the equal dignity of the cultures of the world" (Riding 2006).

In October 2010, in its new location in Cologne, the renovated Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum reopened with a new exhibition called *People in their Worlds*. Perhaps the major feature and programmatic concept of the new museum was the attempt to reflect on colonialism and racism as an important context for understanding the museum's history and the biography of its collection. Equally important was a significant effort to reflect on the knowledge producing effects of every aspect of museum work from collecting, classification, conservation, collections management and display. Notwithstanding these important moves, the exhibition was marked by a sense of contested authorship, between curators and designers, where the creation of stage-managed spaces of scenographic exhibitionary settings saw the 'narrative dramaturgy' of design being dominated by a design company. This served to displace any effort to enquire epistemically into colonial legacies of collecting and knowledge making (Rassool 2014).

The Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt adopted an interrogative method of working with its collection through having artists living and working in the museum, engaging with artworks and artefacts from the collection, interpreting them and intervening in their biographies through creative work. As part of the process of exhibition-making, museum spaces were turned into laboratories of engagement and debate, with artists, curators, scholars and lawyers engaging in interrogation, interpretation and exchange. These proceedings of a museum of process were a way of helping to shape the museum's meanings. In refusing to abide by the logic of the ethnographic, the Weltkulturen Museum began to position itself as a postethnographic museum, a museum that enquires into what the appropriate museologies would look like after colonialism (Deliss and Mutumba 2014).

These ethnographic meanings have travelled and continue to travel together, between the academy and museum, between research and collecting, publication and exhibition. Between the 1960s and 1980s, major reassessments took place in scholarship on African and other societies of the work of the disciplines of anthropology and history in producing knowledge about African societies, as well as of the disciplinary division between them. While the rise of African nationalism and independence movements on the African

continent were important impulses in the growth of African history, anthropology underwent a period of self-assessment in an attempt to turn its back on colonial legacies. These disciplinary reassessments were uneven between different societies and colonial histories, between former colonizing societies that had faced African national liberation struggles and those that had not, between the academy and the museum and between different parts of the former colonized world.

The major challenge is to shift from an understanding of colonialism as time and place and as a formal system of rule to an appreciation of coloniality as an epistemology, as a politics of knowledge. This would enable a much wider understanding of coloniality as embedded in deep structures of knowledge, in the character and shape of disciplines in the museum and the university. Colonialism would then be appreciated as more than merely a topic of history, as was the approach in the exhibition on German colonialism held in 2016 at the German Historical Museum in Berlin, notwithstanding how powerful this exhibition was. German museums and universities have continued to be marked by coloniality in peculiar ways through the persistence of nineteenth-century disciplinary systems and classificatory divisions.

As ethnographic museums in Cologne, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Hamburg and elsewhere have been undergoing processes of renovation, this has sometimes seen an openness to rethinking the work of the museum itself. Some ethnographic museums have laid emphasis on provenance research on their artefacts and artworks from colonial contexts, and on partnerships with and loans to museums in source societies. These approaches have tended to emphasize the entangled histories between former colonized societies and their former colonizers (Thomas 1991), as well as methods of co-curatorship and object sharing (Schorch and McCarthy 2019). This constituted a neocolonial embellishment upon the assertion by European museums in the early 2000s that they were universal museums that preserved collections on behalf of humanity.

Such emphasis on 'entanglement' might as well represent the perpetuation of neocolonialism. In reaction, following the report by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy to French president Emmanuel Macron (Sarr and Savoy 2018), we are witnessing a growing commitment to the restitution of African artworks and artefacts. Some curators in German ethnographic museums, for instance, have expressed support for restitution, while curators in small ethnographic museums in Britain (such as the Horniman and Pitt Rivers), have stressed the *necessity* for restitution, especially in the light of how central museum collecting was to the project of colonial pacification in the late nineteenth century (Hicks 2020).

Perhaps Berlin has been the setting for the most significant contests over collections of colonial human remains, the ethics of colonial collections, and the persistence of colonial urban traces. Partly because of political pressure from German and African activists, museums in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany have already embarked on projects to return African human remains, sometimes victims of colonial violence, or corpses or skeletons illegally removed from graves. This commitment started with returns to Namibia and is set to continue with returns to Rwanda, as well as other African societies that Germany had colonized such as Tanzania and Togo. And yet, German museums still need to face the implications of the fact that in many cases the scientists who had collected these remains, at the same time assembled material culture and documentation (film, images, sound recordings) as part of multidisciplinary expeditions. These collections had become separated from each other into separate disciplines and museums, and possibly also into contexts of injustice and liberal humanism. The time has indeed come for these to be considered together, with human remains of missing persons, and with artefacts also being, in some ways, missing ancestors. The time has come to depart from the paradigm of liberal humanism.

Notwithstanding the shifting climate of museum debates in Europe, with increased acknowledgement of violence and growing willingness to conduct restitution work, the cultural authorities in Berlin have pressed ahead with the formation of the Humboldt Forum. The latter brings together collections of the Dahlem Ethnological Museum with those of Asian art. However, in drawing on a seemingly unproblematic nineteenth-century intellectual history, the Humboldt Forum is set to perpetuate the colonial idea of grouping together the material culture and art of those described as 'non-European'. The Humboldt Forum is also a project of belatedness, of being part of reimagining Berlin as a major European city, and of reasserting Germany's position as western.

4   The Postethnographic Museum

The transformation of museums may involve research into the ethics of acquisition, through provenance research, as well as an enquiry into the relationship between collections and living, historical cultures, including one's own: it also involves a deep, critical, historical investigation into the knowledge systems surrounding objects and collections, in an approach that questions colonial categories. The work of Hamilton and Leibhammer (2017) has shown how important this is for 'untribing the archive' in the case of South African collections and documentalities. We are also learning about the extent to which

museum labels and documentation have concealed the violence of the acquisition of many artefacts and artworks.

The postethnographic museum points to the possibility that the modern museum as the world has known it, which emerged as part of the making of the modern person, and coincided with the colonization of the world, has outlived its value. This postethnographic museum can only be the outcome of a sustained engagement with the basic museum work of collecting, conservation, exhibition and education in ways that enter into battle with the colonial concepts of race and ethnic group that seem naturalized and frozen. In general, it is critical to think about the connections between the administration of people and the administration of artefacts in the museum, and simultaneously to rethink society as well as the museum.

In considering how the museum is changing we need to understand how old collecting museums have been challenging themselves and how new, interrogative museums, understood as process have begun to expand museum horizons to embrace the downtrodden, the oppressed and exploited of the world whose experiences might previously have been confined and contained through colonial ethnography and even a denial of coevalness. This focus on local and deep histories of oppression, displacement and survival, while guarding against the triumphalism of nationalism, needs to consider the ways it offers new understandings of what museums are as well as the possibilities for new museologies for the twenty-first century.

Posing questions about the museum should not merely be about expunging its rapacious histories, and shoring up the vestiges of a remaining benevolence, framed as preservation and stewardship. The most progressive edge of such reformed, benevolent museum is the 'contact zone' (Clifford 1997, based on Pratt 1991), as produced through co-curatorship and of science and 'indigeneity' working together. This model of a reformed museum retained the classificatory order and hierarchy of empire, but relied on greater participation by 'source communities', with the museum placed on a more 'ethical' footing. Rather, it requires questions posed about the syndrome of preservation itself.

This age of an ethical engagement with human subjects and of a new ethics of collecting has seen the emergence of new programmes to prevent museums benefiting from the illicit traffic in artefacts and a significant move by many museums of culture and nature to 'cleanse' themselves of their human remains and other 'sensitive collections', deemed to have been acquired unethically or in a context of injustice. Sometimes these changes have taken the form of a partial 'cleansing' through merely moving the store of human remains or sensitive collections, and creating cultural centres jointly managed by science and the indigenous. Such processes of reform might have created more socially

responsive and ethically grounded museums, but they have left the empire of the museum intact.

Transforming the museum means embarking on projects of restitution, not just as return but also as a methodology of rethinking what we mean by museum. It also entails understanding the history of the museum as the locus of empire and coloniality in all its forms, and to embark on the difficult work of interrogating its collecting histories and epistemologies. The museum needs to be reconceptualized outside evolutionary frames and the impulses of preservation and atonement. The postcolonial museum may indeed require the inauguration of the postmuseum itself.

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The Future of Health in Sub-Saharan Africa: Is There a Path to Longer and Healthier Lives for All?

Richard G. Wamai and Hugh C. Shirley

1   Introduction

"This will be Africa's century," so declared a *Financial Times* article of 30 January 2020 (Jackson 2020). This perspective is a departure over the last decade from representation of a "hopeless continent" in the 13 March 2000 issue of *The Economist*. The 'Africa optimism' is pegged on population and economic trajectories of a continent that is simultaneously old and young. It is the origin of modern humans (López et al. 2016; Wells 2002) but its countries have been independent from colonial rule for just a few tremendously volatile decades (Meredith 2011). Comprising diverse cultural populations with unique opportunities to study diseases impacting on humankind (Braun and Hammonds 2008; Tishkoff and Williams 2002), Africa's long and short history presents a conundrum in understanding the health of the continent. The history of disease and future of health in Africa is shaped profoundly, not only by its environment and socio-cultural demographics, but also by its contact with the outside world.

Many diseases, including cholera, tuberculosis and syphilis, were introduced to Africa by Europeans and other foreign colonists and merchants (Brynildsrud et al. 2018; Kiple 1993; Patterson 1993; Weill et al. 2017). Globalization has further dispersed populations and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, yellow fever, and trypanosomiasis intra- and intercontinentally (Fetter 1993; Kagaayi and Serwadda 2016; Latham 1993; Lyons 1992; Timberg and Halperin 2012; Worobey et al. 2008). Before the onset of colonialism, indicators of well-being, such as height and nutrition, were better in Africa than in most of the world. For example, population height – which is linked to nutrition and longevity – was greater among Africans on average than nearly all other populations, including those of western Europe during the 1870s and increased only marginally relative to other regions until the mid-twentieth century, thereafter decreasing or remaining stagnant (Baten and Blum 2014; NCD-RisC 2016).

Post-independence, Africa has lagged behind other world regions in all major health outcomes despite tremendous national and international efforts over the last six decades (Easterly 2006; GBD Collaborators 2018; World Bank 2007, 2008). Furthermore, after a decade of notable progress during the 1960s

to early 1970s, key health indicators, notably longevity, in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) deteriorated for the rest of the twentieth century (Jamison et al. 2006; Mwabu 1998; Zijdeman and de Silva 2014) only to begin improving in the last decade (World Bank 2011). Still, SSA had the smallest increase in life expectancy since 1950 at just over forty years and remained the lowest at 63.9 years in 2017 (GBD Collaborators 2018). Thus, the probability of death between birth and age five (0–5) and during the productive working years (15–65) remains greatest in SSA, which additionally carries the greatest burden for maternal and child mortality, as well as nutritional and the numerous vaccine-preventable communicable diseases (GBD Collaborators 2018).

Currently home to one in eight people in the world, SSA will carry one in three by the end of the century (UNDESA 2019a). The health of the global population will not improve in this century without improvements to health in Africa. What are the probable future scenarios of health in Africa? Disease ecologies in SSA were changing long before the prehistoric out-of-Africa migration (López et al. 2016; Tishkoff et al. 2009), before and during the slave trade and colonization era (Curtin 1961, 1990; Kiple 1993; Patterson 1993), and during the current post-independence era. This present era is marked by often-harmful structural adjustment reforms (Fetter 1993; Gilson and Mills 1995; Korte et al. 1992; Leighton 1995, 1996; World Bank 1994), the spread of new infections – primarily HIV/AIDS (Kagaayi and Serwadda 2016; Latham 1993; Worobey et al. 2008) – and the onset of the global aid industry (Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009; Ramalingam 2013). Using a literature review and the authors' perspectives gained through engagement in research and observation in the subcontinent, in this chapter we examine and reflect on current trends and forecasts of health in SSA for the twenty-first century with event horizons for the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNDESA 2015) and the Africa Union (AU) 2063 Agenda (African Union Commission 2015).

2   Current state and Causes of Population Health in Sub-Saharan Africa

Comprising 47 World Health Organization (WHO)-Afro countries, SSA has a population of 1.07 billion people with a median age of 18 years (UNDESA 2019a). Of the 47 least developed countries in the world, 32 are in this region (UNDESA 2019b). While global poverty declined between 1990 and 2015, the number of people living below $1.90 per day in SSA has increased from 278 to 413 million, leaving most of the global poor concentrated in this region (World Bank 2018). Furthermore, while SSA's overall poverty rate stands at 41 percent

(World Bank 2018), these countries have the most overlapping deprivations. Many countries experience severe multidimensional poverty (UNPD 2019: 69) owing to environmental factors and dysfunctional nation-state institutions historically dependent on an intractable postcolonial international aid regime (Collier and Gunning 1999; Easterly 2006; Wamai 2003). It is within this context that the state of population health in Africa must be understood.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize key health indicators for SSA with other world regions shown for comparison. A primary measure of survival and health system performance is life expectancy or longevity (van Raalte et al. 2018). Another key measure of population health used to estimate and compare the societal disease burden is the disability adjusted life year (DALY), which quantifies the loss of healthy, productive years of life due to disease (Murray and Lopez 2017; Salomon et al. 2012; World Bank 1993). Tables 1A and 1B show the size of the population, life expectancy, DALYs and healthy life expectancy (HALE) estimates for each World Health Organization (WHO) world region and in each country in SSA for 2016 and 2017.

TABLE 1A   Estimates of total population, life expectancy of both sexes at birth in 2016, total disability-adjusted life years in 2016, and healthy adjusted life expectancy in the six WHO regions

World Health Organization regions	Population in 2016 (000s)[a]	Life expectancy of both sexes at birth in 2016[a]	Total Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in 2016 (000s)[b]	Healthy Adjusted Life Expectancy (HALE) from birth in 2016[a]
African region	1020	61.2	598,615	53.8
European region	916	77.5	300,416	68.4
Eastern Mediterranean region	664	69.1	251,108	60.51
Region of the Americas	992	76.8	286,872	66.45
South-East Asia region	1948	69.5	712,522	60.59
Western Pacific region	1890	76.9	510,444	68.04

TABLE 1B   Estimates of total population, life expectancy of both sexes at birth in 2016, total disability-adjusted life years in 2016, and healthy adjusted life expectancy in 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa region

Sub-Saharan Africa	Population in 2017 (000s)[c]	Life expectancy of both sexes at birth in 2016	Total Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in 2016 (000s)	Healthy Adjusted Life Expectancy (HALE) from birth in 2016[a]
Angola	29817	62.6	16720.3	55.8
Benin	11175	61.1	7063.1	53.5
Botswana	2205	66.1	938.6	57.5
Burkina Faso	19193	60.3	11597.9	52.9
Burundi	10827	60.1	6727.3	52.6
Cameroon	24566	58.1	15809.6	51.1
Cape Verde	537	73.2	138.6	64.5
Central African Rep	4596	53	4171.1	44.9
Chad	15017	54.3	13000	47.2
Comoros	814	63.9	387.4	56.6
Congo	5111	64.3	2480.7	56.7
Cote d'Ivoire	24437	54.6	8297	48.3
Dem Rep of the Congo	81399	60.5	54895	52.5
Djibouti	944	63.8	451.4	56.6
Equatorial Guinea	1262	59.6	772.3	53.8
Eritrea	5069	65	2110.9	57.4
Ethiopia	106400	65.5	46507.4	57.5
Gabon	2065	66.4	875.5	58.7
Gambia	2214	61.9	1093	54.4
Ghana	29121	63.4	13443.2	56.4
Guinea	12068	59.8	8039.1	52.2
Guinea-Bissau	1828	59.8	1143.4	51.7
Kenya	50221	66.7	19507.3	58.9
Lesotho	2091	52.9	1755.8	46.6
Liberia	4702	62.9	2513.8	54.5
Madagascar	25571	66.1	10239.2	58.3
Malawi	17670	64.2	8344.9	56.2
Mali	18512	58	13677.6	50.7
Mauritania	4283	63.9	2193.5	56.4
Mauritius	1265	74.8	413.5	65.8

TABLE 1B   Estimates of total population, life expectancy of both sexes at birth in 2016, total disability-adjusted life years in 2016, and healthy adjusted life expectancy in 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa region (*cont.*)

Sub-Saharan Africa	Population in 2017 (000s)[c]	Life expectancy of both sexes at birth in 2016	Total Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in 2016 (000s)	Healthy Adjusted Life Expectancy (HALE) from birth in 2016[a]
Mozambique	28649	60.1	17888.9	52.2
Namibia	2403	63.7	1129.1	55.9
Niger	21602	59.8	14971.7	52.5
Nigeria	190873	55.2	144976.6	48.9
Rwanda	11981	68	4407.2	59.9
Sao Tome & Principe	207	68.7	70.4	60.7
Senegal	15419	66.8	6274.5	58.8
Seychelles	96	73.3	31.1	65.7
Sierra Leone	7488	53.1	6078.3	47.6
Somalia	14589	55.4	12176.6	50
South Africa	57000	63.6	27581.5	55.7
South Sudan	10911	58.6	8403.4	50.6
Sudan	40813	65.1	19381.5	55.7
Swaziland (Eswatini)	1125	57.7	830.6	50.2
Togo	54664	60.6	4331.8	53.9
Uganda	7698	62.5	4331.8	54.9
U. Rep of Tanzania	41162	63.9	27327.7	56.5
Zambia	16854	62.3	8883.4	54.3
Zimbabwe	14237	61.4	8437.3	54.4

a   *World health statistics 2018: Monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals.* 2018. Geneva: WHO.

b   *Global health estimates 2016: Disease burden by cause, age, sex, by country and by region, 2000–2016.* 2018. Geneva: WHO.

c   *World development indicators: Population, total.* 2018. Washington: The World Bank. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.

These data show that Africa had the lowest life expectancy at 61.2 years in 2016, which rose slightly to 63.9 years in 2017 (GBD Collaborators 2018). A person born in Africa can expect to live an average of 16.3 fewer years than one born in the longest living population in the European region. At 7.4 years, the

African region has the smallest HALE gap, meaning that the loss of health in this region is largely from premature mortality. By population size, SSA bears the greatest burden of disease with 22 per cent of global DALYs. A few variations by country are notable. For instance, the life expectancies in Mauritius (74.8), the Seychelles (73.3) and Cape Verde (73.2) are the highest in SSA, whereas Lesotho (52.9), Central African Republic (53) and Sierra Leone (53.1) have the lowest. These data show a startling reality: the average person in Mauritius can expect to live 21.9 years longer than the average person in Lesotho demonstrating health disparities between and within countries in SSA (Achoki et al. 2019; Leuenberger et al. 2019; Umuhoza and Ataguba 2018).

TABLE 2A　Estimates on HIV prevalence, malaria deaths, TB cases per 100,000 population, NTD related deaths per 100,000 population, MMR, IMR and U5MR in the six WHO regions

WHO regions	HIV (Prevalence in 2019)[a]	Malaria (deaths in 2018)[b]	TB (cases per 100,000 population in 2018)[c]	NTDs (Death per 100,000 population in 2017)[d]	MMR (deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017)[e]	IMR (deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018)[f]	U5MR (deaths per 1000 live births in 2018)[f]
Africa	25,700,000	73276	231	2.841448052	542	52	76
Europe	2,500,000	0	28	0.058380436	13	7	9
Eastern Mediterranean	400,000	3320	115	0.758439315	164	37	47
Region of the Americas	3,500,000	337	29	1.169212984	57	12	14
South-East Asia	3,800,000	164	220	2.30756315	152	28	34
Western Pacific	1,900,000	243	96	0.339356199	41	10	12

Note: NTD = neglected tropical diseases; MMR = maternal mortality rate; IMR = infant mortality rate; U5MR = under five mortality rate.

TABLE 2B   Estimates on HIV prevalence, malaria deaths, TB cases per 100,000 population, NTD related
deaths per 100,000 population, MMR, IMR and U5MR in 49 countries in the SSA region

Countries of SSA	HIV (prevalence in 2018)[g]	Malaria (deaths in 2018)[b]	TB (cases per 100,000 population in 2018)[c]	NTDs (deaths per 100,000 population in 2017)[d]	MMR (deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017)[e]	IMR (deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018)[f]	U5MR (deaths per 1000 live births – 2018)[f]
Angola	330,000	13425	355	5.230275054	241	51.59	77
Benin	73000	7081	56	3.718408862	397	60.54	93
Botswana	370,000	2	275	0.361528477	144	29.99	36
Burkina Faso	96,000	12725	48	4.74227131	320	49.01	76
Burundi	82,000	5118	111	2.934575596	548	40.99	58
Cameroon	540,000	11192	186	3.069301502	529	50.56	76
Cape Verde	2,400	0	46	0.719316946	58	16.67	19
Central African Rep	110,000	3654	540	5.830002483	829	84.46	116
Chad	120,000	8693	142	6.612979802	1140	71.42	119
Comoros	200	39	35	0.198655522	273	51.25	67
Congo	89,000	1961	375	2.09038986	378	36.19	50
Cote d'Ivoire	460,000	9297	142	3.838804416	617	59.4	81
Democratic Republic of the Congo	450,000	44615	321	3.62630164	473	68.18	88
Djibouti	8,800	0	260	0.844386026	248	49.81	59
Equatorial Guinea	62,000	659	201	0.677898612	301	62.62	85
Eritrea	18,000	196	89	2.738347362	480	31.35	42
Ethiopia	690,000	4757	151	2.867944691	401	39.15	55
Gabon	53,000	528	525	3.371953473	252	32.7	45
Gambia	26,000	688	174	2.953198307	597	39.03	58
Ghana	330,000	11070	148	2.56643939	308	34.91	48
Guinea	120,000	8203	176	7.946960609	576	64.93	101
Guinea-Bissau	44,000	680	361	4.764004258	667	54.02	81
Kenya	1,600,000	12416	292	1.079705478	510	30.62	41
Lesotho	340,000	-	611	0.268095729	544	65.67	81

TABLE 2B   Estimates on HIV prevalence, malaria deaths, TB cases per 100,000 population, NTD related
            deaths per 100,000 population, MMR, IMR and U5MR in 49 countries in the SSA region (*cont.*)

Countries of SSA	HIV (prevalence in 2018)[g]	Malaria (deaths in 2018)[b]	TB (cases per 100,000 population in 2018)[c]	NTDs (deaths per 100,000 population in 2017)[d]	MMR (deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017)[e]	IMR (deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018)[f]	U5MR (deaths per 1000 live births – 2018)[f]
Liberia	39,000	2006	308	3.593378283	661	53.48	71
Madagascar	39,000	5350	233	1.428913755	335	38.18	54
Malawi	1,000,000	6478	181	3.284742834	634	35.32	50
Mali	150,000	11848	53	5.013265644	562	61.6	98
Mauritania	5,600	1397	93	1.950891615	766	51.54	76
Mauritius	13,000	–	13	0.143546612	61	13.56	16
Mozambique	2,200,000	14426	551	1.45195146	289	54.02	73
Namibia	200,000	132	524	0.432922918	195	28.97	40
Niger	36,000	17084	87	6.398866503	509	47.98	84
Nigeria	1,900,000	95844	219	4.005967667	917	75.67	120
Rwanda	220,000	3244	59	0.953221603	248	27.02	35
Sao Tome & Principe	–	0	124	3.446335137	130	24.43	31
Senegal	42,000	4480	118	3.225229903	315	31.83	44
Seychelles		–	18	0.907969214	53	12.44	14
Sierra Leone	70,000	6564	298	3.893193646	1120	78.48	105
Somalia	11,000	–	262	6.02875983	829	76.57	122
South Africa	7,700,000	69	520	0.082710233	119	28.49	34
South Sudan	190,000	5356	146	16.61871735	1150	63.69	99
Sudan	59,000	–	71	1.819378128	295	42.14	60
Swaziland (Eswatini)	210,000	0	329	0.646712873	437	43.02	54
Togo	110,000	5132	36	2.333569107	396	47.36	70
Uganda	1,400,000	13203	200	2.706733709	375	33.81	46
United Republic of Tanzania	1,600,000	21550	253	1.432464108	524	37.61	53

TABLE 2B   Estimates on HIV prevalence, malaria deaths, TB cases per 100,000 population, NTD related
             deaths per 100,000 population, MMR, IMR and U5MR in 49 countries in the SSA region (*cont.*)

Countries of SSA	HIV (prevalence in 2018)[g]	Malaria (deaths in 2018)[b]	TB (cases per 100,000 population in 2018)[c]	NTDs (deaths per 100,000 population in 2017)[d]	MMR (deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017)[e]	IMR (deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018)[f]	U5MR (deaths per 1000 live births – 2018)[f]
Zambia	1,200,000	7519	346	1.478407421	213	40.45	58
Zimbabwe	1,300,000	1484	210	1.183912497	458	33.9	46

a   *Web Annex 1. Key data at a glance. In: Progress report on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted*
      infections 2019. Accountability for the global health sector strategies, 2016–2021. 2019, Geneva: World
      Health Organization.

b   *World malaria report 2019.* 2019, Geneva: WHO.

c   *Global tuberculosis report 2019.* 2019, Geneva: WHO.

d   *Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. Global burden of disease study.* 2017, Seattle:
      Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

e   *Global Health Observatory, maternal mortality ration (per 100000 live births) dataset.* 2017, Geneva:
      WHO.

f   *'Levels and trends in child mortality: Estimates developed by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for*
      Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME)'. 2019, New York: UNICEF.

g   *HIV Country Profiles.* 2018 [3/31/2020].

Tables 2A and 2B illustrate the current situation for key diseases and health
measures. SSA can be characterized by overlapping geographical distributions
of three markers, namely high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, neglected tropical
diseases (NTDs) and being overweight as a key risk for non-communicable
diseases (NCDs) (Olesen and Parker 2012). Consequently, high disease burdens
in western Africa are attributed to NTDs and NCDs. HIV and NCDs dominate
in southern Africa, while eastern and central Africa have all three markers.
Increasing injuries related to urbanization and motorization, as well as con-
tinued regional conflicts, reveal a continent rife with a triple burden of dis-
ease (IHME et al. 2013). Underscoring these are pervasive mental health and
substance abuse disorders that remain neglected (Charlson et al. 2014; Patel et

al. 2018). SSA, however, remains the only region in the world where infectious diseases are the leading cause of death (GBD Collaborators 2018).

Comprising viral, parasitic and bacterial infections, 50 per cent of global deaths and DALYs due to infectious diseases are in SSA (Boutayeb 2010a; Tambo et al. 2018). For most of these, SSA carries an even heavier burden: HIV/AIDS (67.5 per cent of all 37.9 million people living with HIV, 67.5 per cent of new infections and 61 per cent of deaths in 2018 are in SSA) (UNAIDS 2019), and malaria (94 per cent and 95 per cent of global cases and deaths respectively in 2018) (WHO 2019a). For TB, the leading cause of infectious disease deaths globally, 24 per cent of cases in 2018 were in SSA as were 84 per cent of all TB-related deaths among people with HIV (WHO 2019b). Some NTDs like trypanosomiasis and schistosomiasis are overwhelmingly found in SSA (Boutayeb 2010b; Hotez and Kamath 2009). Furthermore, of nearly twenty infectious agents that contribute to NCDs (Olesen and Parker 2012) such as cervical cancer, the incidence and mortality in SSA is the highest globally (Bray et al. 2018).

Looking at population health, outcomes for women and children is of primary importance. As the WHO's 2005 seminal report on these groups articulated, "the healthy future of society depends on the health of the children of today and their mothers, who are guardians of that future" (WHO 2005: 1). Indicators of the health of women and children are, therefore, necessary to understand the performance of any health and political system. In 2015, SSA experienced 66.3 per cent (201,000) of 532,000 global maternal deaths (Alkema et al. 2016). These figures are an improvement since 1990, but as shown in Table 2A, at 542 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, SSA is more than three times higher than the next highest WHO region. Despite improvements, infants and children under-five (U5) years of age continue to die at higher rates in SSA than in any other world region. Of 5.3 million U5 global deaths, 54 per cent in 2018 and 31 per cent in 1990 were in SSA (UN IGME 2019). As shown in Table 2B, all six countries with U5 deaths above 100 per live birth are now in SSA, with Somalia (122) leading the pack followed by Nigeria (120).

The high burden of disease, poor population health outcomes and inequities are due to high levels of poverty, weak health systems, poor governance, historical colonialism and foreign aid policies. At the proximal level, high maternal deaths result from a failure to provide women with accessible quality health services. Many childhood deaths are attributable to low levels of immunization and childhood growth failure which is associated with nutrition and health access (for example, Alkema et al. 2016; Kinyoki et al. 2020; WHO 2017). Public perception of mental illness has historically stigmatized patients with mental health disorders and their families, who have often carried the burden of care (Gureje and Alem 2000; Patel et al. 2018). At the historical level, health inequities across and within countries such as those between Lesotho,

Mauritius, Nigeria and South Africa reflect health and development policies rooted in colonial and apartheid systems with fragmented investments, weak institutions, impoverishment of large populations and the environmental, structural and organizational context of disease such as HIV/AIDS (Coovadia et al. 2009; Hirschmann 1987; Ityavyar 1987; Latham 1993; Meredith 2011; Robinson 2011; Timberg and Halperin 2012).

However, a disenfranchising colonial experience is not an excuse for poor performance. Deliberately large welfare-state health investments in postcolonial Mauritius explain the positive outcomes in that country (Hirschmann 1987; Nundoochan et al. 2019; Seekings 2011). This is evidence that, with the right policies and governance, countries can achieve health improvements. Unfortunately, corruption and poor governance have exacerbated poverty for decades and exacted a toll on health development across SSA (Meredith 2011; Pring and Vrushi 2019; Wamai 2003), as funds allocated to improve the health infrastructure have been siphoned off for personal enrichment (Garcia 2019) through complex socio-structural systems (Vian 2008). For instance, models predict that corruption indirectly accounts for 140,000 child deaths annually (Hanf et al. 2011).

Given the well-established links between the burden of disease, longevity and economic productivity (Mwabu 1998; World Bank 1993; Zijdeman and de Silva 2014), a high disease burden clearly depresses Africa's economic and human development potential (Fenollar and Mediannikov 2018; Zeufack et al. 2020). Efforts to reform healthcare systems with ostensibly anti-corruption structural adjustments in the post-cold war era of the early 1990s led to reduced foreign funding resulting in decreased national health budgets and worsening outcomes (Fetter 1993; Gilson and Mills 1995; Korte et al. 1992; Loewenson 1993; World Bank 1993). Since then, 25 years of developmentalism in the era of millennium development goals (MDGs) (1990–2015) vastly expanded the mainly foreign health investments, which led to improvements but fell short of meeting the set goals (Easterly 2009; English et al. 2015). These factors will continue to shape the subcontinent in the current era of SDGs (2016–2030) and beyond.

3   The Next Decades: The Coming Epidemiological Transition

Two decades into the twenty-first century, the state of population health in SSA is the baggage the subcontinent carries into the rest of this century. So, what is the outlook for the remaining eight decades, and beyond? Given the role of globalization in the dispersal of diseases, its expansion in Africa will continue to facilitate the bidirectional spread of emerging diseases. As Patterson (1993: 451) observes, Africa is an "epidemiological unit closely linked to the rest

of the world". *Severe acute respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus 2* (SARS-CoV-2), which causes COVID-19, is the most poignant example in our time of the impact of globalization on the spread of diseases. As in the 1918/19 global influenza pandemic that killed 2 per cent of Africa's inhabitants (Patterson and Pyle 1983), COVID-19, which emerged from China, was introduced into Africa from outside with the first case reported in Egypt on 14 February 2020 (Africa CDC 2020). Therefore, the first lesson is that the future of health in Africa in this century cannot be understood in isolation from the rest of the world.

Numerous studies have projected scenarios driven by demographic and epidemiological transitions for health outcomes and disease burdens in SSA in the decades ahead (Mathers and Loncar 2006). In 2017, Agyepong et al. (2017) published a major Lancet Commission on the future of health in Africa. Authors reviewed the state and projections to 2030 of health data and provided recommendations for policy makers including addressing corruption and research innovation. Foreman et al. (2018) forecasted life expectancy, years of life lost, and all-cause and cause-specific mortality for 250 causes of death in 195 countries and territories for 2016 to 2040, and found that the average SSA life expectancy will reach 71 years but will remain below all other regions. While childhood and maternal deaths decline, those due to road traffic accidents and NCDs are expected to increase (Agyepong et al. 2017; Foreman et al. 2018; Mathers and Loncar 2006). With economic growth, rapid urbanization, motorization and poor safety standards, road traffic accidents, already causing more deaths and injuries in SSA than anywhere else, will continue to increase (WHO 2018a). It will take 160 years before a pregnant woman in SSA has the same probability of giving birth to a living child as women in high-income countries (Lawn et al. 2016). Childhood growth failure is one of the biggest predictors of future population health. If current trends continue, the SDG target to end malnutrition by 2030 will not be met (Osgood-Zimmerman et al. 2018), and future generations will be affected by early childhood malnutrition, which contributes to cardiovascular disease and diabetes (Hult et al. 2010).

In the near term, specific disease targets – for example, reducing malaria deaths by 90 per cent by 2030 (WHO 2019a) and tuberculosis deaths by 95 per cent by 2035 (WHO 2019b) – are unlikely to be met. Likewise, while SSA has made significant progress towards meeting the global UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals – meaning that 95 per cent of those who are positive are aware of their HIV status, 95 per cent of these are on treatment and 95 per cent of these are virally suppressed – by 2030 (UNAIDS 2015a), achievements vary by country, age, gender and socio-demographic status (Green et al. 2020). Achieving these treatment targets will reduce the incidence of HIV, for example in Eswatini to 0.46 per 100 person-years by 2050 (Akullian et al. 2020). However, to set SSA on

the path towards HIV elimination will require a combination of interventions targeted by profiles of population risk and geography (Eisinger et al. 2019; Khademi et al. 2015; McGillen et al. 2016; UNAIDS 2015b). Accelerated efforts are needed to meet the SDG targets of 70 women dying per 100,000 live births and 25 deaths per 1000 live births (Alkema et al. 2016; UN IGME 2019).

Access to education and contraception for women is the panacea to slow down fertility rates (Local Burden of Disease Educational Attainment Collaborators 2020) and together with critical vaccines targeting the mother–child dyad (Kollmann et al. 2020; Lund et al. 2015; Munoz and Jamieson 2019; Velaphi et al. 2019; Vono et al. 2019), will make an impact on future maternal and childhood deaths. These targets and programmes are largely dependent on foreign funding. For instance, in 2015, \$18 billion was spent on HIV/AIDS in SSA of which more than 60 per cent was from donors such as the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Global Fund for HIV/TB and Malaria and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Micah et al. 2019; Wamai 2014). Such high dependency means that many African lives are literally in the hands of global politics in the USA and Europe. A sharp example is where, following the election of President Trump, proposed reductions in the US President's Malaria Initiative, which provides one-fifth of global malaria financing, could have resulted in 290,000 malaria deaths between 2017 and 2020 (Winskill et al. 2017). Furthermore, with huge gaps in funding required to meet the set targets and decreasing donor financing it is essential that governments and donors improve efficient resource utilization and accountability (Agyepong et al. 2017; Kavanagh et al. 2019).

5   Infectious Diseases Dominate the First Half of the Twenty-First Century

In 2006, Rweyemamu, from Tanzania, and his two Ugandan colleagues published a report for the UK Office of Science and Innovation's Foresight programme called *Infectious diseases: preparing for the future Africa* (Rweyemamu et al. 2006). Using a disease risk-driver framework developed in consultation with key African experts and forecasting to the present decade, the report depicts a dire and complex picture of the impact of and future threats posed by infectious diseases, most notably the combined effects on societies of the 'one health' – humans, animals and the natural environment – dimension. Given that 12 of the 15 most contagious animal diseases are found in Africa (Rweyemamu et al. 2006: 5), and that 22 of the 25 most vulnerable countries to infectious diseases are in Africa, the other three being Afghanistan, Haiti and

Yemen (Moore et al. 2016), human behaviour, including demographic changes, migration and consumption patterns, will present the highest disease risk this century (Fenollar and Mediannikov 2018; Rweyemamu et al. 2006).

Diseases associated with poverty, such as those caused by poor household air, childhood nutritional deficiencies, and unsafe water and sanitation, along with limited access to healthcare services, which contributes to maternal and child deaths, will remain the leading causes of years of life lost in 2040 (Foreman et al. 2018). If current trends continue, nearly nine out of ten people in extreme poverty will be in SSA in 2030 (UNDP 2019), further accentuating the many infectious diseases of poverty, especially the NTDS (WHO 2012). More than any other disease HIV/AIDS casts a persistent shadow on SSA. Labelled a 'time bomb' (Rweyemamu et al. 2006: 4), HIV/AIDS prevents SSA countries with high prevalence from achieving significant mortality declines (National Research Council 2006; Norheim et al. 2015), so it will continue to affect health and development. For example, even with higher social development indices than other SSA countries, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana have lower longevity outcomes because of the high rates of HIV/AIDS (GBD Collaborators 2018). Further, HIV will drive the burden of disease by comprising the greatest cause of DALYs in 2030 under the 2002 baseline (Mathers and Loncar 2006). As treatment expands and infections persist one model predicts that 70 million people could be living with HIV by 2050 in SSA (Institute of Medicine 2011).

The value of predicting patterns of infectious disease spread in metapopulations such as SSA in the twenty-first century has been made abundantly clear by the ongoing outbreak of the new COVID-19 pandemic (Achoki et al. 2020; Balcan and Vespignani 2011; Davis et al. 2020). The sustained threat posed by the pandemic underscores a need for strong public health systems, both for COVID-19 and emerging diseases yet unknown. In the short term, early modelling predicted that COVID-19 cases and deaths in SSA would reach 16 million and 34,000 respectively by the end of June 2020 (Achoki et al. 2020). Another model projects 122.8 million cases and 300,000 deaths in the best-case scenario by the end of 2020 and 1.4 per cent contraction in economic growth (Economic Commission for Africa 2020). While no models are accurate and should be adjusted as new data become available, the long-term effects of this pandemic on vaccine-preventable infectious diseases due to the discontinuation of mass immunization campaigns will likely be immense if observations from the 2014/15 West African Ebola epidemic hold true (Parpia et al. 2016; Roberts 2020). COVID-19 notwithstanding, SSA faced 96 disease outbreaks in 36 of 47 countries in 2018 (Mboussou et al. 2019) and currently has 48 high-level single or multi-country infectious disease events requiring an international response (WHO 2020). This calls for critical investments in infectious

disease surveillance and coordination of health emergencies across the countries (Nkengasong 2019) and preparedness for *Disease X* (Simpson et al. 2020).

6   Non-Communicable Diseases Will Become the Leading Causes of Death After 2050

In 2017, NCDs accounted for 73 per cent of 55.9 million global deaths (GBD Collaborators 2018). An epidemiological transition has been occurring in SSA, especially since the 1990s (IHME et al. 2013; National Research Council 2006, 2012). The contribution of NCDs to all SSA DALYs rose by 67 per cent between 1990 and 2017 (Gouda et al. 2019). We predict that at some point this century the overall disease burden from NCDs will overtake infectious diseases, although that will be after the year 2040 (Foreman et al. 2018). For some countries such as Kenya and South Africa, this transition is modelled to happen in the current decade (Osetinsky et al. 2019a), while hospitalization data in countries like Uganda show growing rates of NCDs and declining infectious diseases (Kalyesubula et al. 2019). Major NCDs facing SSA include cancers, hypertension, diabetes and heart disease (Farmer et al. 2010; NCD-RisC 2016; Stewart et al. 2017; van de Vijver et al. 2013).

By 2030 one study estimates that cancer cases and deaths in SSA will rise from 681,000 and 512,000 in 2008 to 1.27 million and 0.97 million respectively (Sylla and Wild 2012). A projected 90 per cent of 443,000 annual cervical cancer deaths will be in SSA by 2030 (Mboumba Bouassa et al. 2017). The hypertensive population is projected to increase to 126 million by 2025 from 75 million in 2008 (Twagirumukiza et al. 2011). Projections for 2035 and 2045 predict diabetes in SSA will increase 156 per cent from 2017, the greatest increase globally (Cho et al. 2018; Guariguata et al. 2014). Hypertension will increase to 46 per cent from 40 per cent in KwaZulu-Natal and to 35 per cent from 29 per cent in rural western Kenya between 2018 and 2028 (Osetinsky et al. 2019a). Even as most people with diabetes and hypertension on the continent still remain undiagnosed, the spread of the NCDs will vary across countries (Gouda et al. 2019; Yaya et al. 2018).

In addition, mental health and substance use disorders in SSA are expected to increase as a share of the total burden of disease within the coming decades, rising from 19 million years lost to disability to 45 million by mid-century (Charlson et al. 2014; Gouda et al. 2019). Significant gaps between current and needed mental health workers could widen without adequate investment in training and awareness programmes for mental health disorders given that the per capita mental health workforce in Africa stands at 0.9 per 100,000 and

only 27 per cent of countries have allocated resources to meet national mental health policies, both far below other world regions (WHO 2018b). Therefore, strengthening mental health policies (Gureje and Alem 2000; Patel et al. 2018), task shifting (Galárraga et al. 2017) and leveraging community health workers (Chibanda 2017; Collins et al. 2016) could be a means of establishing affordable health interventions that bridge a treatment gap estimated to be over 90 per cent for some mental and substance use disorders (Agyepong et al. 2017).

At the cross-section of infectious diseases and NCDs is the growing burden and neglect of surgically treatable diseases. As highlighted in the 2015 Lancet Commission on Global Surgery, expanding access to safe surgical care is an essential piece of a national health package (Meara et al. 2015). An estimated 28–32 per cent of the global burden of disease can be attributed to surgically treatable conditions (Meara et al. 2015), a category that encompasses NCDs, infectious diseases, and injuries. Despite being a cost-effective mechanism to improve livelihoods, upwards of 95 per cent of people living in SSA do not have reliable, affordable surgical care (Alkire et al. 2015). Thus, SSA governments must allocate funds for surgery, anaesthesia and obstetric care and capacity building into national healthcare budgets to fill gaps and meet SDG targets. While regionwide efforts remain forthcoming, progress has been made on this front. For example, Ethiopia's Saving Lives through Safe Surgery (SaLTS) initiative, has achieved significant strides in improving surgical access and training a robust surgical workforce (Burssa et al. 2017; Federal Ministry of Health of Ethiopia 2017).

As SSA's demographic transition progresses in the coming decades, so must health policies and health systems. The share of people over the age of 60 will have doubled by 2030 and will continue to grow at an annual rate of about 4 per cent (compared with 1 per cent for developed countries) over the period of fifty years (National Research Council 2006). This epidemiological transition is being driven by multiple factors, including urbanization, lifestyle changes, ageing and fertility declines (Saghir and Santoro 2018; Sliwa 2016; UNDESA 2019a, 2019b) all of which can be managed through appropriate policies and learning. In response to the looming NCD threat, especially later in the twenty-first century, SSA countries must strengthen surveillance and health systems (Gouda et al. 2019; Mudie et al. 2019; Nkengasong 2019; Wamai et al. 2018) and adopt a model in which interventions are integrated across disease groups and health system levels, which cuts costs and saves lives (Kasaie et al. 2020; Nugent et al. 2018; Osetinsky et al. 2019b). As one example, programmes to control HIV such as male circumcision are modelled to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer by 28 per cent and mortality by 26 per cent by the year 2070 in Tanzania (Hall et al. 2020).

7   Discussions and Conclusions

The future of health in SSA is precarious yet promising. This could be the century for Africa. Without question, because of the global impact of COVID-19, the pandemic presents the biggest immediate and direct threat to SSA in 2020, demanding a coordinated global, regional and national response (African Union 2020; WHO 2020; Zeufack et al. 2020). The pandemic poses further indirect threats in synergy with outbreaks of other raging infectious diseases (Mboussou et al. 2019; WHO 2020). Beyond COVID-19, however, growing economies will allow countries to increase financing for health and expand opportunities. Having increased by the largest global margins in SSA between 2005 and 2015, life expectancy at birth (UNDP 2019: 40) in the sub-region could catch up with the rest of the world by the end of the century. Unfortunately, the subregion will remain vulnerable to the impact of climate change – a crisis to which it contributes little – and while epidemiological and demographic transitions present new threats, global pandemics will afflict ever larger populations.

Furthermore, the region remains tied to global frameworks, such as SDGs, over which it has little control due to its ensuing reliance on global financing. Even as these SDGs have been dubbed "senseless, dreamy, garbled" by a development economist (Easterly 2015) and as "fairy tales dressed in the bureaucratese of intergovernmental narcissism with the robes of multilateral paralysis, and poisoned by the acid of nation-state failure" by the editor of the *Lancet* (Horton 2014), the entire development community seems to believe that these hold an unquestionable promise for a better world. However, given that the health of Africans has suffered in the hands of the structural adjustments of the past, and been unfairly set to fail to meet the MDGs (Easterly 2009), there is indeed cause for pessimism if the new development agenda is framed within a paradigm of foreign aid steeped in colonial history and dysfunctional postcolonial corruption (Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009; Ramalingam 2013). A persistent global funding gap for pandemics strongly affecting the SSA already reaches $23–35 billion (Kavanagh et al. 2019). Foreign donors perpetuate colonial relationships by imposing political, cultural, and religious morals and demands on recipient countries (Garrett 2007). Furthermore, well-funded NGOs and foreign governments siphon the local health workforce, leading to Africa's great brain drain, and hamstringing health infrastructure across the continent (Darkwa 2018; Garrett 2007). As such, business as usual foreign donor largesse is not going to save the subcontinent.

Mitigating these futures is only going to be possible through deliberate political investments and African-grown and led models that adjust rather

than bend to the international health regime. At the same time, health improvements in Africa will not be achieved without robust health systems (Agyepong et al. 2017; Gros 2015; Moeti 2017; Prince and Marsland 2014), and these show critical vulnerabilities in the context of pandemics (Gilbert et al. 2020). Furthermore, SSA will increasingly need to refashion its health systems to meet changing patterns of disease, including expanding the availability of healthcare workers and ensuring effective and high quality universal health coverage (UHC) (Kruk et al. 2018; Moeti 2017; Nkengasong 2019). Recruiting an army of millions of community health workers (CHWs) is a low-hanging fruit, given the existing experience of the many countries across which they provide numerous primary healthcare services and are highly cost-effective (McCord et al. 2013; Singh and Sachs 2013; UNAIDS 2017). Due to their frontline role in contact-tracing in past pandemic diseases (Miller et al. 2018; Siekmans et al. 2017), CHWs might just be the panacea for UHC and in combating the current COVID-19 and future disease outbreaks.

The third edition of the Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries (DCP3) seminal reports provided a framework for population health covering service delivery packages, policies, and platforms for essential and expanded services to 2030 (Jamison et al. 2017). The policies fall into five broad areas – information and communication, taxes and subsidies, regulation, mass screening and treatment of diseases, and engineering (for example, towards a safer road traffic infrastructure). In the context of SSA, essential services include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, cancer, surgery, and mental health. To match these demands, countries that rely largely on high out-of-pocket and donor financing will need to bear an increasing burden in the decades approaching 2040 and 2050 (Global Burden of Disease Health Financing Collaborator Network 2018; Chang et al. 2019). However, historically, at just 2 per cent, the average health spending per person in SSA, even by the better-off countries (National Research Council 2012), is pitifully inadequate with heavy foreign reliance. Despite increases between 1995 and 2015, wide variations occur in government per capita spending – for example, $651 in Namibia versus $4 in the Central African Republic (Micah et al. 2019). In 2040, per capita spending would still be the lowest in the world at $175 versus $7508 in high income countries (Global Burden of Disease Health Financing Collaborator Network 2018).

For far too long, heavy reliance on foreign funding creates power imbalances in health policy ownership with African governments often hamstrung (Gautier and Ridde 2017; Kiendrébéogo and Meessen 2019). Although donor funding has improved lives and plugs some budgetary shortfalls, African governments can move towards autonomy by meeting the 2001 Abuja Declaration of investing 15 per cent of government spending on health (WHO 2011). But this is not enough.

Micah et al. (2019) show that besides increased spending, governments must also combat corruption. With better domestic health governance, use of law in strengthening health systems, protecting population health, and human rights, increased domestic funding would allow countries to rely less on donor funding, achieve UHC and the SDGs and build an 'African Century' (Agyepong et al. 2017; Gostin et al. 2019). Overall, interventions to improve health in this century must be targeted towards population needs and infrastructural demands and be illuminated by the equity policies set out initially in the first Africa Health Strategy of 2007 and other landmark commitments including 'The Africa We Want' Agenda 2063, the SDGs and the Africa Health Strategy 2015–2030 (Africa Union Department of Social Affairs 2016). While these strategies offer a path to the future for Africa, the wider path for the 'African Century' will be shaped by the resilience and optimism of its populations.

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Living

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Introduction to Part 2

To paraphrase the late Binyavanga Wainaina: why do animals in Africa bear names, but people don't? Much indeed has been said and written about 'nature' in Africa (to paraphrase an – unfortunately anonymous – colleague: nature is where Bambi lives); the same is true for the (macro-)economic determinants of life on the continent. Obviously, these circumstances are beyond any individual's control (or even beyond the power of individual states); nevertheless, they are the consequence of decisions made in the past, and will have an enormous bearing on those of tomorrow.

The five contributions in this second section adopt a helicopter view on some of the ecological and economic challenges that confront Africa. In the first chapter, Ian Scoones turns his attention to what he refers to as convivial development, as an alternative to dominant approaches that depart from a crisis narrative and that invariably reach for solutions aimed at preserving the status quo, or securing an uncertain situation. He argues that Africa is, in many regards, ahead of the rest of the world and that a truly decolonial approach should be based on learning *from*.

Next is Michael Bollig's contribution. He asks the pertinent question for whom conservation efforts are intended as he explores the often contradictory approaches that have recently emerged. His starting point is that the current ecological crisis is also a social crisis.

Bollig's remark that ecology is intertwined with the global economy is further corroborated by Eric Kioko, who scrutinizes the mechanisms and impact of the illegal exploitation of Africa's flora – a less mediatized and often disregarded environmental crime that, in terms of revenue, leaves the illegal trade in wildlife far behind and fuels a network of loggers, smugglers, transporters and buyers that spans the globe.

In the fourth contribution Thomas Widlok and Ndapewa Fenny Nakanyete, too, take a stance against the prevailing assumption that Africa 'lags behind'. In many regards, including ecology management and policy, Africa is foreshadowing the future. Crucial to their argument is the importance they attach to time-framing and its impact on the process of decision-making.

Finally, Romie Nghitevelekwa discusses the dynamics of land commodification and contends that land reform is the most obvious way to reduce inequality and prevent further dispossession of, among others, communal lands. Focusing on Namibia, hers is the case of the 'new' scramble for the last African frontiers by foreign investors, and she raises important questions on the effects and sustainability of market penetration.

A New Politics of Uncertainty: Towards Convivial Development in Africa

Ian Scoones

1 Rethinking African Development

Africa continues to face multiple uncertainties – climate chaos, food insecurity, migration flows, economic volatility, conflict, epidemic disease outbreaks, fragile governance and more. Indeed, it is these issues that dominate popular academic and media coverage of Africa. It's all doom and gloom, disaster and catastrophe. The solution, so the narrative goes, is economic and governance 'reform', aiming to 'stabilize' economies and societies and so control uncertainty. Such interventions are, in turn, combined with 'emergency' humanitarian interventions to deal with the worst. Aid and investment packages therefore aim to control, to manage uncertainties, to reinstate a stable *status quo*, while emergency responses override normal routines, imposing an often securitized solution, blotting out local initiative and agency (Yanguas 2018).

In this short essay, I ask if there are alternatives to this dominant approach to aid and development in Africa that foster what I call 'convivial development', one that fulsomely embraces uncertainty, ambiguity and even ignorance (Scoones 2019; Scoones and Stirling 2020; Stirling 2003). Following Ivan Illich (1973), I take convivial development to mean an approach that engages with context, facilitates inclusion of multiple knowledges and skills, fosters a caring approach to people and environments centred on social justice and, as a result, necessarily embraces complexity and uncertainty.

I make the case that, in many respects, Africa is ahead of the game in constructing such alternatives from the margins, and that the Global North, also confronting the multiple uncertainties of a turbulent world – most recently and dramatically the COVID-19 pandemic – should start learning from Africa, reversing the flow of development thinking and practice.

2 Development as Control: The Failures of 'Progressive Neoliberalism'

The dominant control-oriented narrative of development for Africa has resulted in numerous projects and programmes, most of which fail. Whether

the disastrous structural adjustment reforms imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1980s and 1990s, or the more modulated 'good governance' interventions that followed, they were all premised on an assumption of control, and the creation of stable, liberal economies and democracies in the image of the West. While China offers a different model through its brave new Belt and Road Initiative, the story is the same, although the politics are different.

Yet, the assumptions are flawed and the dangerous fallacies of control are exposed, perhaps especially in African contexts. Simplistic technocratic impositions fall apart, and the ideal-type models of Western (or Chinese) development fail, even when ameliorative additions, such as 'participation', are bolted on. The colonization project of aid-led development, whether emanating from the North or South, despite the power, influence and resources, has been shown to be seriously lacking (Antunes de Oliveira 2019).

Even in the Global North, the old order, constructed around various forms of 'progressive neoliberalism' (Fraser 2017) and pushed through aid programmes to Africa, is being challenged. Climate change, for example, means that economic systems and a commitment to growth at all costs, have to be overhauled (Kallis and March 2015). The financial crash has meant that approaches to financialization have to be fundamentally re-thought (Ellis et al. 2014). The COVID-19 pandemic requires a radical rethinking of disease preparedness and response (Leach et al. 2020). And the rise of authoritarian populist movements, and the sustained attack on liberal values, is resulting in a refashioning of once democratic regimes and liberal economies (Scoones et al. 2018).

Facing up to uncertainty is at the heart of all these challenges. One response is to reinforce the technocratic order, find ever more elaborate technological and governance responses to keep control in the face of rising uncertainty. Whether geo-engineering or climate-smart cities to confront climate chaos, or tighter regulation of banks and finance houses to offset a future economic meltdown, such approaches all rely on a politics of control, which frequently resorts to securitized, sometimes even militarized, responses in the face of unfolding crises and emergencies (Adey et al. 2015).

The increasingly apocalyptic language of threat, breakdown and collapse fuels anxiety, fear and isolationism. It also creates space for regressive forces, which, in the absence of alternatives, feed off a sense of helplessness, offering order and control through increasing authoritarianism. A populist politics of blame emerges – accusing 'foreigners' and 'migrants' and attacking a remote 'elite' on behalf of 'the people'. Regressive, nationalist versions of authoritarian populism create a powerful imaginary of a past when uncertainty and fear did not impinge. And such narratives can have a religious inflection, one

that deploys religious beliefs to generate certainties, whether evangelical Christianity, Hindu nationalism or fundamentalist Islam.

The failures of neoliberal styles of development are littered across Africa. The 'Africa rising' slogan was short-lived, as the fragilities and dependencies of economies and polities were exposed (Taylor 2016). The flood of investment that was to follow the post-crash 'land rush' never materialized, and the painful struggles against corporate violence continue across the region, whether around biofuel plantations in Ghana or geothermal plants and oil fields in Kenya (Hall et al. 2015; Lind et al. 2020). And, at the same time, the inroads made by extremism of all sorts are undermining whole regions, alongside the fabric of emerging democracies. Whether this is violent insurgency in the Sahel, Somalia or northern Mozambique or the attack on gay rights in Uganda, for example, the same attempts at control and creating an imagined, regulated order are seen.

3   Embracing Uncertainty: What are the Alternatives?

So what are the alternatives? How can embracing uncertainty generate emancipatory futures and alternative imaginaries of development in Africa? As the multiple failures of neoliberal capitalism are tormenting the West (at the same time as even China's seemingly endless growth path is faltering), can Africa lead the way in prefiguring a future where a different approach is realized, one that does not fall into the fallacy of control, but encourages a more adaptive, responsive, reflexive approach, redefining what we mean by development, progress and modernity?

While arguing against the idea that somehow eliminating uncertainty provides the magic bullet for development, I want to make the case that alternatives that genuinely embrace uncertainty are already happening, but they have been suppressed by standardized, regimented, control-oriented development approaches. Where can we find such alternative development approaches? Certainly, not in most of the aid agencies, NGOs, foundations, technical departments and government offices that have presided over failed development for the last half-century or so. In various ways, dressed up in diverse buzzwords, these have all become trapped in the expert-led, control paradigm of the past, which has fostered the failed neoliberal development project and ignored or supressed uncertainty.

But, alternatives can be found, usually on the margins, perhaps among the wreckage of a failed aid project or investment programme. Here, in highly dynamic, informal settings, improvisation, practised performance,

experimentation and continuous reflexive adaptation are a necessity, often in parallel 'twilight' institutions (Lund 2007). For, this is what daily life is like, and has to be. Uncertainty is necessarily embedded in the everyday practices on the margins, of those living in precarity. It is therefore these vernacular understandings, rooted in long-standing collaborative practices and diverse knowledge and cultures, which fully embrace responses to uncertainty.

This is not a call to reify and recapture a static form of 'indigenous' knowledge and culture, as such settings are always changing, always uncertain (Agrawal 1995). Nor are simplistic versions of 'participation' the solution (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Local knowledges and cultures are deployed not for timeless rituals, but to cope with and respond to change. This generates innovation, sometimes social, sometimes technical, but always co-produced in context (Smith et al. 2014), not as some form of instrumental 'participatory development'. These are the places of 'real economies', created and practised through social investments, and rooted in place (de Alcantara 1992). These are also the sites where new forms of politics emerge, necessarily linked to collective action, mutual support and community solidarity; because, to respond to radical everyday uncertainties, people must work together (Bollier 2014; Nightingale 2019).

These flexible, informal, collective and rooted responses, I argue, cumulatively result in the remaking of the economy, the state and society from below through new forms of conviviality, and so require a radical rethinking of development.

4   Responding to Uncertainty, Reinventing Development: Three Examples

What might this entail? Three short examples show how, in response to the uncertainties of food insecurity, drought and infectious disease outbreaks, a more hopeful, flexible and convivial alternative is already being generated.

4.1   *Food Insecurity in Zimbabwe*
My first example focuses on how farmers innovate to confront the challenges of food insecurity in Zimbabwe. For sure, they make use of existing technologies – improved seeds, chemical fertilizers, irrigation equipment and so on – but these have to be adjusted for use in their own settings. Standard, control-oriented development suggests a package, designed remotely by experts, sometimes restricted cut 'in form' by proprietary technologies. But, in practice, this may be inappropriate: the soils are different, the labour is unavailable and

the crop does not suit local tastes. What happens instead is the deployment of knowledges, practices and a mix of technologies and techniques as part of a farming 'performance', where new solutions to contextual problems are sought (Flachs and Richards 2018).

Research from Zimbabwe (and elsewhere) points to the potentials of local open-source seed breeding and sharing (Scoones 1996), the use of cheap, small pumps for garden irrigation (Scoones et al. 2019), practices of soil fertility management and soil and water conservation that suit the particular setting (Motsi et al. 2004; Scoones 2015) and so on. Uncertainties of climate, plant genetics, soil fertility response, as well as labour and social organization, have to be responded to as part of the unfolding performance. Improvisation, experimentation, adaptation and flexibility are the keywords.

This, of course, is what has always happened in African farming systems, but how can such approaches become central to research and extension systems, as well as technology and innovation projects, without falling into the trap of narrow, technocratic research and single package approaches? Responding to uncertainty requires extended menus, widened choice and an encouragement of diverse performances to create hybrid alternatives, a form of 'bricolage' (Cleaver 2012). The role of development actors – for example agricultural researchers and extension workers – is to extend the menu and learn from the performances, be part of a continuous loop of widely-shared collective learning (Scoones and Thompson 2009).

4.2 *Pastoralists' Responses to Drought in East Africa*

My second example highlights mobility as central to pastoralists' responses to uncertainty in dryland East Africa. Transhumant movements have for centuries ensured that grazing is found, even in the face of highly variable rainfall (Krätli and Schareika 2010; Scoones 1994). Major drought events may require specific innovations – finding out where grazing and water is, negotiating with neighbours, moving to new areas. New technologies, such as mobile phones, linked in turn to weather satellites via the Internet, can facilitate such movements, but the basic principles still apply. Mobility is vital to ensure a reliable system in the face of uncertainty (Roe 2020; Roe et al. 1998). Moving requires strong social institutions, linking across kin groups and clans, and allowing collective work – including, for example, scouting out areas, striking grazing contracts and managing herding labour (Turner and Schlecht 2019). Uncertainties are best not faced alone, and collectivities have to be formed, sometimes quite rapidly, to respond. Strong bonds, deep, shared understandings and functioning institutions are all essential components that assure mobility and successful resource management (Nori 2019; Schnegg 2018).

Many have long predicted the end of mobile pastoralism, arguing for a more 'modern', settled, controlled approach, but sedentary living cannot cope with high variability, and so, even if classic transhumance is constrained, new forms of mobility are invented. In some cases, where rangelands have been enclosed and privatized, then pastoralists no longer move animals, but must move fodder and water, using the same principles (Catley et al. 2013). In our 'liquid times' (cf. Bauman 2013), mobile lives and livelihoods are central, yet a control-oriented stance often establishes borders and boundaries, controlling movement as something undesirable. The sedentary view advocates stability, order and fixity, but such features undermine responses to uncertainty (Scott 2017). Learning lessons from pastoralists about how movement is managed – through diverse knowledges, practices and technologies – and the processes of innovation that underpin them may help overturn the sedentary view of development, and allow us all to embrace uncertainty, whether in respect of climate change, volatile markets or fragile institutional and political systems (Scoones 2019).

4.3   *Responding to Ebola in West Africa*

My third example focuses on outbreaks of infectious diseases. These can suddenly appear, and may cause huge mortalities if uncontrolled. The Ebola outbreaks in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are examples. The conventional approach to infectious disease control is to trace the source, isolate infected people and areas and administer drugs and vaccines. It is usually a top-down response, led by medical professionals, sometimes reinforced by security personnel. The trouble is it does not always work.

In the case of Ebola in West Africa, for example, local responses to the disease – through controlling movements, changing burial practices and so on – were crucial in turning the situation around (Richards 2016; Wilkinson et al. 2017). Indeed, a medicalized, securitized response often makes matters worse, for the fear that the emergency response generates makes people reluctant to report cases, so they avoid treatment centres, even if desperately ill. Distrust, rumour and misinformation multiply. Instead, in Sierra Leone it was people's own 'cultural logics' – practical knowledge of how to deal with uncertainty – that were central, as were collective, village-level responses, driven by local institutions (Leach and Hewlett 2010).

Uncertainties affect different people in contrasting ways: class, gender, age, occupation, location all matter (Dzingirai et al. 2017). Only through working together and understanding social difference was Ebola confronted. It involved linking insights from different knowledge and belief systems; it meant taking embedded experience and emotion, not just technical data, seriously and it

required developing collective, local institutional responses, not parachuted from outside but built from within. Through this hard-won experience, an alternative approach to infectious disease management can be envisaged. It is one that recognizes that the current approach, and many of the existing organizations and sources of expertise, is clearly not fit for purpose, as the world has learned so tragically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, it is those living with disease and being challenged by uncertainties on a daily basis that must take the lead.

5   Confronting Uncertainty: Principles of Convivial Development

Across these examples, a number of principles can be identified. Responding to uncertainties usually requires flexible, adaptive responses, not fixed, standardized packages. Experiences of uncertainty will differ depending on who or where you are, making situated perspectives and diverse knowledges essential. Differentiated actions always need to be responsive to social difference, cultural beliefs and lived experiences. Building the solidarities necessary for collective responses is vital, and this requires strong, rooted institutions, effective local leadership and the autonomy to create new solutions. Innovation, improvisation and creativity are key, and these emerge through flexible performances involving multiple actors, and no predefined script. Therefore, sharing, extending and multiplying such innovations as responses to uncertainty are centrally what development needs to be about, suggesting new roles for experts, state agencies and development projects.

    This in turn means rejecting the 'we know best' stance of mainstream development, decolonizing the process and encouraging emergent, grounded, creative solutions. These principles, learnt from those at the margins – in these cases southern African farmers, mobile East African pastoralists and West African villagers confronting Ebola – make up, in the words of Ivan Illich (1973), the varied 'tools for conviviality'. Thus, convivial development – one that is responsible, social, shared and led by a political community, not experts or managers – is an approach that truly embraces uncertainty – outside the mainstream, in the margins and already being practised across Africa.

    This positive vision eschews the hype of 'Africa rising', but focuses on the real solutions being generated for the current, universal dilemmas of development, North and South. Rather than repeating the failures of technocratic development, perhaps we all should turn our gaze elsewhere, and seek out the principles of convivial development on the ground, ones that genuinely embrace uncertainty, and generate a refashioned version of modernity and progress for Africa and the world.

Acknowledgements

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Twenty-First Century Conservation in Africa: Contemporary Dilemmas, Future Challenges

Michael Bollig

> Africa has been at the receiving end of the monikers of others, from the pejorative 'dark' continent of the 19th century to be labelled more recently, first, as 'hopeless' and then, a decade later, as 'rising' by The Economist. It's high time for Africa to carve out its own epithet. The Conservation Continent is a positive option for many good reasons.
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> DESALEGN ET AL. 2020

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1 Introduction

African wildlife and wilderness landscapes play an outsized role in global schemes for biodiversity protection and adaptation to climate change. If terrestrial protected areas are expanded worldwide, as is emphatically demanded by many contemporary commentators on the current crises, a major part of this expansion will occur – and indeed is already taking place – on the African continent. Is Africa on its way to becoming the 'conservation continent', as the introductory quote by Desalegn et al. (2020) suggests?

A few brief points must suffice to illustrate the contemporary social-ecological crisis. A World Bank communication estimates that climate change alone will result in the loss of over half of African bird and mammal species by 2100.[1] Habitat loss and landscape fragmentation due to agricultural intensification, and the expansion of agricultural activities conditioned by growing population numbers, is an important driver for biodiversity loss (Perrings and Halkos 2015) and biological annihilation (Ceballos et al. 2017). Rivers have been progressively impounded for hydroelectric use, causing large-scale ecological changes in aquatic biodiversity (Mahe et al. 2018). Rapid deforestation linked to agricultural encroachment, and increasing commercial logging, is

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1 https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/02/14/biodiversity.

significant in many African countries. The explosion of invasive species is displacing indigenous animal and plant species in all biomes across the continent (Seebens et al. 2020; UNEP 2016). The rapid growth of agro-industrial estates is a further driving force for habitat change (Batterbury and Ndi 2018; Mulubrhan 2015). Violent conflicts in many contexts have contributed to habitat destruction, biodiversity decline, and species extinction (Brito et al. 2018; de Merode et al. 2007).

So much for the doom scenario! There is another view on African nature that conveys hope and inspiration for a more convivial form of multispecies existence: more than half the world's unconverted arable land lies in Africa, indicating broad prospects for both food production and conservation (UNEP 2016: 37). In the early twenty-first century, about 4.28 million square kilometres, or 14.2 per cent of the continent's terrestrial surface, were demarcated as biodiversity preserves (cf. Europe 3.18 million square kilometres, or 11.4 per cent). Across the continent, more than 8448 protected areas, including about 1100 national parks (of which 36 have been enshrined as World Heritage sites) have increased the chances of survival for many species, while significantly altering human–environment relations. In a number of places, particularly in southern Africa, increases in wildlife populations and attempts to refaunate landscapes are readily observable (see Stoldt et al. 2020 on northeastern Namibia). The expansion of protected areas is spectacular if we consider the percentage of land under protection in single African countries – in Namibia 38 per cent, Botswana 29 per cent, Zimbabwe 27 per cent, Zambia 41 per cent, and Tanzania 38 per cent (all figures UNEP-WCMC 2020).

It is highly likely that the percentage of protected areas will grow further: many states worldwide, and most African states, have signed the Nagoya Protocol and its Aichi targets stipulating that 17 per cent of all terrestrial systems should be protected by 2020 (https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets) – apparently many African signatories reached that target well before the intended date. Some visions go far beyond what has been agreed upon in the Aichi Protocol. The widely circulated Half Earth Initiative (Wilson 2016) argues that we will only be able to halt species extinction effectively if we set aside about half of the Earth's surface for protection. Baillie and Zhang (2018) suggest that the Convention on Biological Diversity should stipulate that 30 per cent of ocean and terrestrial systems should be protected by 2030, and 50 per cent by 2050. They conclude that "anything less will likely result in a major extinction crisis and jeopardize the health and well-being of future generations" (Baillie and Zhang 2018: 1051). Dinerstein et al. (2019) promote a Global Deal for Nature and combine it with planning promulgated by the Paris Climate Agreement. They argue that, to achieve the Paris agreement goal to stay below 1.5°C warming,

30 per cent of the Earth will need to be formally protected and an additional 20 per cent designated as climate stabilization areas by 2030. The maps in Dinerstein et al. (2019) show that Africa will be crucial to such efforts of global environmental planning.

There are very different visions about how these goals can be accomplished. While neo-protectionists argue for an expansion of land exclusively held in preservation, neo-conservationists argue for an integration of human land use and conservation (see Büscher and Fletcher (2020) for an excellent critical summary of both trajectories). Neo-protectionists emphasize that only a significant reduction of land use will at least slow down current rates of species extinction (Wilson 2016). They are prepared to embrace economic losses (mainly in the biodiversity hot spots of the world) and argue that nature needs to be saved from the vagaries of capitalist accounting. In contrast, Kareiva et al. (2012) argue that such "protected areas will remain islands of 'pristine nature' in a sea of profound human transformations to the landscape" and that integrative and patchy working landscapes of conservation are thus the best option (Kremen and Merenlender 2018). Advocates of the working landscapes approach argue that the integration of global commodity chains geared towards sustainable land use open new perspectives for conservation.

Both directions are gaining momentum in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Parks into which people recently migrated have been refurbished for example in Chad and Zimbabwe and rendered into new fortresses of conservation. Surveillance is stepped up and, in many cases, militarized (Duffy et al. 2019). At the same time, efforts to establish working conservation landscapes in numerous community-based projects increase with enormous international efforts focused on buffer zones around protected areas, including the corridors connecting them.

2   National Parks: Emergence, Stabilization and Critique of the 'Fortress' Paradigm

Game reserves have been founded in sub-Saharan Africa since the beginning of the twentieth century (Anderson and Grove 1986). MacKenzie (1988: 261–77) has sketched the transition from hunting reserves to national parks since the 1930s, emphasizing a fundamental shift in perspective: while hunting reserves were established by proclamation or ministerial decree, and could be deproclaimed at any time, national parks were established in perpetuity and were based on fully-fledged legislation. Accordingly, park management

was separated from other aspects of government administration – sometimes a state within the state, with its own territory, laws, and administration. National parks were meant for tourism and, from the outset, were thought to be self-financing (MacKenzie 1988: 264). Accordingly, they were fitted with infrastructure, roads, lodges, and camp grounds – human-made and planned wildernesses suitable for consumption. For an excellent case study, see Carruthers (1995) on South Africa's Kruger National Park. While early on, indigenous communities, foragers, and pastoralists were permitted within national parks after the 1950s wildlife conservation and human land use were perceived as incompatible. This resulted in further dislocations, and the removal of entire communities from these emergent fortresses of conservation. For example, see Dieckmann (2007) on the removal of the Haiǁom San from Etosha National Park in Namibia, and Reid (2012) on the removal of Maasai from conservation areas in Tanzania and Kenya.

There is an enormous amount of literature on the malign social consequences of 'fortress conservation' (Brockington 2002). Poverty, marginalization, and exposure to human–wildlife conflict are commonplace in the buffer zones around national parks. Brockington and Igoe (2006) analysed 250 reports on relocations from 180 conservation areas, 60 of them from southern and eastern Africa. They show that forced relocations, for example, in sub-Saharan Africa, climaxed in the 1960s and 1970s, namely, during the first two decades of independence for many African countries (Brockington and Igoe 2006: 440). The fortress conservation approach remained unquestioned for several decades, promising international tourism and global attention. The crises of national parks in many African countries in the 1980s and 1990s – weak governance, negligible economic returns from tourism, poaching, often connected to violent conflict and economic demise (Lewis 1996) – led to a reconsideration of protected-area politics across the continent.

3   Privatization and Globalization of Protected Areas

Private donors have invested extensively in African national parks in recent years. Adams (2019) reports that Mozambique's Gorongoza Park experienced more than a 700 per cent increase in its wildlife population from a decade ago, after the foundation of US American philanthropist Gregory Carr spent nearly US$ 60 million on park management and on socio-economic development in surrounding buffer zones since 2008. Carr's organization received tenure of the park from the Mozambiquan government for a number of decades. Gorongoza is not a singular case: philanthropic engagement in African parks

is frequent and certainly increasing, as Ramutsindela et al. (2011) and Spierenburg and Wels (2010) have shown.

Another model of organizational reform for protected area governance has been developed by African Parks, a highly specialized NGO that organizes park management on behalf of national authorities and is backed with massive international funding. Today, African Parks has a portfolio of fifteen parks in nine African countries. For these parks, the NGO holds management contracts of twenty or more years. African Parks has a comprehensive mandate: in protected areas, it is responsible for both the tourism infrastructure and for the public infrastructure in surrounding buffer zones. Law enforcement also falls under its mandate, as it coordinates armed anti-poaching units. They may arrest people to hand over to the police later, and they may shoot in self-defence.[2] African Parks also runs refaunation projects in depleted protection areas; for example, it relocated black rhinos from South Africa to Chad's Zakouma Park.

African Parks is supported by a vast and intransient range of north American and European philanthropic organizations, as well as the National Geographic Society, the European Union, the Wildcat Foundation and WWF, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Forest Service. The website also lists organizations as diverse as the Dutch Postcode Lottery, the Department for International Development (DFID), and various African governmental authorities, such as the Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife, traditional authorities such as the Barotse Royal Establishment of Zambia, and less transient funds, such as the Adessium Foundation and the hedge fund, Acacia Conservation Fund (Offshore), Ltd. Such funding networks invite questions of responsibility and accountability, let alone democratic legitimization and control (see Sullivan 2012).

While African Parks runs the management of protected areas on its own, and is backed by a great number of highly diverse international funders, the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) developed a business and management model that tends more towards cooperation. In 2007, Zimbabwe Parks 'invited' FZS to support Gonarezhou National Park, Zimbabwe's share of the giant Limpopo Transboundary Park. FZS was instrumental in developing a ten-year management plan in a comprehensive stakeholder process. The plan entailed the establishment of the Gonarezhou Conservation Trust, which has a mandate to assume all management responsibilities from March 2017 onwards. The trust is directed by a board of six trustees, nominated in equal numbers by ZimParks

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2   https://www.africanparks.org/about-us/our-story.

and FZS. The FZS runs similar projects in Tanzania and Zambia, where, for example, the North Luangwa National Park is managed along similar lines.

Privatization and internationalized partnerships for the governance of protected areas often imply a return to fortress conservation (Scoones 2020). An increasingly militarized approach towards controlling poachers is linked to efforts to control the park boundaries. The International Anti-Poaching Foundation, for example, is financing the training of rangers in Zimbabwe, and the Frankfurt Zoological Society is sponsoring the construction of an electric fence around Gonarezhou National Park (Scoones 2020). There are certainly community projects occurring near these protected areas, but as Scoones (2020) reports for Zimbabwe, there are numerous reasons why these projects are ineffective and address problems such as human–wildlife conflict only in a haphazard way.

Transboundary conservation areas that aggregate conservation areas with different legal statuses across international boundaries are yet another approach to expanding the reach of protected areas. Transboundary conservation areas have especially gained ground in southern Africa. For example, the Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) with 520,000 square kilometres of land, and the Greater Limpopo Transboundary Park with 35,000 square kilometres of land (with current plans to expand it to nearly 100,000 square kilometres), have gained the status of the world's largest contiguous conservation areas. In both transboundary conservation areas, existing national parks, protected forests, and community conservation areas have been fused. In such transnational conservation areas, administrations combine their efforts to guarantee the connectivity of protected lands and the mobility of species, and to increase their attractiveness for tourists (Barrett 2013). Efforts aimed at creating more connectivity across international boundaries for wildlife, however, only rarely imply a similar freedom of movement for local people.

As in the examples given above on the privatization and outsourcing of governmental services, the influence of international donors and international NGOs is major. The South Africa-based Peace Parks Foundation has been the driving force behind transboundary conservation projects, conveniently highlighting their contribution to conservation, development, and peaceful transboundary relations. The Peace Parks Foundation is funded by a vast array of international funders, ranging from De Beers and Anglo American (both multinational mining companies) to the US International Bureau of Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Whether conservation gigantism has sizeable socio-ecological effects is not yet clear, although recent research points to increased mobility of large herbivores and the refaunation of wildlife-poor landscapes through immigration from areas with high wildlife numbers (see, for example,

Brennan et al. 2020; Stoldt et al. 2020). But transboundary conservation has also been blamed for expanding the fortress conservation approach, and further sidelining communities living in long-marginalized areas (Ramutsindela 2018; van Amerom and Büscher 2005).

Figures given by the World Database of Protected Areas (UNEP-WCMA 2020) reflect this heterogeneity of protected area governance only to some extent. Of 8448 protected areas counted in Africa, 3710 are managed by federal or national ministries and 986 by sub-national ministries. For a staggering 2351 of the protected areas, governance is not reported adequately. Some 933 protected areas are private (mainly in South Africa), only 69 are managed collaboratively between government and other agencies, 30 are governed by non-profit organizations, and another 30 by indigenous communities (a good number of them conservancies in Kenya). There is little conclusive reporting within this dataset on conservation governance for numerous countries. No governance types are reported for protected areas in Zimbabwe, as well as Chad, Angola, or the Central African Republic. For Zambia, no governance type is reported for more than 90 per cent of protected areas, and there is no reporting for 267 out of 409 protected areas in Kenya. By contrast, governance types are reported for 819 out of 838 protected areas in Tanzania. If we temporarily focus on Tanzania for the completeness of reporting in this regard, we may conclude that governmental ministries in Tanzania are still in the driver seat (774 protected areas are governed by the appropriate ministry), by contrast with several other African countries (notably, those where reporting is inconsistent), where much responsibility has been delegated to external organizations. Generally, the aggregate data are insufficient to facilitate an assessment of governance across the continent. Reports from various websites, however, suggest a wide variety of governance styles in a good number of countries, increasing influence of international organizations running protected areas, growing significance of philanthropic capital, and the engagement of large international companies and banks. Protected areas are increasingly being run according to very different management models. These come with different ideas about what is to be protected, about refaunation and rewilding, and about participation. Increasingly, national parks are becoming international, intransient multi-stakeholder enterprises, and are therefore extremely difficult to control or hold accountable. In many ways, national parks are becoming international parks.

4   Conservation through Community-Based Protection

In the 1980s, fortress conservation began to come under heavy criticism. Fortified islands of conservation did not automatically result in species survival and

biodiversity protection. In fact, they failed to yield anticipated conservation results and instead brought rampant poaching. These observations led to the conclusion that those communities affected by conservation measures needed to be included in planning and practice to maintain protected buffer zones and create wildlife corridors. Further, the direct participation of local people in the economic gains of conservation were thought to be necessary to gain the cooperation and compliance of rural communities directly affected by conservation. Community-based conservation (CBC) programmes thus became a dominant paradigm in the 1990s, and have remained prominent in various forms of conservation to this day (Berkes 2007; Galvin et al. 2018). In Africa, CBC programmes gained currency in southern and eastern Africa, but less so in central and western Africa. What community-based conservation exactly entailed differed across sub-Saharan Africa. In many places, CBC was implemented as community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), which was also shaped by programmes, projects, and legislation, for example, for forestry and water management. Generally, CBNRM meant "local groups of people ('communities') managing resources in an active manner and with some significant degree of formal (*de jure*) or informal (*de facto*) control or tenure over those resources" (Roe et al. 2009: 13). CBC projects linked conservation with development, sought to engage local communities as active stakeholders, and devolved some control over natural resources (Brooks et al. 2012). This conformed with neoliberal approaches to conservation, which stipulated that the commodification of wildlife and landscapes, and the inclusion of rural citizens into global value chains, could become a significant motor for both conservation and rural development. In francophone West Africa, the term CBNRM was and still is employed in a rather spatialized sense, and policies refer to 'CBNRM zones' or 'CBNRM corridors'. In East Africa, community-based conservation also had its start in buffer zones around national parks and private conservation areas. Protected-area outreach and benefit sharing were crucial for early East African CBC programmes. Recently, however, East African CBC projects have demanded more power in participating in decision-making regarding wildlife and other natural resources (Mkutu and Mdee 2020). Only in southern Africa (notably, in Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe) has CBC been closely connected to decentralization and the devolvement of rights – to natural resources in general, and wildlife in particular – to rural communities (for example Bollig and Menestrey Schwieger 2014).

In a recent study, Galvin et al. (2018) analysed the social, economic, and ecological outcomes of CBC in sub-Saharan Africa. The authors summarize that "more often than not, [the] establishment of CBC in Africa has led to negative or a mixture of positive and negative outcomes, whereas the ecological

outcomes have been largely positive" (Galvin et al. 2018: 39). Positive social outcomes pertained predominantly to increased income and human capital, whereas negative ones were related to the unequal distribution of benefits and reduced social capital. Positive social outcomes relating to financial income were habitually connected to direct payment schemes, which included cash dividends as a portion of visitor levees or lease agreements. They were also "associated with the maintenance and enhancement of networks, relation-ships of trust, reciprocity and exchange, and [an] increased sense of owner-ship among CBC members for conservation-oriented projects" (Galvin et al. 2018). Negative outcomes commonly pertained to an unequal distribution of benefits, elite capture, erosion of community trust, frustration in cases where distributive mechanisms were not working well, and the breakdown of traditional land tenure institutions. Comparing a total of 136 CBC projects worldwide, Brooks et al. (2012) emphasize that project design and capacity building, in particular, are associated with the success of CBC projects. True participation of locals in the implementation and day-to-day management of projects, equity in benefit distribution, and improvement of human and social capital are of crucial importance for success. Interestingly, Brooks et al. find that ecological and economic success are frequently interrelated, and that the success of CBC projects is more closely associated with project design than with community characteristics. Oldekop et al. (2016) show that the best pre-dictor for the ecological success of conservation projects were positive socio-economic outcomes, implying the establishment of co-management regimes, the empowerment of local people, the reduction of economic inequalities, and the maintenance of cultural and livelihood benefits. Moreover, CBC projects are progressively characterized by a large number of interacting stakehold-ers seeking to produce conservation results. Berkes (2007: 15190) suggests that CBC projects typically involve a rural community together with ten to fourteen partners, including national and international NGOs, private enterprises, and governmental offices. What is protected, how it is protected, and how con-servation governance operates is a matter of lengthy negotiations (see Bollig (2020) for an example from northwestern Namibia).

With communities idealized and intra-community cleavages and inequali-ties disregarded in planning, there are as many critiques of CBC projects as of fortress conservation. Often, neoliberal approaches to CBC exacerbate existing inequalities and wealthy households are more likely to gain from it than poorer ones (Holmes and Cavanagh 2016: 205). For KAZA and its related Namibian conservancies, Kalvelage et al. (2020) have shown that the cumu-lative benefits for community-based conservancies are sizeable, but that the sheer amount of income does not say anything about its distribution. In many

national contexts, the devolvement of rights is contested, as administrations frequently fail to cede their prerogatives voluntarily. Moreover, attempts to secure economic success are often futile: the commodification of wildlife and wilderness, and the public–private partnerships linked to it, frequently do not yield the promised or envisaged results. Rural dwellers often end up burdened with sizeable costs resulting from human–wildlife conflict, frustrations about elite capture, and fraud and conflicts over access to natural resources (Gargallo 2015; Holmes and Cavanagh 2016; Schnegg and Kiaka 2018; Sullivan 2006). Many discussions centre on whether trophy hunting and tourism in CBC areas are the most viable ways of providing income to rural communities and alleviating poverty (see Koot et al. 2020; Naidoo et al. 2018). Certainly, seeing the CBC programmes heralded in the 1980s and 1990s as the most promising way of combining conservation, economic development, and participation requires in-depth and comparative scrutiny. CBC will need a pro-poor component to address poverty, perhaps best achieved through cash transfers coupled with settlement rights in a conservation area. Another unresolved issue is how to deal with human–wildlife conflict and substantial damages caused by increasing numbers of wildlife, despite a small number of promising compensation programmes. CBC programmes will also need more businesses to be directly owned and run by local entrepreneurs. A near complete dependence on joint-venture capital and expertise will be detrimental in the long run. The recent COVID-19 crisis shows that an over-reliance on tourism carries specific risks (Lendelwo and Sullivan (2020) for Namibia).

5   Conclusion

Where do we go from here? Protected areas will expand: all political agreements, economic considerations, and much-highlighted contemporary global challenges – like biodiversity loss and climate change – unequivocally point in this direction. The expansion of protected areas is also in the interest of states – even if they do not intend to manage such areas on their own. Protected areas guarantee continued interest by international donors and the constant flow of finances to the country. To prevent the expansion of protected areas from going against the interests of rural communities, such transfers require corporate social responsibility regulations that are internationally supervised. Moreover, investments in conservation and transnational governance of sub-Saharan conservation areas are in urgent need of increased transparency, accountability, and comprehensive considerations of environmental justice.

The ongoing sense of crisis and reporting on impending biodiversity collapse and mass extinctions often make us forget that these governance values constitute the basis of successful natural resource management and are not merely nice assets to have. Büscher and Fletcher (2020) present an agenda for convivial conservation beyond conventional nature/culture dichotomies, and beyond a capitalist mode of production, by abstaining from commodifying nature or seeking ecological redemption in the growth of conservation markets. While this may take time to come about, the short-term measures envisaged by proponents of convivial conservation may be of considerable importance for the coming decades; these include historic reparations for people's loss of land and livelihood opportunities within protected areas; conservation-related basic incomes to promote decent livelihoods for those living in or close to protected areas; re-evaluating relationships with corporations and major conservation NGOs; implementing democratic conservation governance, and identifying alternative funding mechanisms (Büscher and Fletcher 2020: 186–97). It is high time to test-run such approaches and to refine ways of governing and protecting resources in an equitable, just, and sustainable manner, as contemporary challenges are formidable and will require global efforts. The challenge of establishing socio-ecological conditions for the flourishing of all lifeworlds in the twenty-first century will only stand a chance if these fundamentals of environmental justice are established.

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Forest Crime in Africa: Actors, Markets and Complexities

Eric M. Kioko

1   Introduction

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), forest crime refers to the illegal exploitation of the world's flora, which includes taking, trading (supplying, selling or trafficking), importing, exporting, processing, possessing, obtaining and consuming wild flora in contravention of national or international law.[1] Forest crime is on the rise across the globe, but particularly in poor tropical countries. The FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment report of 2020 notes that Africa had the largest annual rate of net forest loss in 2010–20 at 3.9 million hectares, followed by South America at 2.6 million hectares. Forests in West, central, East, and southern Africa are particularly vulnerable to the illicit exploitation of high-demand endangered trees, thus putting biodiversity, local economies, and humans at great risk.

In 2016, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Police Organization (INTERPOL) estimated the annual monetary value of forestry crimes worldwide at US\$ 51–52 billion, and of the illegal wildlife trade at US\$ 7–23 billion (Nellemann et al. 2016). Based on these estimates, forest crime has surpassed poaching and other forms of illegal trade in wildlife by an overwhelming margin to become the world's leading environmental crime.[2] Despite its spectacular increase, forest crime has received surprisingly little attention in the media and in scientific and crime reports compared with the illegal trade in wildlife. A review of recent studies on environmental crimes in Africa reveals an almost exclusive focus on wildlife poaching and on the illicit trade in ivory (Coutu et al. 2016; Harrison et al. 2015; Titeca 2019; Varun et al. 2014; Weru 2016). Reports featuring forest crime (Bussmann 1996; Müller and Mburu 2009; Nellemann and Interpol 2012) tend to give a rather general

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1   https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/wildlife-and-forest-crime/overview.html.
2   The term 'environmental crime' covers illegal activities, including serious and transnationally organized crimes, that harm the environment and from which individuals, groups or companies benefit through exploiting, damaging, trading in or stealing natural resources (Nellemann et al. 2016: 17).

picture of illegal timber logging and to lack proper empirical analysis of the organization and execution of the criminal behaviour.

African sandalwood (*Osyris lanceolate*) is a high value plant used globally in the manufacture of perfumes, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. Its recent commodification and commercial exploitation follows a decline in the global supply from India and Australia (Arun Kumar et al. 2012), coupled with what appears to be a rising demand for authentic, naturally occurring species (Kioko forthcoming). African rosewood (*Guibourtia coleosperma*), extracted mostly from West Africa, but also from central and southern Africa, is a strong, heavy brownish wood with dark veining popular for making luxury furniture and musical instruments. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) includes both sandalwood and rosewood in its red list of threatened species, as does the CITES[3] multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals from unregulated and illegal exploitation.

FIGURE 1   Rosewood CIFOR/ PAOLO OMAR CERUTTI 2020

2   Scale, Actors, and Markets of Africa's Endangered Plants

Mainly due to the absence of reliable and timely data, complex supply chains, weak legislation and a lack of international cooperation, it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics on illegal forest activities in Africa. It is even more difficult to

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3   CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival (source: https:// cites.org/eng/disc/what.php).

FIGURE 2   East Africa's sandalwood
            PHOTOS BY ERIC KIOKO 2019

quantify what specific plants have been illegally obtained and traded because
of an incapacity among affected states to carry out species-specific surveil-
lance, the difficulty of distinguishing between legally and illegally obtained
and traded forest products, weak forest governance across states, the complic-
ity of public officials in forest crime syndicates, and a lack of export data from
customs.

However, some rough estimates exist. The 2017 Trade Records Analysis of
Flora and Fauna in Commerce notes that the export of illicit timber (in the
form of logs and sawn wood) to China from Mozambique has seen a sevenfold
increase in the last ten years (Lukumbuzya and Sianga 2017). Furthermore, the
authors note that the DRC has experienced exponential growth in the timber
trade since the 2000s. It is now among the top ten African countries exporting
timber to the Chinese market, with about 30–50 per cent of imports between
2014 and 2017, while Tanzania's export permits indicated that more than 90
per cent of natural forest timber (around 12,000 cubic metres) is destined for
China. The 2016 UNEP and INTERPOL report estimates that Kenya loses 70,000
hectares of forest each year to illegal logging.[4] Zambia exports substantial
volumes of logs and sawn wood to the DRC, South Africa and China (European
Commission 2013). The illegally obtained and traded species from these coun-
tries are listed in the IUCN red list. However, as noted earlier, the volumes of
exports for illicit sandalwood and rosewood, or any other individual species, is
rather difficult to determine with precision.

While the precise estimates remain elusive, there is a consensus among
scholars and concerned agencies that forest crimes are on the rise due to a
number of factors, including the growing demand for industrial wood, fuel-
wood, and fragrant-scented wood. Sloan and Sayer (2015) note that the rising
demand for wood is principally in poorer countries, and growth in demand
will accelerate into the future, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

2.1   *Sandalwood*
Commercial exploitation of East Africa's sandalwood may be traced back to
the early 1900s (Mwang'ingo et al. 2003). However, the indiscriminate extrac-
tion and massive smuggling of the precious wood has been occurring since
2000 and peaked in 2017. Extraction concentrated on communally owned
lands (community conservation areas) and state protected forests. The scale
of exploitation and wanton plunder of natural resources prompted Kenya and
Tanzania to ban the sandalwood trade in 2005 and 2007 respectively, but the

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4   https://www.voanews.com/africa/report-kenya-losing-forests-organized-crime.

ban has proven hard to enforce and therefore the illicit trade persists through a dynamic and increasingly resilient transnationally organized criminal group.[5] Following Uganda's reluctance to restrict the sandalwood trade, syndicate members shifted their operations from Tanzania and Kenya to Tororo, Uganda, making it the nerve centre for laundering illegally obtained sandalwood before export to the Chinese and Indian markets via the Kenyan and Tanzanian ports (Kioko forthcoming).

The key players of domestic, regional and global supply chains of sandalwood include loggers from local communities, smugglers/traders, transporters, and buyers from India and China. Smugglers purchase raw sandalwood from community conservancies at between 80 and 200 Kenyan Shillings (US$ 0.74–1.84) a kilogramme and sell it to Chinese and Indian syndicate members in Tororo for between 800 and 1200 Kenyan Shillings (US$ 7.34–11.03), thereby making roughly US$ 100,000 for every 14-ton truckload of sandalwood. Based on interview data from Baringo, Mukogodo Forest (Laikipia North), and Samburu (the Mathews Range Forest) in Kenya, between 2015 and 2017 some brokers and community members turned loggers earned around 200,000 Kenyan Shillings (US$ 1840) a month from the sale of sandalwood from community conservancies to smugglers.

The bribes smugglers paid to members of the syndicate, usually local administrators, police officers, judges, and members of the council of elders, were in the region of between ten thousand and a million Kenyan Shillings (US$ 92–9200) depending on their position, influence, and role in facilitating the illegal trade. Consequently, the illicit trade in sandalwood turned smugglers, loggers, and some public officials into millionaires overnight. The response to increased interagency surveillance of those engaged in the illicit operations has been to become more sophisticated, to adopt more innovative means of transport such as luxury vehicles, and to hire corrupt police officers to transport the sandalwood in government trucks to disguise their contents.[6]

The organized syndicate of people engaged in smuggling sandalwood in East Africa is recruited from a network of state and non-state actors who are selected because their role, power, or influence in society or government is likely to guarantee the success of the criminal enterprise. Notably, some corrupt public officials constitute important nodes for the criminal enterprise.

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5   Organized criminal groups consist of three or more people working together over a period of time, with a view to committing one or more serious crimes to generate financial or material benefits, often by providing illicit goods and services (UNODC 2020: 19).

6   https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/ktnnews/ktn-newsdesk/video/2000100743/police-vehi-cle-nabbed-smuggling-sandalwood-worth-sh20-million-in-nakuru.

FIGURE 3   Luxury vehicle impounded by police in Samburu
                County ferrying sandalwood worth 2.5 million
                Kenyan Shillings (US$ 23,000)
                CITIZEN DIGITAL, JANUARY 29, 2020

Interviews with sandalwood smugglers in the Kenya–Uganda border town of Malaba show that they see themselves as ordinary business people filling a critical gap in the demand and supply of goods and services. Although mostly high-school or college dropouts, by being in a position to buy the loyalty and legitimacy of state officials, many of these smugglers have over time become extremely rich. Their allegiance to each other is rooted in their working history, where they tap into pre-existing relations involving illicit activities, but also tend to have roots in a single shared ethnic descent, which may create some level of trust. According to the UNODC (2009: 12), these organized criminal groups take the form of shifting alliances of loose, flexible networks of key individuals operating at national, regional, and international levels. In East Africa, for instance, the criminal groups include individuals from West Africa, Asia and Europe.

The extraction of sandalwood is mainly done by uprooting the whole tree to obtain the heartwood and roots where the greatest intensity of aroma and essential oils are to be found. The extraction process leaves behind a landscape dotted with open pits and causes extensive damage to the surrounding flora, including the destruction of the wildlife habitat. Community participation in illicit value chains, particularly inside community-based conservancies, deserves close attention. Organized criminal groups are increasingly exploiting local situations, such as poverty, intergroup conflicts, and weak indigenous nature-conservation norms and rules to profit from communally held resources, and thereby threatening the decentralized model of conservation. The situation may lead to the 'empty forest syndrome' exemplified in much of Malaysia and Thailand where forests have been stripped off all their 'valuable' timber and wildlife (Redford 1992).

2.2   *Rosewood*

According to UNODC (2020), rosewood is the most trafficked wild product in the world by value and volume (see Figure 4). Rosewood, most of which is headed to China, is traded far more than elephant ivory, rhino horn, and pangolin scales combined, and is often called the 'ivory of the forest' (Ong and Carver 2019). From the figure below, which shows the volume of trade as calculated from the value of the respective seizures of wildlife, rosewood accounts for more than 40 per cent, which is higher than the illegal trade in elephants (33.1 per cent) and rhinos (5.5 per cent) combined.
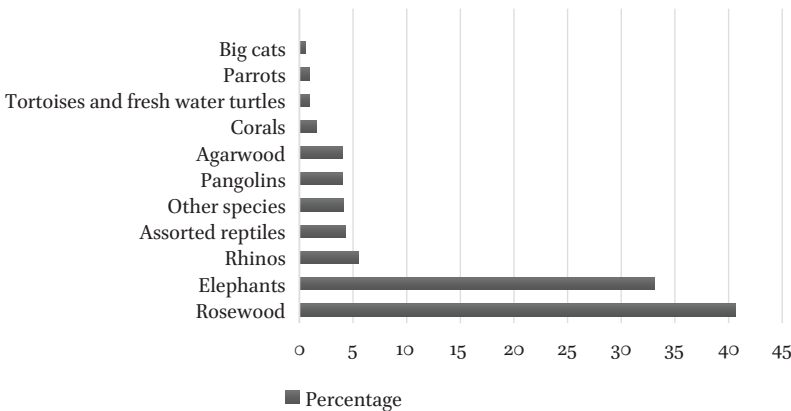
FIGURE 4   Volume of trade based on the value of seizures of respective wildlife
SOURCE: MODIFIED FROM UNODC (2020: 11)

The largest flow of illicitly harvested rosewood between 2017 and 2020 came out of Africa, with more rosewood exported after it was listed in the 2017 CITES, with Nigeria alone exporting 750,000 cubic metres in 2017. This is equivalent to about four million trees, or over 30,000 shipping containers, an average of almost one hundred container loads exported per day (UNODC 2020: 13). Africa is estimated to be losing US$ 17 billion in revenue annually as a result of the illegal trade.[7] In 2014, China imported rosewood logs from West Africa to the value of US$ 2.5 billion, which meant that at least one tree was logged every minute.[8] Ghana, which is considered one of the main transit countries, exported 540,000 tons – the equivalent of 23,478 twenty-foot containers or approximately six million trees – of illegal rosewood to China between 2012

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7   https://allafrica.com/stories/201907310048.html.
8   https://www.clientearth.org/race-rosewood-china-toll-west-africas-forests/.

and 2019.[9] The US-based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) indicates that over 9330 tons of rosewood, worth over US$ 5.4 million, was exported to China in the month of September 2019.[10]

In southern Africa, the Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) also comes into focus with reference to the illicit trade in rosewood (see Cerutti 2020; Nott et al. 2020). Cerutti notes that about US$ 9.0 billion dollars worth of rosewood was imported into China over the last decade with Zambia being the main transit country. In a related study, a team from the Centre for International Forestry Research estimated the cost of bribes paid annually on the roads and border points of Zambia at about US$ 1.7 million (Cerutti et al. 2018: 56). Illicit trade in rosewood is also prevalent in Namibia. In February 2020, *The Namibian* reported that from November 2018 until December 2019, nearly 70,000 tons of timber were exported through the port of Walvis Bay, 13 per cent of which was mostly Namibian rosewood while the rest came from Zambia, the DRC, and Angola – all destined to China, Vietnam, and smaller quantities to Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Greece.[11]

Despite various national and international laws and treaties having outlawed the rosewood trade, the illicit enterprise persists, and its scale will increase in the future as China's timber and forest product imports are expected to increase from an estimated 194 million cubic metres in 2015 to 254 million cubic metres by 2025.[12] Ong and Carver (2019) observe that rosewood logging causes problems that go well beyond the removal of rare tree species. For example, in West Africa, it can dry out forests and leave them vulnerable to fires and desertification, while in Madagascar, tall rosewood trees serve as key nesting areas for endemic animals such as ruffed lemurs.

3   The Elephant in the Room: Complexities in Addressing Forest Crimes

There is overwhelming evidence on the drivers of environmental crimes as well as recommendations to address and control illicit enterprises (Hayman and Brack 2002; Kamweti et al. 2009; Kleinschmit et al. 2016; Varun et al. 2014;

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9   https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49165636; https://eia-global.org/blog-posts/2020
      0721-ghana-can-end-destruction-of-illegal-rosewood-trade.
10   https://eia-global.org/press-releases/20191104-rosewood-revealed-website-launch.
11   https://www.namibian.com.na/197573/archive-read/Namibia-to-export-120-000-logs-of-
      timber.
12   https://www.risiinfo.com/press-release/chinas-timber-and-forest-products-imports-
      expected-to-increase-by-60-million-cubic-meters-by-2025/.

World Bank 2019). The drivers may be categorized into economic, social, political, and environmental, while approaches to controlling environmental crimes broadly fall under governance, including legislation and enforcement, international coordination and cooperation, political goodwill, and institutional building and strengthening. Now that we seem to know the problem and how to address it, what explains the pitiful success in addressing environmental crimes? Various difficulties characterize their mitigation in Africa, and these have great implications for the future of illicit value chains linked to forests.

3.1   *Disproportionate Attention to Wildlife and Forest Crimes*

Wildlife crimes like ivory poaching have historically attracted more attention from the media and concerned agencies than crimes associated with forests and this pattern is similar elsewhere in the world. A World Bank study on illegal logging in Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, and the Philippines found that the cumulative probability of an illegal logging crime being penalized is less than 0.082 per cent (Goncalves et al. 2012: 5). According to the report, lack of coordination among the actors in question, competing priorities, limited resources, lack of capacity, and benign and malicious neglect hamper forest law enforcement in these countries and make it an ineffective tool for countering and deterring illegal logging.

On the contrary, states have come up with legislation that imposes punitive measures on perpetrators of crimes against wild animals. For example, poaching and wildlife trafficking in both Kenya and Uganda carry a life imprisonment sentence. In South Africa, a rhino poacher was recently jailed for 77 years to signify the seriousness of the offence.[13] Apart from prohibitions against trading in restricted forest products (for example, under the 2016 Forest Conservation and Management Act in Kenya), African countries lack a laid down strategy on how to curb national and transnational forest crimes let alone prosecute the offenders. Where forests crimes are punished, offenders get a reasonably light sentence. In Kenya, for instance, the jail term is between six months and five years with the option to pay a fine.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is no different. According to the African Forest Forum (Sola 2011), forest legislation in the region is weak, sometimes outdated, poorly structured, and contradictory. The decentralization of forest management has also been a major cause of poor enforcement where legal pluralism creates the opportunity for too many competing institutions. Illegal trade in forest products in the region

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13   https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28441261.

exploits these weaknesses, including the prevailing uncertainties on the best approaches to control the vices. As is the case in the East African Community (EAC), forest offences receive relatively less attention than crimes against wild animals.

3.2   *Communication and Limits to Cooperation in Enforcement*

To set the stage for legislation and collaboration on a broad range of global environmental challenges that span international borders, states have ratified numerous international conventions and treaties on environment and natural resources. Among the multilateral environmental agreements that the EAC and SADC member states have signed is CITES, which is critical given the region's strategic location for transnational organized crime. However, EAC and SADC states grapple with the legal, political, and economic challenges that threaten the needed cooperation and integration (Elhiraika et al. 2015; Makame 2012). Treaties and agreements often lack policy harmonization and contain inadequate sanctions against non-compliance. They are also prone to corruption, the untrustworthiness of some member states and political regimes, poor enforcement, ineffective public participation, and a failure to cooperate over managing transboundary ecosystems and controlling transboundary organized criminal activities.

Poor communication within a country, between the government ministries and departments responsible for enforcing the timber trade regulations, and between neighbouring countries (see Nott et al. 2020), makes it practically impossible to synchronize the laws and coordinate the measures needed to mitigate transboundary forest crimes. In the Congo Basin, weak forest governance, combined with an increasing demand for cheap, illegal products globally, has driven a sharp rise in already widespread violations of laws enacted to protect and manage forests. As the EIA[14] notes, timber illegally harvested in one country may be legally imported to another because countries are not bound to enforce the forestry laws of other countries, thus echoing the situation regarding the transnational rosewood trade in the KAZA region and the illicit sandalwood trade in East Africa. Furthermore, when illegally obtained wood from Africa enters China with the 'right' documents (for example CITES certification obtained by bribing a customs official), it becomes legal (Ong and Carver 2019).

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14   https://eia-global.org/subinitiatives/congo-basin.

3.3   *Inability to Address the Demand and Supply of Forest Products*

Attempts to control forest and other environmental crimes have focused almost exclusively on enforcement agencies targeting criminals without reducing the size of the illegal market in which they operate. Hayman and Brack (2002: 4) argue that as long as the demand and supply pressures that produce profit-making opportunities remain, new operations will continue to enter the international market. However, there are few data on these black market operations in which the demand for illicit products is mainly driven by changing patterns of wealth and consumption (Duffy et al. 2015).

The Chinese trade embargo on ivory, which came into force in 2018, is hailed as a major development in the war against the illicit ivory trade. However, despite rising environmentalist pressure in China, the effectiveness of the trade embargo is debatable because of its awkward position in an authoritarian regime. Moreover, there is a conspicuous absence of measures to address forest crime, particularly the imports into the country of illicitly obtained sandalwood and rosewood from Africa.

In addition, enforcement has often deterred the 'small' players in environmental crimes, leaving the main perpetrators to seek ways of manipulating the system and finding new opportunities and actors. Varun et al. (2014: 58) argue that efforts at interdiction too often net only low-value individuals, and not the true beneficiaries who consign cargoes, bankroll transactions, and ultimately reap the financial rewards. Therefore, intensifying enforcement, though crucial, is ultimately an inadequate long-term strategy with which to conserve high-value species (Challender and MacMillan 2014).

3.4   *Community Facilitation of Forest Crime*

Since the 1990s, commodification of the wild within the shared resource systems of Africa only targeted wildlife tourism in East Africa, and tourism and trophy hunting in southern Africa. Forest resources, including timber, are not commodities from which conservancy members can earn an income. Recently, however, the rising demand in wood for industry, fuel, and fragrance has driven the extraction and commercial exploitation of endangered trees from conservancies and state-protected parks and forests.

Against CBNRM ideals, and in contravention of the rules, regulations, and sanctions that govern the extraction and use of shared resources, farmers and even members of some conservancies are increasingly being lured into logging, thereby facilitating a crime of international significance. The incentive for local user groups to protect shared resources and to benefit jointly from them through tourism-based activities therefore suffers a huge blow as capitalist tendencies motivate individuals to exploit community-held resources.

Mitigating forest crimes becomes a big challenge when the socio-economic dynamics are moving in the opposite direction – notably a youth bulge compounded by unemployment and problems of generational control taking centre stage.

3.5   *Chasing Ghosts: Complicit State Officials and Enforcement Agencies*

There is overwhelming evidence of state officials being complicit in environmental crime syndicates, particularly in Africa. Maguire and Haenlein (2015) observe that highly networked organized crime groups, brokers and corrupt government officials continue to drive the illegal ivory trade across East Africa, by exploiting weak legislation and enforcement by security agencies. Corruption is cited as the main driving force behind the trends in both wildlife and forest crimes, which if left unchecked will soon lead to the extinction of specific flora and fauna.[15] The illegal trade in sandalwood and rosewood thrives primarily because the public officials responsible for enforcing the law are succumbing to bribery.

Wildlife and forest resources are a political commodity (Gibson 1999), so can be exchanged for political favours. This means that politicians make decisions about how wildlife and forests are exploited. Gibson (1999) argues that politicians use wildlife to discriminate between allies and enemies: their decisions affect how individuals interact with wildlife, who owns wild animals, who hunts, when they hunt, what weapons and equipment they use, which species they kill, and how they exchange wildlife products.

Given the active role of state security agencies and powerful officials in forest crime, efforts to curb illicit transactions may only serve to show potential donors and development partners that a government is committed to the fight, but ultimately obscure the true nature of these crimes.

4   Conclusion: the Future of Illicit Forest Value Chains in Africa

Illegal logging and other forms of forest crime continue to receive less attention than wildlife crimes, despite the former being greater than the latter by value and volume. There is a current obsession with combating the illegal wildlife trade, including state of the art monitoring of wildlife in real time and the development of cutting edge, hi-tech tools and equipment (World Bank 2018). According to the World Bank (2016) and Global Environment Facility,[16] most

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15   https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/wildlife-and-forest-crime.html.
16   https://www.thegef.org/news/gef-increases-funding-combat-illegal-wildlife-trade.

of the international funding is channelled into combating the illegal wildlife trade. Few if any international or country-specific resources are committed to reducing transnational forest crime.

What explains this disproportionate attention and how does it affect the future of forests in Africa? This dichotomy has deep colonial roots in which forestry was always thought to be commercial while wildlife was decommodified. Unlike forest resources, wildlife was linked to class, status and prestige and restrictions forbade most Africans from game hunting (see Steinhart 2006). Peluso (1991) observes that while regulation of access to forested land in many countries began in the colonial period, postcolonial state control of forested land gained greater ideological, political and economic importance where forestry agencies lay claims on and commoditize particular forests and species to generate revenue, thereby earning themselves legitimacy from the state.

Therefore, the importance accorded to wildlife and related crimes has somewhat blinded the escalating levels of crime connected to forests across the globe. This explains the weak enforcement of forest policy and laws, lack of cooperation over combating transnational forest crimes, inability to address the demand and supply of forest products, and the thriving organized criminal networks that survive by exploiting these weaknesses. The uneven treatment of wildlife and forests poses a challenge to the future of biodiversity in Africa and across the globe. I argue that unless forest crime is given as much or more attention than wildlife crime, the effects of the indiscriminate plunder of forest products may be further reaching than those of wildlife crime. The ongoing trends, if unresolved, may potentially create a future in which forests in Africa are devoid of specific trees and wildlife.

Community facilitation of forest crimes deserves closer attention. Especially within shared resource systems, the participation of certain individuals in organized crime syndicates through the extraction of high value trees creates uncertainties over the future of the community conservation model. In particular, this relates to a commitment to nature conservancy norms and values that have traditionally defined access to and use of communally held resources. Changes in attitudes and aspirations at the local level may explain the drastic appetite for the commodification and commercial exploitation of forests. For example, youth aspire to have greater control of their present and future economic situation due to changes in the patrilineal organization in which parents can no longer guarantee inheritance to their sons. As a result, many youths are motivated to engage in activities that guarantee them quick money to build their own families irrespective of the risks involved in these activities and the danger they cause to communally-owned resources.

The current demand for forestry commodities and the existing legal and institutional frameworks in many African countries suggest that markets and actors will change even more in favour of organized crime in the future. Indeed, the existence of legal markets for wildlife and forestry commodities fuels illegitimate trade and increases poaching and illegal logging. This has led to a call to ban the legal trade in ivory,[17] but the debate during the 18th wildlife trade summit in Geneva elicited strong reactions, particularly from SADC member states.[18] There is a high possibility that debates around the commercial exploitation of forests may follow a similar trajectory in the future.

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17   https://www.reuters.com/article/us-wildlife-cites-elephants-idUSKCN1220OE;   https://www.worldwildlife.org/initiatives/stopping-elephant-ivory-demand.

18   https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/08/elephant-ivory-trade-at-cites/.

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Framing the Future of National Parks

Thomas Widlok and Ndapewa Fenny Nakanyete

1   Nature Conservation from the South

Contrary to the colonial and developmental image that Africa is 'lagging behind' and needs to 'catch up' with Europe, the more recent position holds that Africa is 'the future' in the sense that many ideas and practices that characterize Africa today are foreshadowing processes of a global future at large (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2011). In many instances, the notion of a future 'Africanization' of Europe (see Mbembe 2017) highlights problematic developments such as precarious labour relations and the categorization of some members of society as 'superfluous'. But what are domains in which African developments may foreshadow positive changes for the future of the north and the globe at large? When searching for such domains the strength and growth of nature conservation in Africa stand out as a promising candidate.

In this chapter, we therefore compare a case from the south, Namibia, which has a very strong track record of nature conservation, with a case from the north, Germany, which appears to be a relative newcomer, 'catching up' only recently by establishing national parks for the first time across the country.[1] In Namibia, the conversion of land into protected areas has reached a larger scale than ever before and it does so against a long history of national parks. In Germany, by contrast, and despite earlier attempts to protect small areas, national parks are latecomers, aspiring to a status that parks in Africa already possess. We shall not only compare formal processes of institutionalizing nature conservation but also more generally investigate the temporal frames that are created and employed in the two contexts.

To what extent are national parks projects that are setting the frame for conservation in the future and to what extent are they, in turn, being informed by particular ways of framing time and the future? By temporal framings, we mean ways of conceiving and dealing with the land with regards to the time

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1   We realize that this comparison is explorative rather than conclusive and we seek to broaden the scope in future collaborative work which has been delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The choice of the two countries is, however, not arbitrary since the two countries are at different ends of the spectrum in terms of the early establishment of national parks (Namibia) and the very recent establishment of such parks (in Germany). Ultimately, we would like to include other, neighbouring countries in the comparison and more cases within each country to go beyond the minimal comparison of two cases from each country.

dimension, for example as 'coming from an ancient past', 'eternal', or as 'for the future' and so forth. Such frames inform both, discursive practices and other practices such as converting the land and various forms of living off the land. Concerning institutions such as national parks, we find some of the temporal framings being made explicit in brochures, monuments, signboards or documents. But at least in part, those framings are implicit in practices, for instance in rules for visiting, the establishment of development zones, and the adoption of a 'project' approach (see below). Arguably, the more implicit a frame, the more effectively it influences people's views and actions since implicit frames operate out of awareness and are typically not subject to debate and criticism.

To say that Namibia's national parks are old and established while Germany's are recent and developing glosses over many particularities of the various areas in question. Moreover, the Namibian parks were in many cases creations of German or South African colonialism, serving the interests of colonial regimes and not those of the local population. The park boundaries were also redrawn for strategic and political reasons (de la Bat 1982: 20). The Namibian national parks under consideration here were established as protected areas with several functions: the Etosha National Park was partly used to police the Haiǁom San in the area (and migrating labourers from the north of the country). Several parks in northern Namibia (including Etosha and the precursors of what is now the Bwabwata National Park) were used militarily to protect the European settlement areas further south during the war of independence (see Boden 2009; Dieckmann 2007; Jones and Dieckmann 2014). In colonial times therefore, various motivations fuelled the establishment of national parks and it was only after independence in 1990 that Namibia incorporated effective environmental protection laws into its new constitution for the management of national parks and other protected areas. This gave the country international recognition as one of the world's first states to include the protection of the environment in its constitution, with Article 95 (I) promoting conservation of the ecosystem, its biodiversity, and the sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of its both current and future citizens.[2]

Today, Namibia's state-run protected areas, including national parks, cover 13,000 square kilometres, which is equivalent to 20 per cent of the country's territory (see NACSO 2015). When all non-state-run areas (including

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2 Article 95 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia is promoting "the welfare of the people" through various measures including the "maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity of Namibia and utilization of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future" (https://laws.parliament.na/namibian-constitution/).

conservancies and community forests) are included, about half the country has some sort of protection status. The rights of possession to these areas vary. Whereas national parks belong to the state and are run by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (known as Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism since 2020), conservancies and community forests are co-managed by communities, more recently established under state administration, and they include communal and (to a lesser degree) privately-owned land.

Germany's national parks were all established fairly recently as a consequence of the national biodiversity strategy to have at least 5 per cent of forested land declared protected wilderness areas by the year 2020. Therefore, every state in the Federal Republic sought to have a fixed proportion of its conservation areas set aside as national parks subject to international regulations. The Eifel National Park was established in 2004 and the Black Forest National Park as late as 2014. Moreover, these are looked upon as national parks 'in the making' because they do not, as yet, have the right proportion of undisturbed core areas that international standards require. While Namibia's parks are institutionally old but have undergone recent turns in conservation, Germany's may be institutionally new yet nonetheless incorporate old practices. Germany's state forestry departments were the first to coin the now globally used notion of 'sustainability', albeit mainly in an attempt to make themselves central and indispensable (see Radkau 1996). Their way of setting the 'undisturbed high forest' as a standard for conservation was to a large extent a tool for marginalizing and undermining the communal practices of forest-dwelling peasants and a continuation of the rights of the landed gentry in the hands of the nation-state (Radkau 1996: 65–6).

Thus, the official history of establishing national parks and other conservation areas is a complex story that cannot be read as a simple developmental sequence in either of the two cases. This raises the question of what temporal frames may be found under the surface picture presented in glossy brochures.

2   Recognizing Temporal Framings in National Parks

Arguably, the future is determined not only by the power of agents (for example the power of the state to create laws or the power of NGOs to mobilize people) but also and more fundamentally by the frames in which the future is conceived, the framing that constitutes the playing field of the political agents, so to speak. However, the recognition of time frames cannot easily be elicited by consulting the dominant discourse. The most effective time frames are those that have become so natural to agents that they are no longer

recognized since they are out-of-awareness 'framings'. For instance, a surface discourse of conservation 'for future generations' or 'for present and future generations' (see Photo 1) is commonly found in the establishment of all national parks (and other protected areas). However, underlying this focus on the future (and present), there is also a largely implicit framing of timelessness that is found in the rhetoric of biodiversity protection more generally. This underlying frame of 'timelessness' is, analytically, just a specific temporal frame, namely one that operates with culturally specific notions of 'eternity'. Euro-American national parks are fuelled by a strong sense of 'the sublime', of a particular experience of nature that often carries religious undertones with the emphasis on 'that which lasts' as opposed to the hectic and changing times of modernity (Cronon 1996). Today, this tendency is manifested in German national parks in several ways.

FIGURE 1   Sign at Namutoni, Etosha national park THOMAS WIDLOK

The main Christian churches in the Eifel have developed a 'creation path' within the park itself, and the Black Forest National Park also has a regular programme of church-based events in which the 'breath of eternity' (*Atem der Ewigkeit*) can be felt.[3] For the less religiously-oriented visitor, pieces of paper containing quotations from well-known poets such as Hermann Hesse and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe are available from the park's centre. These

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3   See   https://kirche-tourismus-bw.de/html/content/kirche_im_nationalpark_schwarzwald. html [20 October 2020].

FIGURE 2   Sign at Eifel national park THOMAS WIDLOK

quotations invariably invoke the timelessness of nature[4] and provide an intellectual and emotional dimension for those visiting the park. The Eifel National Park presents itself to the public as a 'building site' for wilderness, with nature as the builder and an approximate 'finish' date in 250 years' time (see Photo 2). This relates to one of the key slogans used by national parks in Germany, namely 'Urwälder von morgen' (Primordial/timeless forests of tomorrow). Parks also occasionally incorporate pilgrimage sites (or parts of pilgrim ways), places of mystical encounters (such as the Mummelsee in the Black Forest), a way of the cross, summit crosses, wayside chapels and so forth.[5] That no national park comes with a shelf-life underlines the sense of awe and eternity they provoke. There is no date envisaged when the park would be handed over to a future generation, or a point in time when it would be degazetted because its function had been fulfilled. While they may have a distinct past, the parks are typically imagined to stretch into an endless future of 'coming generations'.

One effect of this rhetoric of timelessness is that neither the future of the park nor the authority of the state to guarantee that future is easily challenged. The cumulative interests of endless future generations must, by definition, outweigh any disadvantages or conflicting interests that any particular stakeholder may have today or any grievances that may be brought in from the past. The aspirations of a (largely unrealized) future outweigh the particulars of the concrete past and present, and such a frame is therefore biased towards an unspecific eternal future. We argue that whatever steps towards the future development of the protected area may be undertaken in both Germany and Namibia, they all operate against the backdrop of an 'eternity'. When parks are portrayed as harking back to a 'time immemorial' before human occupation and are envisaged as cathedrals of the future, they effectively eclipse the interests (and conflicts of interests) in the here and now. Moreover, their detached status is claimed and reproduced by the managing state authorities – which is mutually reinforcing since the nation-state, too, presents itself as an eternal entity above and aloof from the particularist interests of ethnic/social groups or individuals.

In Namibia, the state authorities who manage the national parks recognize and justify temporal framing through independence and nationalism, which

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4   For instance, one quotation by Goethe reads, "Wohl ist alles in der Natur Wechsel, aber hinter dem Wechselnden ruht ein Ewiges" ("Everything in nature changes, but behind the change there is something eternal."

5   It is noteworthy that national parks in Namibia include colonial graves, marked as sites for visitors, but so far disregard pre-colonial religious sites. Pre-colonial graves in the park are currently out of bounds, cannot be visited or ritually attended to, which mutes the voice of those connected to the land through these sites.

are then mobilized in decisions about the present while assessing the impact for the country's future. The concept of national parks as a natural heritage asset is often declared to be for the benefit of present and future Namibian generations at large. As a consequence, temporal frameworks involving conflicts of interest between the nation-state and particular interests of ethnic groups become difficult to include. The Etosha National Park as an 'ancestral home' for the Haiǁom San holds significance as a place of origin and identity (see Suzman 2001), but the dispossession of the San due to the establishment of the Etosha National Park as an eternal national good makes it difficult for the San to realize spiritual values and connections in their present-day life or for the future of their children. The same holds for other local attachments to areas subsumed under national parks in the country.

In a current land claim court case, the Namibian state, as the main defendant, concludes that there is no recognized method of estimating the 'intrinsic value' of Etosha National Park. The value is not quantified because it includes "natural capital; conservation value; symbolic value; emotional value, ecosystem services; positive impact on the value of adjacent farms, and tourism" and it would have also to include the unrealized 'option value', that is "the option to use resources *in the future* … often associated with the diversity of protected areas, the *future potential value of which is unknown*."[6] In other words, Etosha has 'invaluable' value for future state revenue as a unique international tourist destination. Sharing 'eternity benefits' among particular 'stakeholder' groups is therefore problematic, maybe even more problematic than distributing the 'eternity costs' of industrially destroyed land, for instance in Europe's coal extraction regions or nuclear wastelands elsewhere.

3   Standardization of Temporal Frames

While the 'eternity' temporal framing may be more or less diffuse and underspecified, there are also temporal framings that are more precise and subject to international standardization. The international standards of national park management, for example, are geared towards very specific timelines. They largely disregard any changes to the status of a stretch of land (or water) in the past but are very specific for instance with regard to the size of a park and the proportion of its 'untouched' core zone in relation to buffer or mixed-use zones (see Wild Europe 2013). The zoning of protected areas is itself not only a

6   Affidavit of Minister Pohamba Shifeta (pp. 682–9) in the court case of J. Tsumib et al. against the Government of the Republic of Namibia, 14 July 2016 (Case A206/15), emphasis added.

spatial device but also a temporal one in that it specifies not only what human activity should be allowed in each zone but also when (up to when, or how often) this should take place.

In Namibia, for instance, some national parks consist of zones demarcated for large and exclusive nature conservation, with other zones including confined settlement for (present) indigenous communities, who live under restrictions concerning where they can settle and what livelihood activities they can pursue. This zoning corresponds to the strategic goals of increasing protected areas while also increasing subsistence opportunities for the local population. Such restrictions are usually not (re)negotiated over time despite population growth and land degradation in the residential zones. This significantly affects the food security and livelihood strategies of resident communities living in or near national parks (see Paksi and Pyhälä 2018).

Meanwhile, national parks in Germany are gazetted in such a way as to prevent anyone permanently settling in the area and they have a target plan for the future that dismantles settlements, paths and other infrastructure. The parks are not considered 'finished' and 'ready' when they are established, but are seen as 'projects', states of wilderness projected into the future to reach international recognition over a set period of time. Park management is then geared towards not losing that recognition by complying with the development targets that international standards require. In its simplest but most effective sense, this standardization is about setting 'deadlines' and being committed to them. These are deadlines after which no more human interference is supposed to take place; they are there to eliminate invasive species such as the Douglas fir, which was imported into the Eifel from North America, and to provide a timetable for the (re)introduction of native species, for instance allowing wolves to return to Germany.

Wildlife management, in Germany and Namibia, involves quotas, including temporal framing to specify how many animals can be shot over a certain period, typically a calendar year. The annualization implicated in taxation and business plans operating within financial years organizes time in very specific ways. Although parks may technically not be considered commercial land, their time frames are thereby very much aligned with those of commerce. In Bwabwata National Park in Namibia, for example, wildlife management through trophy hunting is said to provide socio-economic benefits to local communities through hunting revenue, game meat distribution and employment as trackers, especially for the local Khwe San. In return, indigenous residents are expected to comply with the standardized sustainable management of natural resources for generations to come, while their traditional livelihood

strategies as custodians of the environment, which differ from the scientific notion of conservation, remain constricted or prohibited.[7]

In this sense, national park management is above all a form of *management*, a standardized tool for setting goals, translating goals into targets and measures, and evaluating the results in a predefined temporal frame. Thus, despite the underlying imagery of eternity and 'future generations', management plans by definition apply standardized timeframes that emerge from the logic of economic planning, corporate profiles, 'production' targets and so forth. Although national parks are explicitly excluded from the economy of markets in many ways (for instance, the land cannot be sold and is considered a national asset), they still partake in the temporal logic of corporations. Land use practices are translated into 'management', which inherently organizes ideas, practices, humans and non-humans into a series of 'outcomes' that can be calculated and scheduled (see Abbott 2016). Again, this framing appears to many so 'natural' and clandestine that it is not recognized as a rather specific cultural practice of temporal framing. The frames may only become visible when stakeholders fail to comply with this implicit management logic, as in the case of indigenous minorities (see Sapignoli 2018; Zips-Mairitsch 2013).

4   The Politics of Temporal Framing

As we have shown above there are temporal framings that re-emerge such as the assumed eternity of nature across parks and countries. There are also temporal framings that are diversified and contested even within countries and regarding individual parks.

Government, international agents and NGOs often accept (sometimes reluctantly) that there may be conflicting projects present with regard to a particular piece of land that is declared a protected area, but at the same time, they try to set down the (temporal) conditions for getting involved. Correspondingly, associations and consultation bodies are established when conservancies, community forests or national parks are being created. There may

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7 Khwe representatives from Bwabwata National Park have recently visited the Eifel National Park, and a good number of national park staff in Germany have some experience of national parks outside Europe. Nevertheless, the exchange between 'traditional ecological knowledge' and park management remains very limited. https://www.nationalpark-eifel.de/de/nationalpark-erleben/aktuelles/artikel-detailseite/Besuch-aus-Namibia-Traditionelles-oekologisches-Wissen-im-Austausch-3172R/.

be fundamental differences in the way these stakeholders frame the park in its temporality, ranging from short-term economic gain to transgenerational interests and the notion of a permanent shared heritage. It seems, however, that in Namibia and in Germany, these fundamental differences are rarely discussed directly but remain largely implicit. Stakeholders can voice their particular interests but they have to be prepared to channel them through the 'technical' procedures of hearings, points of public inspection and regular consultations or – when conflicts intensify – in terms of court hearings, lawsuits and other forms of legal action at various levels. All these technical procedures have their specific time regimes.[8]

Court cases, such as the one currently underway in Namibia, in which both the ownership status of Etosha National Park and the distribution of benefits from its resources are at stake, are notorious for taking a long time, often beyond the lives of individual defendants. It has been more than sixty years since the Haiǁom San of Etosha lost their ancestral land rights through eviction, but their first court case to reclaim these rights only opened in 2015 (see Menges 2015). There have since been delays and dismissals of the case because of political factors involving both the government and the affected community; the latest appeal has (at the time of writing) still not been heard. Efforts to self-organize and mobilize the community into demonstrating the urgency of the recognition of their land rights in the park have been going on since 1996. The government's refusal to approve the chief that the community had elected as its representative in the Council of Traditional Leaders, prompted some Haiǁom San to organize a protest at the gates of the Etosha National Park to draw attention to their claim for ancestral land. This resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of 73 community members. However, they were later granted bail and the charges were eventually dropped (see Dieckmann 2007). Despite subsequent attempts by various civil society agents and international organizations to gain recognition for the San way of life and their ancestral land rights over Etosha National Park, there is little indication that a satisfactory legal resolution is happening soon.

As in many instances elsewhere, the indigenous defendants despair over the 'inaction' and delay that robs them of the opportunity to enjoy in their own lifetime what may eventually be granted to them. Moreover, once a court

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8   Part of this time regime is the streamlining of diverse interests into 'stakeholder groups' who may be allowed to air their views at 'hearings' at particular points in time. State officials tend to present themselves in this context as indispensable mediators in the process while, at times, masking their own interests.

ruling has been made, there is very little room for renegotiation, for a court ruling brings a sense of finality and 'eternity' in that it informs (at least in common law) any possible future claims. The politics of temporal frames works at several layers with politicians, bureaucrats, NGO or civil society representatives each having their own deadlines and cycles that may or may not coincide with those of the other parties involved. When conflicts with the government arise the general claims to promote and maintain the welfare particularly of marginalized parts of the population do not translate into a prioritizing of the temporal frames of marginalized groups such as the Haiǁom San. Their claims are subsumed under the dominant temporal frames.

5   The Positioning in Temporal Frames

Having sketched questions relating to the recognition, standardization and politics of temporal framings in the establishment of national parks we want to end by making some suggestions in terms of an outlook for future research and new theoretical ideas. It seems important to point out the diversity of time frames (and of practices of framing) that are to be found in this domain, not only across but also within countries.

The first task for researchers is to detect the largely implicit temporal frames that are being employed. The next task is to analyse who uses these temporal frames and who is guided by them without being aware of them. In this process, it is also important to note that having, or accepting, a particular time frame does not predetermine how agents position themselves (and others) in it. Even when a certain way of temporal framing becomes dominant and is standardized, there are open questions over what point in time one has reached within that accepted time frame.[9] Both in Germany and Namibia, it is commonplace

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9 As Alfred Gell (1992) outlined, this is a well-established problem in the anthropology of time. The collection of calendars, or what Gell (1992: 151) calls "A-series time" has been a longstanding interest in the ethnography of time. What seasonal calendars do people use to move around in their environment or to make specific uses of their environment? What ritual calendars do they consult to organize their social lives or deal with conflicts and crises? However, recording the calendars is one thing, positioning yourself with regard to any given calendar (or any other temporal frame) is yet another. Gell points out that many of the misunderstandings between local informants and researchers can be traced back to this distinction. While researchers try to elicit calendars as a temporal map with which to navigate an unknown territory, in their responses many informants for whom the calendar is a known territory grapple with the question of positioning themselves and others within these frames. In other words, the answers they give do not refer to the point in the calendar when they should plant, harvest, hunt, or do nothing. Rather,

for people to believe that 'the government' implements its plans irrespective of what locals think, even at a point in time when the processes are still open. Conversely, occasional resistance is exhibited long after the window of opportunity for influencing political processes has closed.

Positioning oneself in a time frame in the realm of nature conservation is often expressed historically in terms of initiators, early adopters and late adopters. The history of many nature reserves in southern Africa is one in which expatriate nature conservationists (occasionally former big game hunters) are seen as the initiators (see Carruthers 1995), government agencies, the military and NGOs as the early adopters, and the local community as the latecomers. The personnel in German national parks seem to assume that locals will continue to resist if they see their rights curtailed, but that opposition will peter out over time. In Namibia, the opposite assumption is more likely to be heard, namely that with growing population pressure and growing demands on land there will be more disputes about reserving land for nature reserves. In both cases, further research is needed to understand the diversity within each case and to determine both, similarities and differences.

In many instances, the temporal positioning is also hierarchical, namely based on ideas of seniority or centrality. In southern Africa, government officials (and expatriate consultants) frequently engage in patronizing discourses with the local people, whom they look upon as being of an inferior status. For example, when addressing the Khwe San residents at an annual general meeting of their community-based organization, a representative of the Namibian ministry in charge of running the Bwabwata National Park said that, "We [the ministry] are the parents in the Park, and you [Khwe] are the children. You do what your parents are telling you to do."[10] Patronizing discourses between state authorities and residents also have a track record in Germany (see Radkau 1996), where they are typically framed in terms of the centrality and importance of central state administrators (and scientists) and the backwardness or ignorance of local village residents.

Analytically and practically, we see the need not only to elicit variation (and agreement) on how to frame the future of national parks but also, and maybe more importantly, on how various participants in the process position themselves and one another in these temporal frames. Also, there is a growing awareness that humans are not the only ones determining temporal frames. With climate change and other influences by non-human agents on

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for the practitioner, the relevant question is whether one had reached that point in the (idealized) sequence of events for carrying out certain activities.

10   We are grateful to Attila Paksi for pointing this example out to us.

established timeframes, it may become necessary to alter the existing temporal framings for national parks. This includes the definition of what is an 'appropriate' or 'native' plant or what may be necessary adaptations and alterations of frames that were adopted when a park was first conceptualized but that may require revision as it develops. Although some human groups occasionally claim to speak for certain species of animals in a park, in all cases the temporal framings seem to be rather anthropocentric.

Acknowledgements

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The Future of Communal Lands in Africa: Experiences from Namibia

Romie Vonkie Nghitevelekwa

1 Introduction

The large-scale land losses of small-scale farmers are characteristic of sub-Saharan Africa and have had a significant impact on the rural economies of the region (Wily 2012: 751). For countries like Namibia and other former settler colonies, these land losses, or dispossessions as they are known, can be traced back to the colonial period, where they formed a key component of the colonial political economy. First, this resulted in a blatantly unequal distribution of land, with which countries like Namibia and South Africa continue to grapple. Second, colonial land policies created a dual land tenure system, which forced rural dwellers into one of two tenure forms along racial lines. African populations were to subsist on communal land, whereas the white settlers in the freehold land areas established a market economy. During the different epochs of colonialism and apartheid, communal land has undergone what Wolfgang Werner calls administrative incarnations (Werner 2015). The German colonial administration initially set up native reserves, while the South African apartheid administration established first homelands and, later, communal lands. The traditional authorities, working in close conjunction with a white dominated administration, were made responsible for managing the reserves and later homelands and/or communal land. After independence in 1990, the Namibian government retained the dual land tenure system of both communal and freehold land. The administration of communal land remained in the hands of the traditional authorities, a function that was given legal effect with the passing and enactment of the Communal Land Reform Act in 2002 (Republic of Namibia 2002).

What are the future prospects of communal land? At present, it is seen either as a safety net for the rural poor, or as a resource for commercial exploitation (Dobler 2013). Each of these conflicting uses not only serves the interests of different groups, but also produces different visions of land rights and envisions different futures (Nghitevelekwa 2020) and, it is these futures that I aim to untangle.

2   History of Communal Lands in Namibia

In pre-colonial Namibia, land tenure and land use were organized communally, albeit in a number of different ways. Southern Namibia, for example, where the people led pastoral lives, was characterized by a "high degree of mobility" and, although the authorities were aware of the markers of the areas under their respective jurisdictions, there were no rigid boundaries. The people in northern Namibia, however, were agro-pastoralists for whom "land was owned by the community as a whole" with individualized landholdings allocated to households on a permanent basis, though certain resources such as pastures were shared (Werner 1993: 137). Land dispossession by the German colonists, which was later consolidated by the South African apartheid regime and the implementation of land policies that introduced rigid boundaries and the system of dual land tenure, drastically changed these systems. The African populations were then confined to areas demarcated as reserves (later called homelands and then communal lands), which served the important function of providing cheap labour to the colonial market economy. For instance, by 1913 an estimated 12,500 male Africans were working on the farms and about 10,000 in the larger mining and government enterprises in the police zone. Contract labourers fuelled the colonial economy, but at the expense of the communal land areas (Melber 2010). In northern Namibia (Owambo), for example, the loss of strong young men to migrant labour (Haahti 1912 in Melber 2010: 39) seriously undermined traditional modes of production and social structures. While the arable lands were shrinking and producing fewer yields, the wages earned from the colonial economy were too low to sustain people's livelihoods in the communal areas (Melber 2010; also see Likuwa 2020).

Following the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission, which proposed an "amalgamation and expansion of some of the reserves" (Werner 1993: 145), the term 'reserves' was changed to 'ethnic homelands'. Then, from the 1980s onwards, legislation was passed that stipulated that 'ethnic homelands' were to be renamed 'communal lands'. One of the key legislations was the Representative Authorities Amendment Proclamation AG 4, in particular its Section 4, which vested the trusteeship of communal land to the administrator-general (Amoo 2014). Following independence, all colonial land policies and laws were repealed; trusteeship of communal land was then transferred to the independent Namibian state and the traditional authorities were made responsible for its administration.

3 Communal Lands and Early Penetration of Market-Exchange Relations

Despite domination by the colonial administration and indirect rule, monetary exchange relations did not fully penetrate the communal land areas. Although their pay packets were pathetically low, migrant labourers brought a cash-based economy into the communal areas, albeit, as Wolpe (1972) argues for South Africa, in highly unequal ways. To enable cheap reproduction and to prevent the emergence of a landless proletariat, the land was not commodified, but labour was. In addition, and also linked to labour migration, monetary exchange relations penetrated the communal land areas through the illegal trade in diamonds, although this was often under cover (Amupanda 2020).

Even before the start of the twentieth century, a form of petty trade was already in existence in which missionaries bartered European goods in exchange for such things as cattle, ivory, and ostrich feathers. Although earlier attempts were made to open trading stores in north-central Namibia, the first one did not materialize until 1925 and its existence was closely linked to labour migration (Dobler 2014). The spending power of labour migrants had opened up avenues for monetary exchange in communal areas, but these did not extend to land transactions. Moreover, land speculation remained absent from communal areas where land could be neither bought nor sold, and commercial leasing was out of the question. The productivity of the land remained largely oriented towards ensuring the basic subsistence needs of the resident population. In fact, the Namibian communal land areas were what I refer to as 'last frontiers'. These were the places where people continued to eke out a living; they were the safety nets for the poor.

4 Post-Independence Developments and the Scramble for the 'Last Frontiers'

The marginalized, underdeveloped 'homelands' were established to be just that, namely labour reserves and places in which to keep the so-called non-productive social groups – the elderly, the children, the women, and the sick. Today's communal land areas now face the threat of appropriation by the highest bidder. In 2002, 12 years after attaining independence, Namibia enacted a law on communal land – the Communal Land Reform Act – and this kick-started the communal land reform process. Through communal land reform, different kinds of land rights are registered and legally secured. Three kinds

(customary, leasehold, and occupational land rights) cater for the different forms of land use now found on communal land. Customary land rights are granted for farming and residential use, and their statutory protection is particularly important in the context of high competition. Leasehold rights are granted for general business and commercially oriented agricultural purposes, while occupational land rights are granted for public bodies such as educational and health institutions.

James Ferguson correctly observes that for southern Africa "the importance of land, and the desire for it, seems in some ways to loom as large as ever" (Ferguson 2013: 167). In Namibia, competition for land is fierce. There is, however, less communal than freehold land available (38 per cent as opposed to 48 per cent of the total land area respectively). Speculation in the communal areas, be it for land or for land-based resources such as timber, is now an everyday occurrence (Peters 2020). A variety of different forces and actors, as well as economic and social processes, account for this development. The demand for land as a basic safety net for residents remains. An interest in this land also comes from people living in urban areas as far as 700 kilometres away. Some argue that the members of this group, particularly the wealthier ones, feel that they ought to own farmland – and a substantial amount at that – in their home village as a mark of their status and willingness to maintain links with their place of origin (Schnegg et al. 2013). It is impossible to undervalue the relationship between land, a sense of belonging, and social identity. Most urban dwellers do not regard the urban areas in which they live as home. On the contrary, home is the rural village; it is where they are expected to own land, although some use their power to amass large tracts at the expense of other communal land users.

The increased demand for communal land has driven market exchange transactions that are illegal because the communal land legislation prohibits them (Mendelsohn and Nghitevelekwa 2016). Moreover, the desire for communal land derives from a wish to invest not only in large-scale market-oriented cash-crop production and cattle herding, but also in tourism and the hospitality industry and, in the process, to use foreign investors and their national partners. By entering into concession agreements with community-based institutions, like conservancies, more established tourism and hospitality businesses can benefit from the best kept natural environments and cultural endowments on communal land and develop them into highly valuable tourism enterprises. There are other economically and developmentally-driven interests in the land. For instance, the alienation of communal land for the establishment or expansion of townlands is widespread. Townlands in northern Namibia are mushrooming in once rural and communal areas. With the

cooperation of the Ministry of Rural and Urban Development, town councils can turn these lands into townlands. According to the Communal Land Reform Act (2002), once an area has been declared a townland, it ceases to be communal land and, in terms of governance and administration, shifts from the jurisdiction of the traditional authorities to that of the town councils. In these various ways, communal land is being commodified (Lenggenhager et al. 2021).

Unlike the scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century (Carmody 2011), today's scramble is for the 'last frontiers' – the public land, or *edu laaveshe* (land for all), as local land users in north-central Namibia's communal areas refer to it – that has remained in the hands of the poor. Natural resources (be they mineral or marine-based) have, through the processes of exploitation and underdevelopment, been exported to faraway lands. The old players remain, but new players seek new ground for the extraction and exploitation of land and land-based resources. Indeed, Africa's 'last frontiers' are playing fields for global and local investors. Different players toss dominoes as they compete to influence social networks to assert their interests. Biofuels and minerals (iron, cobalt) have gained significance and prominence (AUC-ECA-AfDB Consortium 2010). Lucrative licences for wildlife, oil exploration, fisheries (see the Fishrot scandal) have been granted to international 'investors'. In Namibia, the growing demand for timber and tobacco for the Asian economies has also become apparent. Areas such as the Kavango, diverse in biological diversity and with a good track record in conservation, are now open to oil exploration by Canadian investors. In short, communal land areas are being progressively integrated into market relations (Nghitevelekwa 2020).

5   The Dynamics of Land Commodification: Who is Benefiting?

The dynamics and compulsions behind the commodification of Namibia's communal land areas are driven by more than the demand of hungry Asian economies for cheap raw materials. The need to eradicate poverty and other social ills, such as high levels of unemployment, is also used to justify the foreign direct investments. There is a wide consensus that economic progress and poverty alleviation can only be achieved within the context of a market-oriented economy. According to this view, selling the labour force, land and other natural resources, and creating a market for them, is fundamental to alleviating poverty. The preoccupation with what Ian Hacking (1982, cited in Appadurai 2013: 295) called "the avalanche of numbers about population, poverty, profit, and predation", produces economic initiatives that are often

approved and implemented at any cost. It is often not asked who these invest-ments and developments are meant to serve and how useful they are to the lives of the target population.

Since independence, Namibia's economy has grown considerably, from US$ 2.804 billion in 1990 to US$ 12.37 billion in 2019, although it was expected to record a 7.3 per cent contraction in 2020 because of the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bank of Namibia 2020). Although this growth has enabled the country to graduate to the status of upper middle-income country, it has failed to address the social ills that the country is facing. Unemployment and poverty rates remain high at 33.4 per cent and 26.9 per cent respectively (Namibia Statistics Agency 2018, 2019). Unemployment and poverty are most pronounced in the rural, and thus communal, land areas. Hence, these social ills are used as justification for much needed 'investment' and 'development'. There is a need to interrogate the diverse implications of market penetration. Central to this interrogation should be the question of whether the local pop-ulation will be able to participate actively and benefit from a market-driven rural economy, or will the people continue to be reduced to mere spectators. This conundrum is questioned in the following two examples.

In 2019, the Namibian Cabinet approved the development of a Namibia Oriental Tobacco CC project in the Zambezi Region, where climate and soil conditions are better than elsewhere in the country. The company had applied for a 99-year lease to grow tobacco on 10,000 hectares of communal land (Tjitemisa 2019) to be developed by a Chinese investor with a local partner. It is unclear how the general populace in the area will benefit. How substantial and meaningful will these benefits be? To what extent will the project eradi-cate poverty or reduce unemployment? What kinds of employment will it cre-ate? Will it just generate a working poor as many of these kinds of projects do? Are these kinds of projects turning those who have long lived on and off the land into a landless proletariat, or force them to squat with relatives in neighbouring communities? While these kinds of initiatives are approved and supported in the name of 'investment' and the 'free market', in practice, can they be construed to be nothing but the classical extraction of Africa's raw materials for further processing in the destination zones? One is further left with an important question: what kind of mechanisms would need to be in place to prevent or end unwanted consequences and which ones could ensure the equitable sharing of revenues and environmental sustainability?

Asian companies, particularly Chinese and Vietnamese ones, have found a new niche in Namibia, namely forest logging. For the past three or so years, truckloads of timber – including precious rosewood – have been travelling along the Trans-Kalahari Highway to and from northeastern Namibia (some

also from landlocked Zambia, which relies on Namibia for access to the coast) to the port of Walvis Bay. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform and the Ministry of the Environment, Forestry and Tourism, the two government bodies responsible for safeguarding Namibia's environment, have received numerous requests from the public to put a stop to this illegal logging of timber (*The Namibian* 2019). According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, in the first two months of 2019, about 75,000 tons of timber were exported from Namibia, at an estimated value of N$ 94 million (Brandt 2019). Because of the high consumer demand in China for dark red tropical hardwood species, the Chinese market is a big importer of rosewood – the main tree species logged. Key to the logging and exploitation of timber are questions of environmental sustainability and of how, given that these trees are felled in communal land, the communities have benefited. How much of the revenue trickles down to the people living in the areas where the timber has been logged? While timber logging does not compete for space with smallholders, it nonetheless creates environmental problems in terms of deforestation and biodiversity loss, which is also a loss for communities already affected by climate change. The timber products are extracted from rural and communal areas where poverty is rife, but most of the profits derived from them go to commercial companies abroad. Whereas some cash remains with the local partners or authorities, there is a lack of transparency and of democratic control over it.

6   Conclusion: How Can Local Populations Benefit?

When looking at the future, Arjun Appadurai (2013) detects a tension between the ethics of *possibility* and of *probability*. The ethics of possibility encompasses views on "thinking, feeling, and acting that increase the horizon of hope, that expand the field of imagination, that produce greater equity … in the capacity to aspire, and that widen the field of informed, creative, and critical citizenship" (Appadurai 2013: 295). The ethics of probability, by contrast, encompasses ideas on "thinking, feeling, and acting that flow out of what Ian Hacking called 'the avalanche of numbers' or what Michel Foucault [1979] saw as the capillary dangers of modern regimes of diagnosis, counting, and accounting" (Appadurai 2013: 295). In this context, the *probability* is that, if left to run its course, the penetration of markets will have disastrous implications for most of the rural population; it will exacerbate existing inequalities and, in the event of uncontrolled timber logging, will also have catastrophic effects on the environment. The *possibility*, on the other hand, lies in the prospect of ongoing tenure reform

programmes successfully offering statutory protection to customary land rights in communal areas. The tenure reform that is currently ongoing in most African countries – and in Namibia through the communal land reform programme – "is offering Africa an unexpected opportunity to move into a more inclusive and equitable era of social transformation through decolonizing property rights" (Wily 2020: 57). While legal recognition and protection has been extended to customary land rights, the hope should lie in the possibility of recognition and protection also preventing appropriation. So far, however, "legal recognition has not prevented appropriation" (Peters 2020: 80). If we allow the highest bidder to capture the communal land at the expense of the rural poor, we jeopardize our ability to look at the future with aspiration, anticipation, and imagination (Appadurai 2013: 286). Today's tenure reform should be sufficiently transformative to secure communal land users' rights against appropriation and to include those who inhabit communal land as veritable partners in development, and not as mere spectators as their long-held resources are exploited by others through capitalism. Surely, communal land should not be excluded from the process of maximizing its potential. However, the current legal framework is inadequate to the task of ensuring that this is done in an inclusive and equitable manner. Better regulations should be introduced to strengthen protection and to allow for a fairer distribution of benefits from the commercial use of communal land.

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Confronting

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Introduction to Part 3

The chapters grouped in this section concentrate on various arenas, from the theatre of conflict in the Sahel to postcolonial debates on language policy. What they have in common is a firm empirical grasp of the complexities of conflict and tensions in contemporary (and future) Africa. Conflict and antagonism, however, should also be regarded as forms of futuring, even if their consequences usually come at the expense of those already on the fringe.

For instance, in her opening chapter, Mirjam de Bruijn observes that in the Sahel, the past has overtaken the present, with yesteryear's confrontations clearly feeding into an immediate future of turmoil and profound insecurity, with digital channels having taken up the role of the erstwhile trans-Sahara trade routes. As the future of the new power entities operating in the region is uncertain at best, de Bruijn argues in favour of placing more emphasis on the new connectivities that have emerged from the ashes of the old ones.

Next, Ulf Engel asks whether or not the arrival of COVID-19 on African shores could have been foreseen. He takes a closer look at the institutions and think tanks that set the scenarios for policy-makers and describes how the professional future-makers acknowledged the likelihood of a widespread epidemic, yet framed it as a security risk and political threat. The question remains of why policy makers failed to heed these early warnings, even although a number of institutions for dealing with outbreaks of infectious disease were already firmly in place.

In their contribution Clement Chipanda and Tom Tom home in on the challenges Zimbabwean youths face in gaining access to land. Despite however the ongoing land reform, youngsters are unable to profit from it. Both formal and informal access pose obstacles of their own, but overall, the authors conclude, gender, seniority and existing relations throw up barriers in their quest for food and livelihood security.

Land also features prominently in Kennedy Agade Mkutu's analysis. His chapter takes us to northern Kenya, where the Kenyan government is lending its support to various large-scale infrastructural development projects, which, promoted by local and national elites, are further marginalizing the rural poor, and turning fundamental disagreements into potential sources of violent conflict.

The fifth contribution to this section is by Katrien Pype, who eloquently discusses how the inhabitants of 'Digital Kinshasa' try to come to grips with the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on their rejection of racist stereotypes and their understanding of global power imbalances, their online activities concerning

the pandemic are best understood as social commentaries and as attempts to implement political change, at times holding local decision-makers accountable, at others reversing the saviour narrative.

Sixth and finally, Inge Brinkman stages a confrontation between two monuments of African literature, Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Their voices, along with those of others, lay bare the complexities of the postcolonial debate. For too long, Brinkman argues, postcolonial theory has been stifled by a reliance on decontextualized abstraction. A closer look does, indeed, reveal the messiness of colonialism; it also warns against the facile dichotomies of the present.

Connected Sahel-Sahara in Turmoil:
The Past in the Future

Mirjam de Bruijn

1   **Introduction**

This essay is about a confrontation surrounding the political transformation of
the Sahel in recent decades. As a regular guest of good friends in the region, to
which I had been travelling since 1987, I thought that I was well-informed about
and familiar with the local culture and the people's sentiments, so it has been a
shock to see the region in such turmoil. Witnessing the local people, especially
the pastoral groups, turning to another interpretation of the world has made
me question my former assumptions. However, the research in which I have
been engaging in recent years has yielded some insights into the present situ-
ation (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995). Deep inequality in Sahelian society, the
semi nomadic population's difficult relationships with neighbouring groups,
and their marginal position vis-à-vis the national state, have had economic
and political ramifications. In an attempt to understand the links between
the pastoral nomads' present position and their possible future in the Sahel,
I present a view of the troublesome situation in the Sahel from the local play-
ers' perspective, with 'communication and connectivity' seen as important to
socio-political change and as contributors to the 'violence' in the Sahel today
(Laurie and Shaw 2018). There are of course many other factors at play. Climate
change, changing livelihood conditions, the fact that it is a war over resources,
and the geo-political interferences of France and China are also important,
but here my focus is on communication and connectivity as central elements
in the violence.

The Sahel-Sahara region is back at the centre of world politics; it is mak-
ing history, particularly in the light of the region's partial subjugation by jihadi
groups who oppose the current postcolonial administration and want to estab-
lish an Islamic state. Islam has a long history in the Sahel and local scholars
have often been central to the various debates between different forms of
Islam. Not all social groups, however, followed these religious undercurrents.
For instance, similar to former slaves, the nomadic groups were long denied
access to Islam, and it is only in the last few decades that they have become
actively involved in joining Koranic schools and becoming Muslim scholars and
marabouts, and they tend to be especially open to 'new' radical ideas. Muslim

radical groups based in Algeria and Syria influence and support the Sahelian Muslim jihadi groups and leaders engaged in the Sahel upheaval. International and locally-based Muslim groups organize through different means of communication, including mobile phones and social media to get their messages across and to recruit new followers and supporters. Many (mainly) men from pastoral groups from the Sahel have joined their ranks and the Sahara Desert is now a sea of supportive connections between them.

In this short contribution, I attempt to relate this new history to the region's previous history and thereby lay the groundwork for imagining its future. This is a narrative about modernity and counter-modernity, a narrative in which pre-modern times are idealized through the physical revival of trans-Saharan routes, and the imposition of a rule of order through Islamic law. Yet, at the same time, it is critical of the modern state for having absorbed hierarchies established in medieval times. In this regard, memories of the past play a contradictory role and inform different possible roads to the future.

2   The Trans-Sahara Routes and Empires

The Sahel-Sahara conjures up a contradictory picture: it is both an untamed world without boundaries and a provider of wealth to the empires that control the trans-Saharan routes. The region was once central to the economic, political, and social dynamics that defined the world, as evident from the large empires established during its 'rich' Middle Ages – Mali (1230–1600), Songhay (1464–1591), Segu (1640–1861), Kanem (700–1380), and Bornou (1380–1893). These empires depended on the routes crossing the Sahara Desert and their rulers collaborated with the nomadic pastoralists (Monroe 2013; Wolf 1982: 25–31) trading in goods such as gold, salt and slaves: in fact, slavery was an integral part of the economic and social organization of the region (Evans and Robinson 1995). These empires were also partly driven by the elite ideology of Islam (see van Dalen 2016), but with the decline in the trans-Saharan trade in the seventeenth century, with the exception of Kanem–Bornou, they eventually petered out. Then, when the trade routes were reoriented towards the coast, and the large Saharan cities of Timbuktu and Gao fell to the Almoravids' destructive accession to power, the trans-Sahara trade could no longer sustain the empires and they gave way to smaller kingdoms and chaos. Nonetheless, the racial and hierarchical structures of these empires endured and continue to colour socio-political relations in the Sahel (Hall 2011).

3   Islam as an Ideology of Power and Organization

In the early nineteenth century, a new phase in empire-building began when Fulani jihads assumed power in the Sahel. The Hausa-Fulani, or Sokoto, Empire was established in 1804, with the Adamawa Emirate, which extends into what is now Chad comprising its outer eastern part. In 1818, the Macina Empire was established in what is now central Mali. In 1850, the jihad of Al Hajj Umar Tall was launched (from the west, in Senegal) and gradually conquered the Sahel (Hanson 1996), taking over Macina in 1862. For these empires, people were again an important form of wealth, and the economy was largely dependent on slavery. Islam became the foundation of social organization and culture in these empires, where sharia law was applied and where dancing and drinking alcohol were forbidden. In particular, Macina is described as having been a piously ruled empire (Sanankoua 1990), but rebellions against the power-holders were never strong enough to dismantle their power (de Bruijn and van Dijk 2001).

   The expansion of the Fulani jihad ended in a confrontation with the French, who had succeeded in establishing colonial rule by the beginning of the twentieth century. Colonial rule, unfortunately, did not end the socio-political hierarchies established during the early and later empires; instead, the hierarchical structures continued in the racial ideology and economic division of labour (Hall 2011). The colonial project included a reorientation of trade towards the coast of sub-Saharan Africa, which effectively lost the Sahara Desert and Sahel its place in the world. Despite its rich pre-colonial heritage – both venerated as ideal and contested for its deeply engrained social inequalities – it lost its own agency.

4   Turmoil in the Sahel

Over the past two decades, violent conflicts in the region south of the Sahara have been attracting international media attention. These include the Darfurian crisis in Chad and Sudan that began in 2003; the refugee crisis in central Africa resulting from the conflict in the Central African Republic that began in 2013; the arrival (around 2009) of Boko Haram, the jihadi group controlling the Lake Chad area and northern Nigeria; and the rebellion that broke out in Mali in 2012 after the fall of Gaddafi, which jihadi groups soon hijacked. The relative peace since the 1990s, which followed a period of unrest after independence, has ended and the Sahel has seen a gradual breakdown in law and order. Regular armies and nation-states have lost control and large sections of the population

have ceased to recognize their authority. Ethnic violence, excessive killings by armies, and the emergence of all kinds of armed militia have become part of the conflict landscape and of daily life for the local populations. This chaos, not to mention lack of security, is probably the main reason why people accept the militant groups. In the northern Sahelian regions, these groups are ideologically committed to jihad and are affiliated with international jihadi groups such as al-Qaeda, AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), and Islamic State. In the southern Sahel, the militant groups that arose from a perceived need to oppose the jihadi groups operating in areas where the state had lost control are now in charge. One such group is Dozo, a secret society made up of traditional hunters and found in various parts of West and central Africa. It is set up to assure the security of its communities and, in this role, it has the support of the local population.

5   The Past in the Present

Forgotten and unforgotten pasts inform the present (Trouillot 2015) and help us imagine the future. Can the present cast light on former Sahelian empires? The importance of the past operates at two levels. First, stories and images from the pre-colonial era provide people with the collective memory they use to exert power in the present. Second, remembering the past plays a role in establishing a person's identity, and it does not need to be a conscious process (de Bruijn and Both 2018; Stoler 2016). This leads to two further points, namely (a) how the re-establishment and reimagination of the Sahel-Sahara as a space for communication and economic activity is seen as an important source of wealth for empire; and (b) how the pre-colonial past is remembered informs both the leaders of the 'counter' movements and the population and citizenry at large of the new power constellations of the present.

6   Reconnecting the Shores of the Sahel to the North

In their seminal article on communications between north and south Sahara, Walther and Retaillé (2008) have shown how communication networks have affected the Sahel-Sahara for centuries. Caravan routes, with their caravanserais, have provided a grid along which to introduce modern communication technologies like transport routes and mobile phone networks. Of course, with the insecurity in the region, these have also assumed other forms, but the basic principle of connectivity and the Sahara as a sea of connections

remains unchanged. Furthermore, nomadic pastoralists are still the guard-ians of these routes, albeit with trucks now instead of camels. Despite changes in the intensity of the movement along these routes, they have always been used by salt caravans travelling through the desert from Tripoli to Darfur, by labour migrants moving from Chad to Libya, and by migrants on their way to Europe, not to mention the illegal traders who ply the less-recognized, more concealed routes. Walther and Retaillé argue that these were already commu-nication routes, but that the introduction of new communication technologies has merely updated them with Orange and MTN antennae positioned along various nodes in the Sahara/Sahel network. How do these new links across the Sahara affect the present-day situation?

When Gaddafi fell in 2011, the Tuareg troops serving him returned to Mali where they formed the core of a rebellion that broke out there. Jihadi groups partly based in Algeria soon hijacked the rebellion and, by forming a coalition with locally-based jihadi groups, have since established their rule in parts of the Sahara. I suggest that the entry of these external jihadi groups into the Sahelian region – where they joined locally-based Muslim leaders, were able to reorganize local (Muslim) communities, and came close to establishing an Islamic state – is also a consequence of their old Sahara-Sahel connections, which new commu-nication technologies now facilitate. That they use old transport routes to fuel the war, old traffic and other routes to earn money to feed into the war (often involving people smuggling and hiding in oases), is but one indication of the historical antecedents of their communication history. In addition, one detects a certain pride in their propaganda that they are the masters of the Sahara.

In March 2017, an alliance between international and Sahel-based Muslim radical groups was announced. The Macina Liberation Front, a Fulani-based group led by Hamma Koufa, joined Ansar Dine, a Tamacheck-based group, AQIM, Al-Mourabitoun (formerly the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa), and the support group for Islam and Muslims, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin. A video declaring their unity and common goals, and reaching out to all social media channels, accompanied the announcement. Without the trans-Sahara networks to facilitate communication and economic advancement, a jihadi war in the Sahel would be impossible. In a number of ways, therefore, we are back in old times.

7   Mobility of Ideas: Communication Routes

The routes are not just traffic points or nodes; they are connections or linkages through which ideas and messages once carried by people on camelback are

shared with the communities they encounter on their way. While the travellers may include Muslim scholars and non-religious thinkers, the important factor is that their ideas and norms also accompany them on their journey (see de Bruijn et al. 2001) and that the spread of ideas in this manner is part of culture. Travellers and travelling scholars are a normal phenomenon in the Sahel, and their words are heard when they are offered food and a place to stay. This is how new ideas and philosophies travel and have done since time immemorial. Similar dynamics are evident in the recent spread of new Muslim ideologies, though now in a modern format: today they travel not only physically, but also on mobile phones and over the social media. For example, Hamma Koufa (Galy Cissé 2019) makes specific historical references in his sermons to establish the glory of the Fulani conveyed over the new communication networks, which is characteristic of Sahel culture.

Specific ideologies linked to the present-day jihad, such as Salafism or orthodox Islam, were already circulating in the region before the arrival of this 'new' jihad. Most researchers and observers were unaware of the phenomenon because it travelled largely unseen through rural areas and families. These were travellers hosted by communities on the fringes of the Sahara. Today 'travelling' strangers, like those in the past, have strong messages about jihad and sharia law and are guided by translators who speak to the local communities.

8   Messages Reviving the Past: Of Inequality and Anti-Western Sentiments

The European colonial powers did not change the hierarchical structures of the society inherited from the Middle Ages and nineteenth century. Moreover, the recent politics of decentralization imposed on national states has not brought more equality; instead, corruption has been installed as part of culture and society. The racial hierarchies of the olden days have also been perpetuated (Hall 2011). Master–slave relations, and memories of the slave trade are still very present in discursive practice – in oral traditions, rituals, material relations such as labour relations, and access to resources. In general, these relations seem to have evaporated with modernity; however, in many Sahelian societies they are still visible for those with the perspicacity to see beneath the surface (Pelckmans 2011). The references to these pre-colonial powers are an example of reformulating the past to fit a present-day ideology. For instance, people who live in Macina currently formulate their wish to return to the Diina, the theocratic rule of Seeku Amadou (Macina Empire 1818–53), by comparing the rules of the new jihad with those of former times. Their hope is to

be able to end the unfair treatment they have experienced under the rule of the Malian state.

The preachings of Hamma Koufa that circulate through the Sahel by means of mobile telephony give an explanation about the marginalization of certain groups in society and a call for a campaign against corruption, with strong anti-Western (colonial powers) rhetoric and advocacy for a better, more just society. In this regard, he refers specifically to the time of the Macina Empire (Galy Cissé 2019). This is a message that one can also read from the videos circulated by the leaders of Boko Haram. In these narratives we hear a pronounced respect for former times, and we see a call for the subjugation of the population to a new regime of sharia law. They preach a new (restored) caliphate as the ideal future. The population in the Sahel is receiving these messages, and it is clear that they resonate with the structural grievances of many Sahelians, who have seen a degradation of their livelihood and who have experienced no positive support from the state.

The other side of the story is that other groups (those enslaved in this era) remember the earlier times as a period of fear and chaos. Reliving old master–slave relations, fearing nineteenth-century jihadists, and internalizing racist relations based on colour, all play a part in the inter- and intra-group violence. The modern ideology of democracy and the view that people are equal because they can vote, does not negate the persistence of the hierarchical relationships of old, for they have never really disappeared. The present-day violence in the region should be read through a lens that takes the past seriously; only then can the attacks on Fulani villages, and the fear in the eyes of the Dogon, become an understood reality (as witnessed during interviews with refugees in Bougouni and Bamako, Mali).[1]

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and social media reinforce the ideologies of mobility and travelling. Communication has power, and through access to ICTs people gain political agency (Castells 2013; Dafoe and Lyall 2015). The messages that travel over the digital media reach large numbers of people and, since the Sahel and Sahara are strongly connected, certainly influence their ideas and are one of the reasons why they are joining vigilante groups and no longer shying away from using violence. On these mobile phone tracks from Senegal to Chad, similar messages are received and processed in the minds of the often young people who access these media.

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1   www.nomadesahel.org.

A background of duress, coupled with these digital influences, informs the choices and actions of today's youth.

9   Past Connecting the Imagined Future

The future promises a networked Sahel-Sahara in which power is defined through the connectivities created in religious settings, commercial exchanges, and ethnic social relationships. These in turn are derived from a shared distant past and, because it seems to inform the future, the distant past has now become the recent past. How will the powers controlling the trans-Saharan routes affect the Sahel? Will the violence of today play out in future generations? Will the newly created powers fall apart in much the same way as those of the old empires? Will the social media that now create unity among certain groups also create a network of resistance to the central powers? Will such resistance create new power centres and finally sweep away the power of the corrupt nation-state and, in the process, readapt the conscious or unconscious narratives and practices from a violent past?

The outcome is highly uncertain. To understand the future, we have to delve deep into how new connectivities relate to the connectivities and ruptures of the past, and we also have to understand how far they follow old lines of reasoning and sociology. The unfolding world of the future might not be a sociopolitical paradise. Most interventions in the conflict by international agencies and national governments fail to consider the deep history of the region. The government of Mali's recent attempts to negotiate with the jihadi groups in the Sahel are probably the only hope, but they are certainly no guarantee of a 'good deal'. Reliving past hierarchies is not really what the people of the Sahel want, although they perhaps feel more listened to and heard by these jihadi groups than by anyone else (de Bruijn and van Dijk 2019). While the example of the Taliban in Afghanistan is not comparable, in that it has profoundly changed the Afghan socio-political and cultural space, we can certainly draw lessons from it.

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Black Swan, Grey Swan? Pandemic Scenarios and African Peace and Security Futures

Ulf Engel

1　　Introduction

In the world of states, international organizations and national governments are dealing with futures every day. These futures are constructed in many ways and in different social arenas (Appadurai 2013; Goldstone and Obarrio 2017). Obviously, in politics they can become fairly crucial for everyone's life. Policy planning has to prepare for tomorrows that are usually unknown, or at least difficult for contemporaries to grasp fully, depending on the time horizon. How exactly this is done may differ from case to case. Policy actors routinely make use of various future-constructing techniques – from 'outlooks' to 'perspectives', from 'trends' to 'prognosis', and from 'scenarios' to 'forecasts'. These techniques are based on different, distinct methodologies, which have in common that they aim to look at concrete events and incidents, but also relevant developments beyond today's seemingly apparent certainties (Tetlock and Gardner 2016).

In this short contribution, I am interested in very general terms in how African futures in the politico-security realm have, if at all, narrated the threat of epidemics and pandemics. To what extent was the outbreak of something like the coronavirus part of relevant African future scenarios and, thus, could have come onto the radar of relevant decision-makers? More concretely, I will look at how epidemics such as Ebola and pandemics like the acute respiratory syndrome COVID-19 have been identified as threats to peace and security. Off the cuff, most people would agree with the statement that COVID-19 is, what in this trade is called, a *black swan* – something that is highly improbable and therefore not predictable or foreseeable at all (Taleb 2007). In the area of politics, prominent and often cited examples of black swans are the Jom Kippur war of 1973, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990/1, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the attacks of 9/11 in 2001, or the uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East in 2011. Interestingly, in hindsight most of these events actually turned out to be *grey swans* – that is events for which early warning information was in fact available within the respective system, often the intelligence community or specific early warning systems (see Engel 2019), but for various reasons was not recognized, acknowledged or followed-up (see Davis 2016; Jervis 2009).

In the following I will, first, briefly recall how in the mid-2010s the African Union framed epidemics as a so-called 'non-traditional' peace and security concern. Second, I will scrutinize three prominent politico-security scenarios that have been developed in recent years on African futures: how are they discussing the relevance of epidemics and pandemics? So, the question discussed here is not whether the outbreak of COVID-19 was predictable, but to what extend it could have been on the radar of relevant decision-makers. This is followed by brief conclusions.

2 The African Union and the Making of 'Non-Traditional' Peace and Security Threats: Epidemics and Pandemics

The Ebola epidemic broke out the first time in 1976 near a river called Ebola (the 'black river') in the northern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Since, regular outbreaks of the disease have been recorded. Following renewed onsets of Ebola in 2014 in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) as well as in the DRC, Ebola got onto the radar of the African Union (AU). The AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government made reference to the epidemic for the first time in 2012 (AU Assembly 2012), following a smaller number of incidents in the DRC and Uganda. In those days it was treated as a public health issue that called for regional coordination of public health systems. But this discourse shifted with the new outbreaks of Ebola in 2014 in West Africa, partly because post-conflict countries with little societal resilience were affected. The debate was taken to the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), the highest decision-making body between biannual summits. Ebola was discussed on 19 August 2014 (450th PSC meeting), 29 October 2014 (464th meeting), 28 November 2014 (471st meeting) and 19 December 2014 (478th meeting). And, while the AU Assembly continued to coordinate the disease prevention and mitigation efforts of member states (AU Assembly 2015a), Ebola was also linked to post-conflict reconstruction and development policies in affected countries (AU Assembly 2015b), especially those that have come out of civil wars, like Liberia (1989–97, 1999–2003) and Sierra Leone (1991–2002). This firmly established epidemics as a 'non-traditional' security threat on the agenda of the African Union, and warranted the attention of the continental body as well as the regional economic communities and AU member states – alongside El Niño and illicit financial flows. This new awareness also led to the establishment of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) to equip the Union with a monitoring and coordination mechanism (see Engel 2020). Around 2014/15, epidemics also become a data monitoring

category for the AU Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), which is advising the chairperson of the AU Commission and the PSC on courses of action to prevent or mitigate violent conflict.[1]

3   "The Future … is no Longer Quite What it Used to be"[2] – African Futures Scenarios

On the eve of 2020, academic and journalistic layperson forecasts for 'Africa in the year 2020' did not capture pandemics as an important upcoming issue. Analysis was limited to the 'known knowns', such as upcoming elections or ongoing violent conflict (see, for instance, Africa Report 2019; Lakemann and Lierl 2020; Malley 2019). As usual, little attention was paid to the 'known unknowns', or even the 'unknown unknowns'. But how about more systematic and professional efforts at scenario-building? In the following, and in the tradition of private sector and intelligence contributions to this field, scenarios are treated as a tool for planning and decision-making. They

> represent a distinct, plausible picture of a segment of the future. Because it is impossible to know the future precisely, the solution is to create several scenarios. These scenarios are, essentially, specially constructed stories about the future, each one modelling a distinct, plausible outcome.
> CLARK 2004: 173

In the past decade, three scenarios for African futures stand out – the *African Futures 2050 Report* published by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) (Cilliers et al. 2011); the *African Futures: Horizon 2025* of the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) (Arnould and Strazzari 2017); and the US National Intelligence Council's (NIC) *Global Trends Report: Sub-Saharan Africa* (NIC 2017). Obviously, the three scenarios have been produced at different moments in time (2011 and 2017 respectively), are addressing different temporal horizons (from 2025 to 2050), and target different audiences.

The *African Futures 2050 Report* is the product of a partnership between the Pretoria-based ISS and the Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures at the University of Denver, Colorado. It is a forecasting tool, based on an 'international futures' model. The target audience includes the NEPAD Planning and

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1   Personal observations at the AU Peace and Security Department, Addis Ababa, 24 September 2014, 16 January 2015 and 18 March 2015.

2   Valéry (1948: 135). The French poet and philosopher Paul Valéry (1871–1945) coined a version of the phrase in French in 1937 in an essay titled "Notre destin et les lettres".

Coordination Agency, the African Development Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, and the African Union, among others. The report was published in 2011, that is before the crucial Ebola outbreak in West Africa. It looks at a time horizon of forty years. *African Futures 2050* discusses various peace and security dynamics. Increasing urbanization and the governance of complex urban spaces, climate change, drugs-related violence, (politized) religion, military capacities and the resilience of societies are identified as the main drivers or game changers (Cilliers et al. 2011: 76–9). The Ebola epidemic is not mentioned in the scenario, though attention is paid to HIV/AIDS (Cilliers et al. 2011: 11, 17, 18, 25, 70).

African Futures: Horizon 2025 is a forecasting report published in 2017 by the Paris-based EU Institute for Security Studies, the EU agency for analysing foreign, security and defence policy issues. Previous studies have been conducted on the Arab world (2015), Russia (2016) and China (2017). The report identifies a number of 'systemic' and 'macrosocial drivers' for African futures. The latter include 'epidemics', with the other drivers in this category being demographics, gender attitudes, education and corruption. However, the report remains fairly vague and unspecific and Ebola is not mentioned as such. As Arnould and Strazzari (2017: 9) put it:

> Lastly, while advances have been made in tackling certain serious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and reducing infant mortality, periodic public health crises and epidemics will continue to pose significant challenges in Africa over the longer term, and may even increase under the effect of climate change. These not only carry high human costs but also economic and political costs that will determine whether some of the identified socio-political and economic transformations will produce positive or rather negative effects.

Finally, every four years the US National Intelligence Council (Washington DC) produces a five-year forecast and strategic assessments based on open sources. Within the set of the three scenario reports analysed here, the NIC 2017 forecast has a very short time horizon (2017–21). Unlike the ISS and EUISS, the methodology is descriptive and explorative, rather than strictly scenario-based. The overall forecast states that "in the next five years, sub-Saharan Africa will become more populous, youthful, urban, mobile, educated, and networked" (NIC 2017: 117). The main drivers of the scenario are "mass mobilization, urbanization, and religious affiliation". And the violence forecast highlights that "complex security problems will mount, ethnic tension escalate, and religious extremism, particularly radical Islam and fundamentalist Christianity, will spread even further" (NIC 2017: 117). The report does not discuss epidemics or

pandemics in particular, though it briefly mentions challenges that "transcend national borders and individual states' capacities and require coordinated multinational action" (NIC 2017: 118). However, the report clearly emphasizes that previous actions on HIV/AIDS and Ebola "spotlight the potential for further health gains through partnerships between African states and the international community" (NIC 2017: 121).

4   Concluding Observations

The question addressed in this vignette was to what extent the outbreak of COVID-19 could have been on the radar of relevant decision-makers, and what kind of African futures have been developed in this respect. It seems that for African decision-makers, COVID-19 was more of a black than a grey swan. On the one hand, and after the Ebola crisis in West Africa (2014–16), the levels of preparedness of the African Union had risen through the launching of the Africa CDC in 2017. This was supported by ongoing debates in the PSC on the security threat that epidemics and pandemics can potentially pose. This seems to indicate that there was general, yet not case-specific awareness. On the other hand, no one 'forecasted' or 'predicted' that something like the coronavirus could make its landfall on the continent. However, at least some institutions were in place to monitor the outbreak and, so some extend, coordinate policy responses (Engel 2020). This differs from the few prominent scenarios published on African futures over the last decade (ISS, EUISS, NIC). They only superficially discuss the likelihood of a deadly pandemic of this kind, which is in stark contrast to the other scenarios already published elsewhere in 2013 (see DBT 2013).[3] So, with regard to the latter, at least from a scenario-building perspective, COVID-19 is indeed a grey swan: there was early warning information available – a plausible future was described. Yet, decisions-makers did not take it up for policy planning purposes. This happens rather often with scenarios. This is partly explained by the different cognitive mindsets and operational cultures in which scenario-builders and decisions-makers are living

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3   In 2013, the German government tabled a report to parliament on its risk assessment regarding the civil protection of the German population (drafted by the Berlin-based Robert Koch Institute, the government's central institution for biomedicine). Among others, the scenario describes how a hypothetical modification of the SARS virus, in this case originating from Asia, is spreading across the globe (DBT 2013: 5). Needless to add, that in this case a good scenario did not trigger the necessary policy responses with respect to increasing the preparedness of the public health system. Of course, one can only speculate about the reasons for this.

(Brozus 2018: 20; see also Davis 2016; Jervis 2009). Both perspectives looked at in this text – policy considerations and think tank-driven scenario-building – illustrate the practical relevance of producing African futures, but also underline the need to produce methodologically sound approaches. Finally, this is also a timely reminder of the challenges involved in linking this kind of early warning information in systematic ways to policy planning and decision-making processes.

Acknowledgement

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The Youth and Land Access Challenges: Critical Reflections from Post-Fast Track Land Reform Zimbabwe

Clement Chipenda and Tom Tom

1   Introduction

Land is a key resource that serves both productive and social purposes. Access to land enhances food and income security, and the attainment of the sustainable development goals that aim to reduce poverty and hunger (Kumeh and Omulo 2019; Rosset 2011). With an ever-growing youth population, struggles for land are expected to intensify in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa.[1] Recent estimates suggest that between 2015 and 2025, about 11 million young people, for whom agriculture is or could be a substantial source of income (Yeboah and Jayne 2018), enter the labour market annually (Canning et al. 2015). Access to land, however, remains a challenge for many (AGRA 2017). Global agriculture is facing a crisis as younger and older generations struggle over resource allocation and use (Byamugisha and Ansu 2017; Chipato et al. 2020; White 2012, 2015). In some countries, land grabbing and corporate investment in large-scale industrial farming have made land prices unaffordable and out of reach for the youth (White 2015). Moreover, political, gerontocratic and patriarchal biases, which the case of Zimbabwe exemplifies, are affecting access to agricultural land by youth and women (Chambati and Mazwi 2020; Mutopo 2011; Mutopo et al. 2014).

Despite an ambitious fast-track land reform programme (FTLRP) seeking to address colonial imbalances, the country faces severe challenges over access to land by the youth.[2] Based on an empirical study in rural Goromonzi and Zvimba districts, we explore the formal and informal challenges that young people face in accessing agricultural land.

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1   Estimates show that 41 per cent of sub-Saharan Africans are below the age of 15 and that 19 per cent are between the ages of 15 and 24 (UNDESA 2017).

2   For the purposes of this chapter, we use the 15–35 age bracket to refer to the youth. Zimbabwe identifies those in this age bracket as the youth (GoZ 2013).

2   Background: Zimbabwe's Land Question and Youth Dynamics

Since 1890, unequal and repressive land policies have defined Zimbabwe's agrarian relations (Moyo and Chambati 2013). Against a backdrop of exclusionary and repressive laws (Gundani 2003; Martin and Johnson 1981), a protracted war of liberation dislodged colonial hegemony and led to independence in 1980. The postcolonial government faced the unenviable task of resolving the country's long-standing 'land question' (Mkodzongi and Lawrence 2019; Moyo 2013). At independence, 6000 white farmers owned 15.5 million hectares compared with 4.5 million African farmers on 16.4 million hectares of land (Gundani 2003). The initial postcolonial land reform was unsuccessful with only 72,000 families being resettled in two decades against a target of 182,000 set in 1982 (Moyo 1995). Only in 2000 did Robert Mugabe's government respond to pressure from liberation war veterans and local communities, and spearheaded a state-sanctioned, controversial, unplanned and polarizing FTLRP. In just over a decade, the programme led to the resettlement of 180,000 African households on 13 million hectares of land, thereby facilitating one of the biggest agrarian transformations in modern African history (Bhatasara and Helliker 2018; Moyo 2013).

While Zimbabwe's post-independence land reforms to some extent resolved the country's 'land question' (James 2015; Scoones 2015), scholars agree that only a few young people benefited (Scoones et al. 2019; Thebe 2018). Historically, land access constraints due to gerontocracy and, in the case of women, patriarchy, have been reported as prevalent in Zimbabwe's communal areas (CAs) and have persisted in contemporary times (see Mutopo 2011; Mutopo et al. 2014). This has raised what we term the 'contemporary youth land question'. It is premised on concerns that a growing youth population without land has emerged alongside a failing economy, high unemployment and less lucrative migration destinations locally, regionally and internationally. The youth are increasingly demanding their 'generational dividend' pertaining to political and economic space (Chipenda 2020a; Chipenda and Tom 2019). Within and beyond Zimbabwe, the central question is what role can the youth play in the agricultural transformation of postcolonial African countries?

3   Highlights of the Case Studies and Corpus of Data

This chapter is based on a study undertaken during the rainy season of late 2019 and early 2020, of two rural districts of Zimbabwe, Goromonzi and Zvimba. Both researchers were familiar with these areas, where they had been

working for the previous six years. Goromonzi, which is in Mashonaland East Province, approximately 40 kilometres east of Harare, currently houses 2822 A1 (small-scale) and 846 A2 (medium-scale)[3] farmers who were resettled on land previously owned by 122 white farmers on large-scale commercial farms (LSCFs). Also, 16 LSCFs and agro-estates were unaffected by the land reform (Chipenda 2020b). In Goromonzi, the respondents were selected from 13 former LSCFs,[4] which have since been converted into small-scale A1 farms. They were also drawn from the CAs (former native reserves) of Chinyika, Rusike and Seke. Zvimba, which is in Mashonaland West Province in northern central Zimbabwe, is further divided into 35 wards and, before the FTLRP, had 718 LSCFs and approximately 150,000 households under customary tenure (Murisa 2009: 21). Banket ward, where the fast-track farms of Dalkeith and Whynhill were selected for the study, lies approximately 95 kilometres to the northwest of Harare (Moyo et al. 2009). Prior to the FTLRP, the ward had 41 LSCFs, 16 of which were reconfigured into A1 farm units and 25 into medium-scale A2 plots.

Agro-ecologically, the two districts lie in regions with the country's highest average annual rainfall (between 750 and 1500 mm annually) and the richest soils, making them prime areas for diversified agricultural production. They reflect Zimbabwe's varied agrarian and land tenure system. The accessibility of the districts and resulting opportunity to conduct a low budget study, their good rural–urban connectivity, high number of youth, and diverse range of rural livelihoods contributed to their selection for the study.

We used a predominantly interpretive and qualitative research paradigm to 'to better understand the land access challenges faced by the youth. Starting from a basic survey that yielded elementary quantitative information, we selected a cross-section of participants whose views and experiences are pertinent to an in-depth understanding of the youth's land access challenges. These included the children and grandchildren of the initial land occupiers, or those closely related to them in other ways; youth in nearby CAs; the initial land occupiers (or old generation of land beneficiaries); local traditional leaders and district administrators (or government officials now known as district coordinators), land officers and agricultural extension officers. During the

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3   According to officially prescribed farm sizes under the FTLRP, A1 plots are smaller landholdings than A2 plots. For example, for region IIa (where the study was undertaken), A1 plots should be 15 hectares compared with A2 small-scale (30); medium-scale (200); large-scale (330); and peri-urban (2–30) (see Department of Lands 2001). However, in reality there are variations across and within agro-ecological regions. Unlike in A1, access to the A2 scheme had to be supported by proof of capital/collateral.

4   These are Belmont, Eton, Dunstan, Warrendale, Xanadu, Brookmead, Manor Estate, Iddesleigh, Harveydales, Saratoga, Glen Avon, Northfield and Bellevue.

interviews and focus-group discussions (FGDs), we invited our interlocutors[5] to suggest improvements. A review of scholarly articles and secondary sources complemented the primary data. It is, however, important to note that the two themes developed below are a mere selection and therefore not exhaustive.

4　　　Formal Access

In Goromonzi and Zvimba, all the current youth were still children when the FTLRP was implemented in the 2000s. Therefore, ownership of land units in both the smaller-scale A1 and medium-scale A2 schemes was minimal. Although some of them may have participated in informal land occupations alongside the war veterans (see Sadomba 2013), the majority were excluded from formal land allocations[6] at the time. In relation to the A2 scheme, most youth did not qualify for formal allocation because of their lack of collateral, unless of course they could tap into social capital in the form of political connections with influential members of the ruling party. In both districts, it was noted that some beneficiaries of the FTLRP who are still alive are not ready to transfer land ownership (just yet) to the youth. They grant them access through a ceding process, in which they give land rights to a person of their choice. The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water and Rural Resettlement oversees the whole process. Officials said that although they have transferred land to the youth using this method, it has been prone to contestations, conflicts and at times violence involving family members who disagree with the decisions made.

Since land title deeds are the only formal proof of land ownership (Moyo 2011; Moyo et al. 2009), in the two case studies we looked at who held the title deeds and the year in which the youth (the second generation of land beneficiaries) officially became landowners. Land title deeds to some extent guarantee security of tenure and the sense of ownership may increase commitment to agriculture. 'Offer' letters and A1 permits are the main documents required

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5　District coordinators (2); lands officers (2); village heads (4); youth on fast-track farms (30); youth in nearby CAs (10); original land beneficiaries (40). Number of interviews and participants: 48 in-depth interviews were held with the first four categories of participants; Number of FGDs and gender composition: Two FGDs with ten participants each were held with the original land occupiers in every district. In Zvimba, five of the original occupiers involved are female, while in Goromonzi there were five young women accessing land who participated in the study. All methods and techniques were chosen for their suitability to the study.

6　In the two districts, informal land allocations took place in the early 2000s. However, the participants explained that Dalkeith farm in Zvimba district was officially subdivided and occupied in 2000 (see also Murisa 2009: 249).

to gain formal access to and ownership of land. For example, in Zvimba district, 67 per cent of the youth with official access to land had offer letters they had inherited from their parents, while in Goromonzi district, 100 per cent of the youth purposely selected for the study who have official access to the land either had an offer letter, or an A1 permit ceded by or inherited from their parents or allocated by the government. This information prompted further questions about official rights to land. First, most youth only inherited the offer letters and A1 permits after their parents had died, which may indicate that parents or guardians are unwilling to change ownership formally. Second, a culture of dominance by male elders, which is highly prevalent in Zimbabwe, and the unwillingness of some of the children or grandchildren of the initial beneficiaries of the land to recognize farming as a career (they see no future in it) reinforced the decision to cling to the land until death. Third, the government's timing in issuing A1 permits suggests that the land allocation went beyond the years between 2000 and 2008, which is often documented as the 'fast track' period. For example, in Goromonzi district, the government issued A1 permits to 13 per cent of the youth included in the study for land identified as vacant in 2016. On this point, the land officer clarified that the initial people to whom the land had been allocated had either accepted the offer or fled from the electoral violence experienced after 2000. Some had died without successors; others had just abandoned the land, and some land had become available through a state land rationalization scheme. Issuing land titles in 2016 was ZANU–PF's attempt at clientelist politics, as the party sought to swing the youth and other members of the electorate to its side in preparation for the elections of 30 July 2018. According to the lands officer in Goromonzi, few land titles were issued prior to this period, and the allocations had only been made after the available land had been identified. The politics of patronage is not new in Zimbabwe (see Sachikonye 2011).

In both districts, however, views converged around the fact that the post-FTLRP formal land allocations depended on having strong political connections, without which access to land was virtually impossible. In fact, the youth attending the focus-group discussions (FGDs) we organized were adamant about the importance of possessing political capital. This is hardly surprising given that studies on the FTLRP confirm electoral politics, patronage and the ruling ZANU–PF's history of using land provision as part of its hegemonic political project, especially in the strictly controlled resettlement areas (Chipato et al. 2020; Chiweshe 2011; Scoones et al. 2019; Zamchiya 2011). Another issue worth noting is that the traditional leaders, *sabhukus* (village heads), in Goromonzi see themselves as playing a pivotal role in allocating farms in the 'new' resettlement areas, despite having no legal entitlement to do so. Nonetheless, they recommend prospective beneficiaries to the local

District Lands Committee and the local Lands Office. This is usually someone from their local community whom they know and can attest to having the 'right' political credentials, thus ensuring a consensus between the traditional leaders and the party supporting the application. It was abundantly clear that anyone who openly supported the opposition had a slim chance of being allocated land.

Research also revealed differences between youth in farming areas and in CAs. The majority of rural people in Zimbabwe live and practise subsistence agriculture in CAs, which the British colonialists created when dividing the land between Europeans and Africans, and marginalizing and degrading the latter in the process (see Dore 2009). The resettlement areas include the old resettlements the postcolonial government established soon after independence in 1980 and the new resettlements (also called fast-track farms) the FTLRP created (Chambati and Mazwi 2020). At FGDs, the youth opined that they had been dealt a blow by being born in CAs because the land there is scarce and the soil largely poor. They compared themselves unfavourably with the resettlement area youth whose parents, caregivers or relatives had managed to acquire land during the FTLRP. They felt that their counterparts were better off because they could inherit land by having been born into families with better land, thus creating enhanced opportunities and life chances. They observed a generational land transfer system in the FTLRP area, which was exclusionary and only benefited those who had been allocated land, thus creating new inequalities and differential development opportunities for young people. Our findings echo those of Dekker and Kinsey (2011) who noted differences between families in resettlement areas and CAs. The different land tenure systems, soil types, agricultural production activities, and social and institutional structures shaped the opportunities and life chances available to the youth. In the study areas, respondents criticized the negative attitude of the 'newly' installed traditional leaders (*sabhuku*s) towards CA youth. They accused them of favouring those on the fast-track farms and stressed that future land allocations should give preference to them as they were traditionally disadvantaged.

Government officials participating in the study acknowledged that young people faced land access challenges, and that the problem, which affected the country at large, needed urgent resolution. However, they thought that the government had put adequate mechanisms and structures in place to address the youth's land needs, with registering on the national waiting list being a prerequisite to acquiring land. The completion of the second phase of the land audit and rationalization programme in fast-track areas in September 2020, and the promulgation of new farm-size regulations in February 2020, set out

the future opportunities for youth to obtain land. The establishment of a Youth Desk in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement in 2018 – charged with assisting youth with land and agriculture issues – was said to be another milestone in prioritizing youth concerns and demands. Of note was that the older generation, which had benefited from the FTLRP, felt that the failure of the youth to access land presented a serious problem and that the government should look at different ways of making it available to them. This included rationalizing land sizes by targeting those with landholdings that were too large, expropriating the remaining large-scale commercial farms, and allocating some unused state land to the youth. The elders, however, seemed determined to continue owning and controlling their land and were reluctant to share it with or hand it over to their children, but thought that the government should allocate them land elsewhere.

The implications of the various scenarios are not only that many youth have to overcome considerable hurdles to gain formal access to land, but also that only a few are able to access the fast-track farms. The situation is even more challenging for young women, as exemplified in Zvimba District, where none in the study sample owned land in their own right. The inheritance and ceding processes are both prone to contestation. This is because it is difficult to enforce traditional inheritance laws, especially if there is no will, and not all interested parties embrace the ceding processes. Furthermore, not all youth are interested in owning agricultural land: for some, natural resource exploitation and using the land for residential purposes is more appealing, while others do not want to practise agriculture but would rather participate in other parts of the agricultural value chain.

5   Informal Access

Youths may informally access land for agricultural and other purposes, such as establishing a home (*musha*), through family, household and community networks, and informal ways of transferring land ownership are commonplace, especially between spouses. Scholars in other study sites, for example Kwekwe District (Chibwana 2016) and Shamva District (James 2015), corroborate these findings. Informal access may also pertain to other groups, including farm workers (Sinclair-Bright 2019) and lessees (Mudimu et al. 2020). In both study sites, the youth discovered various ways, including informal social transfer and unauthorized plot subdivision, to access land: the initial land occupiers enabled their children and grandchildren to own land by subdividing the initial

plot; facilitating the informal occupation of 'no man's land',[7] and encouraging or negotiating land leasing on their behalf, especially where the family plot could no longer be subdivided. For example, at Dalkeith and Whynhill A1 farms in Zvimba District, the young participants all claim informal ownership of their parents' plots. Of these, 13 per cent are using leased land and 53 per cent were allocated an informal subdivision of the main plot by parents, guardians or other relatives on the basis of social transfer and the need to maximize land use.

Beneficial as these forms of youth access to land may be, they are also problematic. Unofficial social transfers, subdivisions or leasing to the youth or any other person are not legally recognized. However, because the government does not formalize land access in CAs, such transfers are not a problem, though accessing land through these means cannot guarantee access to loans for agricultural purposes. Overall, the participants found it difficult to get bank loans, even with the land ownership documents. The reluctance of the lending institutions arises from fear of non-payment due to limited land use and low production. Access to subdivided land relies on good relations; otherwise, the landowner can repossess. In the case of land leasing, failure to pay the leaser justifies the termination of what are often 'unwritten contracts'. Participants in FGDs stated that the continuing subdivision of plots is unsustainable; also, feelings of unfairness over the ratio used to subdivide the land often lead to conflicts between the usually young beneficiary and other family members. Moreover, the young respondents indicated that they curtail their ability to make decisions about land use, production, marketing and use of agricultural income.

These challenges were even more demanding for the young women in our study (see also Kazembe 1986; Mazhawidza and Manjengwa 2011; Mutopo 2011). Only one (out of five respondents) in the CA could claim land as hers. In Zvimba, two young women were allocated a piece of land, but that is still under the control of their father or male relative. Also, they were cultivating food crops for household consumption, whereas their male relatives grew commercial crops, the market price of which is markedly higher than the former. In the case of female youth, patriarchy, internal family dynamics and socialization present further obstacles to their independence.

6   Conclusion

Youths in Zvimba and Goromonzi districts experience various challenges in accessing agricultural land, which we explored along two axes – formal and

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7   No man's land refers to land reserved for common grazing or unallocated or unoccupied in fast-track farms, CAs, and state land.

informal. Field-based evidence shows that, despite their diversity, complexity and dynamism in understanding land access, the majority of youth have no direct access to, or own, land in either the fast-track farms or CAs. However, youngsters are indispensable to agriculture and other development activities and, prioritizing them for land allocations would be a first step towards ensuring agricultural success. However, that alone would not suffice: youth interested in farming, especially young women, should be appropriately supported and agriculture made 'classy' enough to attract them. This entails policy reorientation and a change of attitude. ZANU–PF and politicians in general need to go beyond politics and think of agrarian and youth development.

Land access challenges experienced by youth are not unique to Zimbabwe and are common in other African countries including Ghana, South Africa, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Namibia, Kenya and Zambia (Amanor 2010; Chinsinga and Chasukwa 2012; Djurfeldt et al. 2019; Jayne et al. 2012; Yeboah et al. 2019). This brings into perspective the challenges that Africa's agrarian future is facing in a context where agriculture and its associated value chains are considered key to economic transformation, development and poverty eradication (AU 2011). The urgent need to address youth land access challenges cannot be overemphasized.

Acknowledgements

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"We Will Not Watch Like Monkeys": Development Visions and Conflict Potentials in Northern Kenya

Kennedy Mkutu Agade

1   Introduction

The remote, peripheral, particularly northern parts of Kenya, historically viewed as unproductive, have come into the spotlight as sites of great strategic importance, suitable for large-scale infrastructure development. The Kenyan government's Vision 2030 development blueprint sets out to address economic, social and political pillars of development and considers infrastructure an important enabler (Government of Kenya n.d.). Whereas Kenya's development visions have historically focused on investing in areas likely to produce the greatest economic (and political) returns (Zelezer 1991), Vision 2030 prioritizes the development of the northern arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). These areas are now recognized as having, among other things, considerable potential for oil, gas and mineral extraction, livestock production, tourism, and solar and wind power (Government of Kenya 2012a).

Perhaps as much as 60 per cent of Kenya is made up of ASALs occupied by pastoralists, whose livelihoods are wholly dependent on adaptation through mobility. Accordingly, land tenure is largely governed by custom and is communal in nature. Colonial and postcolonial governments have often undervalued these realities, and presumed that communal lands were unoccupied, so available for other purposes ranging from private ranching and irrigated agriculture to conservation and public projects. Although the Community Land Act of 2016 aimed to correct these injustices by providing for group registration and titling by indigenous inhabitants, for various reasons to be explored the protection offered may be ineffective (Wily 2018).

In this chapter, I consider the experiences of Turkana, Samburu and Isiolo counties in northern Kenya in which great change is anticipated, and interrogate the various visions of the future. The areas are all on the route of the planned Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET), one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects on the African continent, to include road, rail and an oil pipeline for transporting crude oil from fields in Turkana. New airports and resort cities are planned, together with dams to service the water needs of the latter (Government of Kenya n.d.). The state vision is supported by donors and development agencies; the North-Eastern

Development Initiative, a World Bank project, is also bringing roads, energy, water, sanitation, agriculture, and social protection (World Bank 2018).

Since colonial times, these counties have shared histories of economic, political and social marginalization. Another important similarity between them is that, since pastoralist communities compete for water and pasture in a drought-prone climate, resource-based conflicts are frequent and institutionalized. The conflict is facilitated and made more lethal by the availability of firearms in the region from neighbouring warring countries, and because state-run programmes have armed community members as National Police Reservists (Arero 2007; Mkutu 2008; Oba 2013). The lack of a formal state security presence has both allowed and stimulated the acquisition of arms for both offensive and defensive purposes. The new infrastructural developments complicate these pre-existing challenges, thus threatening land dispossession, exclusion, elite capture and conflict.

2   Frontier Developments and Inequalities

As states and/or investors advance into new spaces, both physical and metaphorical, they often do so with the apparent assumption that nothing already there is worthy of consideration, and that modern Eurocentric visions are inherently superior (Nyanjom 2014; Schetter 2012). Such assumptions dismiss the human value and agency within these spaces in terms of profitable economic systems and strategies; systems of governance and security; cultural and social institutions; and knowledge and skills capital. Notwithstanding the problems that come with lack of access to healthcare and education, and with vulnerability to natural disasters, there is much to be admired and embraced about pastoral social, political and economic systems, including a relatively classless society, the sustainable use of the environment and resilient livelihoods. However, neoliberalist and capitalist policies tend to advantage the 'haves' at the expense of the 'have nots' (Harvey 2003) while those less equipped in terms of wealth and educational capital are less able to anticipate and benefit from change (Elliot 2016).

Infrastructure is often seen as key to economic growth, though in fact where it is debt financed it may actually have the opposite effect (Banerjee et al. 2020). In a study of several infrastructure projects, Flyvbjerg et al. (2009: 179) found that the choice of projects was rarely down to suitability; costs were often strategically underestimated and benefits overestimated by project proponents, leading to 'survival of the least fit'. Moreover, investing in large-scale infrastructure inevitably leads to the neglect of investments in human capital,

while rural or indigenous populations tend to bear the brunt of the negative impacts without feeling the positive ones (Suárez and Pérez 2018).

3   Barrels of Prosperity: Inclusion and Exclusion in Turkana County

In 2012, Kenya announced the discovery of commercially viable quantities of oil in the Turkana Basin in the northwest of the country. Within a few months, Turkana County had already seen massive change, and an influx of foreigners and non-Turkana people. Local expectations about the impending oil wealth were high, while in the political arena, various contesting groups were already talking about how to share the proceeds. The main players, Tullow Oil PLC and partners began extracting on a small scale in 2018 and planned to scale up operations after four years.

However, from the beginning, low-intensity conflict dogged Tullow's operations in Turkana. Before 2012, the production-sharing contract the company and government of Kenya signed was secretive and failed to involve Turkana's local government representatives at the time. Then, in the initial stages of the oil and gas exploration, participation processes were inadequate and local politicians became too dominant. Information was scanty and when local people began to see parts of their rangelands being fenced off, and sites allocated for surveying and later exploration, there was widespread fear and anger (Mkutu and Wandera 2016). In terms of environmental and social impacts, threats to water access, deforestation, toxic waste management and gas flaring were prominent concerns, and the new installations became a focus not only for small eateries and shops, but also for prostitution, alcohol sales and street children (Mkutu et al. 2019). By 2019, the company had detailed its plans to expand from 4 to 33 well pads (Tullow Oil 2019), and create a central processing facility while the national government gazetted around 15,500 acres for the activities of Tullow Oil PLC and 51,000 acres for the LAPSSET corridor (Obare 2019).

Expectations for jobs and tenders were initially high among locals, whom the company used for all unskilled labour positions. A particular thorn in the flesh, however, was that a local politician managed to profit from a lease-purchase scheme, agreed by Tullow and Toyota Kenya, to reward local entrepreneurs who employed local drivers to provide services to Tullow. Turkana drivers formed an association and complained bitterly. To make their voices heard, they created makeshift roadblocks outside the oil sites (Mkutu and Wandera 2016). Although community protests have so far been unarmed, they have sometimes severely disrupted company operations (Etyang 2018; Mkutu and Wandera 2016).

Oil royalties, of which 5 per cent is supposed to go to the local community around the oil fields, have allegedly gone into the pockets of local politicians. Moreover, at the time of writing the company had just announced plans to sell its interests and, as of January 2020, has dramatically downscaled its operations, leaving the future uncertain with a possible takeover by a Chinese company on the horizon. Further, the drop in international oil prices and economic and political turmoil following the COVID-19 pandemic makes the prospect of future benefits trickling down to the locals even more uncertain.

4   'The Snake': Land Injustices and Vulture Capitalism Surrounding LAPSSET in Pastoral Counties

Since 2016, the National Land Commission has been compulsorily acquiring community land for the LAPSSET corridor, which is planned to pass through seven counties (Obare 2019). The corridor – or 'snake' as some informants have called it – is to be 2000 kilometres long and 500 metres wide (LCDA 2017). Furthermore, the government has stated its intention to allocate a special economic zone for 25 kilometres on either side of the corridor, to which private investors would be invited to develop industrial parks and mechanized agricultural farms (LCDA 2017).

Following a catalogue of historical injustices and conflicts, land was a key issue in Kenya's 2010 constitutional reforms, which culminated in several new legal provisions, including some to protect customary land tenure. However, in the absence of the full provisions of the Community Land Act of 2016 most land is as yet unregistered and held in trust by the county governments, with any compensation for land compulsorily acquired also held in trust until registration by the respective group. However, the powers of the county trust holders are vague and open to abuse, and local community members often lack the knowledge and political power they need to challenge them. Since official boundaries of community land are also vague, it is easily gazetted for other purposes without offering compensation (Wily 2018). A recent Land Value Index (Amendment) Act enacted in 2019 to streamline land acquisition for megaprojects is also insensitive to pastoralist realities; it decrees that unregistered community land will be valued at the market rate, which fails to recognize its value in sustaining pastoral livelihoods, and only recognizes people who have occupied the land for six years prior to its acquisition (Natural Justice 2019).

Currently, there is a great flurry of land speculation and illegal acquisition where LAPSSET is expected (Bonaya 2019; Elliot 2016). This has been intense in Isiolo (Enns 2019). Furthermore, there is an increase in individuals and

groups marking out boundaries on communal land with fences, thorn bushes or painted boundary stones.[1] In the Gotu area, Isiolo, a group of professionals from Isiolo and Marsabit pooled their resources in an attempt to acquire 33,000 acres of community land for a ranch. This was strategically located near the LAPSSET route and the Isiolo–Madogashe road currently being upgraded by the World Bank. The national government halted the acquisition after protests from the local community.[2] The former governor claimed that national Ministry of Lands officials had colluded with land grabbers (Abdi 2015). A peace worker gave his opinion: "I think the government aims to displace the local people in Isiolo … [the] majority of the local people are poor; they cannot keep up with these projects; a lot of immigrants from elsewhere will come to Isiolo and the majority of us will be displaced."[3]

Another important dimension of these concerns is a longstanding boundary dispute with Meru County, which LAPSSET plans and expectations have exacerbated. In 2018, there was an initiative by the Meru governor to provide services in the disputed areas and to issue title deeds. Many saw this as putting a Meru County stamp on the area and winning the hearts, minds (and votes) of those people. To add to all this, the top LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority officials have been people of Meru ethnicity. This layer of ethno-political competition further complicates the situation, and suggests that benefits will be politically distributed, leading to increased risk of conflict and less attention to development.

Participation is an important aspect of the injustices described. Despite a constitutional emphasis on it, people's visions about LAPSSET are limited because the participatory processes are not reaching them. LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority stated that it had meetings to which key community representatives and administrators were invited, but that it relied on the local administration to disseminate the information to most of the people, and acknowledged that this does not reliably happen. Thus, people fear the worst (often justifiably so) and are unable to prepare themselves either to benefit or to mitigate harm. A Ministry of Lands officer verified this dynamic of exclusion from participation when he said that he could tell the researchers where LAPSSET would pass, but that the members of the community had not been informed because 'they have interests'.[4]

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1   Observation, Isiolo, 2018–20.

2   Observation and interviews with local leaders and community members, Isiolo, August 2019.

3   Interview, Isiolo member of subcounty Peace and Cohesion Committee and Livestock Marketing Division, Isiolo, 22 March 2019.

4   Phone interview, Ministry of Lands officer, Nairobi, 11 March 2020.

Lack of participation acts as a trigger for violence when community security actors (the warriors of pastoral groups) chase away visiting consultants connected with LAPSSET, as happened in Samburu County.[5] A community member in Wamba, Samburu said, "All we know is [the word] LAPSSET, we do not know about it. First, we must know what it is all about. If they come with security and build here we will not watch like monkeys."[6]

5   Power Lines and Local Political Power in Samburu County

Samburu is one of a few counties in which pastoralist group ranches were established from the 1960s onwards to safeguard land tenure for pastoralists, and to help the latter engage with the market economy. However, group ranches have faced several challenges, including the potential over-empowerment of local elites and of their ability to accumulate benefits. Many group ranches have become part of wildlife conservancies. The Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO) is the government-owned company that implemented the Ethiopia–Kenya Transmission Line, which the two governments conceived in 2006 as part of the proposed Ethiopia–Kenya Power Systems Interconnection Project. The power line passed over several conservancies in Samburu and raised some inter-group disputes. Some local people unsuccessfully attempted to benefit privately from the compensation being offered by building *manyattas* (simple Samburu dwellings) along the proposed route.[7] Then, when compensation was awarded collectively, this brought disputes about how to share the economic benefits.

In Namunyak conservancy there were two factions – those who wanted 'the ATM', namely cash transfers, and those who wanted community development projects.[8] Those wanting cash feared that conservancy board members would monopolize the money and they would never see the benefits.

> Recently, we got almost fifty million (Kenya shillings) from KETRACO as compensation … what we saw is the eight million that was given to members. The remaining we were told will be kept for us; they will build for us

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5   Interview, NGO staff member, Wamba, Samburu, 19 December 2019.

6   Interview, National Police Reservist, Wamba, Samburu, 18 February 2020.

7   Interview, West Gate conservancy staff, Samburu, 13 February 2020; Interview, Catholic priest in Wamba, Samburu, 16 February 2020.

8   Interview West Gate conservancy official talking about Namunyak, Samburu, 13 February 2020.

a project, so it goes on and on. … All those golden opportunities like the snake (LAPSSET), they will pay to the group-ranch management.[9]

An almost identical dispute was taking place over the 21 million Kenya Shillings that KETRACO awarded to West Gate conservancy.[10]

A possible implication of LAPSSET passing through Samburu is the disintegration of some group ranches because of the commodification of the land.[11] Large-scale subdivision and some private sales of group-ranch land have already been witnessed in Amboseli and Narok, creating many challenges to livelihoods and environmental impacts (Mkutu 2020). Furthermore, because empowered people such as local political leaders are likely to be allocated the more valuable parcels and others excluded altogether, this could raise tensions and create conflict. For many, pastoralism could be abandoned for more lucrative but perhaps less sustainable alternatives. Finally, one way to have compensated communities adequately for their losses would have been to provide electricity, either on or off grid. However, despite demands by the communities, the power lines simply pass through the county, leaving them in the dark.[12]

6   The 'Conservation Landscape'

Conservancies are a popular and growing model of land use in Kenya, particularly in the remote pastoralist counties, and they now number about 160 and cover at least 11 per cent of Kenya's total land area (KWCA 2021). In the north of the country, most conservancies are part of an umbrella organization known as the Northern Rangelands Trust, which receives high levels of donor development funding to support their creation and ongoing management.

Controversially, despite the various benefits they bring to the communities, conservancies tend to formalize land claims, militarize communities and sometimes exacerbate conflict (Campbell et al. 2009; Government of Kenya 2012b). Pastoralists and even administrators have at times proposed or established conservancies as a means of protecting land claims and controlling pastoralist migrations from elsewhere. That conservancies are allowed to use

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9   Interview, retired civil servant and community development officer, Wamba, Samburu, 19 February 2020.

10   Interviews, West Gate conservancy, February 2020.

11   The Community Land Act of 2016 actually repeals former legislation recognizing group-ranch titles, and group ranches have been asked to re-register. However, the governance structures and the risk of subdivision remain the same.

12   Interview, manager, Kalama conservancy, Samburu, 18 December 2019.

armed national police reservists to carry out community and wildlife security (Mkutu 2020) provides a further incentive. These rangers, who are members of the local community, have occasionally been accused of involvement in lethal inter-communal conflicts (Greiner 2012; Okumu 2014). Moreover, the Northern Rangelands Trust facilitates training and equipment for the ranger teams and is involved in deployment decisions. This, however, raises potent ethical questions (Mkutu 2020), especially since the non-conservancy reservists, previously armed to supplement police efforts in remote areas, were disarmed in 2019. Some communities accuse conservation elites of using conservancies and their highly trained ranger teams to grab their land and access its resources (Mkutu 2020; Ogada 2020).

The issue of conservancies relates to the question of different visions about development in several ways. First, LAPSSET and the associated developments are going to interfere with wildlife corridors and there is already evidence of this, with dead giraffes and other grazers on the recently completed Isiolo–Moyale road,[13] and stranded buffalo herds unable to cross between Shaba and Buffalo national reserves on either side of this road (Mkutu 2020). This increases human–wildlife conflict, which usually hits poorest communities hardest (Garland 2008), and these are the same communities already likely to be squeezed by LAPSSET. Second, in an attempt to mitigate this problem, the government has proposed creating protected wildlife corridors and existing conservancies are likely to feature strongly in this plan, together with the creation of new ones. This too will constrain pastoralist movements and multiply the other problems of conservancies. Third, the increased militarization of society is ominous where LAPSSET has increased the stakes for control over land, and where grievances among pastoral communities are highly likely to occur over injustices such as displacement (both by the corridor itself and associated land grabs in the special economic zone), and exclusion from jobs and other economic opportunities.

7   From Conflicting Visions to Conflict

These cases in the early stages of development in Turkana, Isiolo and Samburu illustrate the conflicting visions of the different actors. While promising to 'open up the north' and 'reverse years of marginalization',

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13   Interview, manager, Kalama conservancy, Samburu, 18 December 2019.

the state's emphasis on land-based infrastructural development is more likely to increase inequalities. With their enhanced vision of the future, empowered people are able to get ahead and land speculation is soaring in the lapsset areas. With devolution in Kenya, over the last seven years an increasing number of elites and brokers have been establishing bases in the counties, where they see opportunities to advance economically and politically, to accumulate and dispossess, by using their monopoly on knowledge and their ability to access links and networks with investors and the diaspora.

By contrast, many pastoralists lack education, access to information, and meaningful participation, and have few helpful connections, while local pastoralist elites may even corner the benefits given collectively. A lack of planning for inclusion in employment opportunities through skills training in advance of these developments makes it likely that skilled and semi-skilled labour will need to be imported, as in the case of Turkana, thus fuelling local grievances.

The anticipated development of lapsset has a potential to overcome the structural violence of exclusion. However, local people's distrust of the project may lead to a greater likelihood of social conflict around infrastructure development (Suárez and Pérez 2018). Conflict may take the form of state–community and community–investor conflict, as in Turkana; intra-communal tensions and conflict, as in Samburu; and intercommunal or ethno-political conflict, as in Isiolo. All these counties have large numbers of firearms in civilian hands and a high risk of violent conflict as the development visions proceed. Moreover, the terrorist organization Al Shabaab, which has already carried out several devastating attacks in Kenya, has threatened to attack Kenya's development projects (Watkins 2015). Since Al Shabaab relies upon locally based networks, these early findings suggest that inclusion is critical to development and may be the most potent way of avoiding conflict.

Acknowledgements

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Spells of Moral Panic and Flashes of Pride: Digital Kinois' Engagements with the Search for a COVID-19 Cure

Katrien Pype

1 Introduction

The search for an efficient cure for COVID-19 infections is a medical puzzle of global and local political significance. It is also readily felt in 'Digital Kinshasa', the online space for those who identify as a 'Kinois', an inhabitant of (global) Kinshasa. Digital Kinois ask questions such as how are 'black' bodies involved in this pandemic? What kind of expertise does the DRC, and by extension Africa, have in this crisis? And, can African herbal treatments play a role in COVID-19? The answers Digital Kinois formulate on these questions are informed by their understandings of global inequalities and racist stereotypes.[1]

In the following, I describe the online discussions on the topic of COVID-19 care in Africa that occurred between 20 March and 12 May 2020, thus spanning the height of COVID-communication in Digital Kinshasa. By early May, one could observe a growing COVID fatigue in both Kinois society and in Digital Kinshasa due to a seeming lack of COVID patients. I ask, what does 'the digital' afford Kinois in this era of uncertainty in the biomedical world and global chaos? It will become clear that several of these discussions have led to 'digital moments', periods of intensified digital content production around a topic. I have subdivided these into 'spells of moral panic' and 'flashes of African pride'. In these 'moments', motivated sometimes by disgust and rage, at other times by glorification and anticipation, a collective effervescence (Durkheim 1912) emerged, uniting Digital Kinois around a theme that mattered, while at the same time pushing forward debates, experimenting with new vernaculars, advancing new cultural heroes, defying established figures of authority, and imagining new futures.

Since 2003, I have been carrying out ethnographic research on media cultures in Kinshasa. The material has been collected via remote ethnography (Postill 2016), following public and private lists and publications on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube, and privately interacting with individuals

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1 A longer version of this chapter appeared as a UCL Centre for Digital Anthropology blog post (Pype 2020).

over Messenger and WhatsApp. Most names of the interlocutors and commentators are pseudonyms, except for public figures. I have translated all posts from Lingala, French or KiKinois (Kinshasa's slang) into English.

2   *First Flash of African Pride:* 'Blacks' Coming to Rescue 'Whites'

On 21 March, Cuban nurses and doctors arrived in Italy. Zacharie Bababaswe, an influential Congolese television journalist, with a short history as national deputy, wrote on his Facebook wall:

> Atterrissage d'un avion militaire cubain transportant des médecins du pays de Fidel Castro, en Italie. Tous sont des noirs accueillis en 'standing ovation' par des blancs. Les larmes d'incapacité du Président du Conseil italien ont ému le monde entier et Cuba a réagi. Qui l'aurait cru ? Le monde va changer après le Coronavirus !! #SimonKimbangu"
>
> [*English translation*: The arrival of a Cuban military plane transporting doctors from Fidel Castro's country to Italy. All of them are blacks receiving a 'standing ovation' from whites. The president of the Italian Council's tears of helplessness have moved the whole world and Cuba has reacted. Who would have believed it? The world will change after Coronavirus !! #SimonKimbangu]

The caption of the text showed a sad emoji, along with the phrase that he was 'feeling emotional' (Bababaswe 2020).

The subtext is that the world is witnessing a reversal of the 'normal' relationships in global health. Black people are coming to the rescue of 'whites'. The question of 'Who would have believed it?' expresses joy in this disbelief; the hashtag #SimonKimbangu adds a politico-religious layer to the statement.[2] Bababaswe's hashtag made an explicit connection between the Cuban doctors' travel and Kimbangu's prophecy. Kimbangu is heralded as a 'father of

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2 Simon Kimbangu, the so-called Black Jesus, is one of Congo's (and by extension Africa's) most important religious leaders. He is the founder of the Kimbanguist Church (official name: l'Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la terre par son envoyé special Simon Kimbangu), arguably one of the largest African prophetic movements. Through his popularity as a healer Kimbangu quickly became an icon of colonial resistance and started a religious movement with strong political bearings. His prison notes, written while being detained by the Belgian colonial authorities, contain prophetic announcements of the liberation of the 'black race', and of an increasing role for black people on the global stage (M'Bokolo and Sabakinu 2014; Mokoko-Gampiot 2017).

the nation', not only by Kimbanguist followers but by many non-Kimbanguist Congolese as well. It is thus not surprising that Bababaswe dropped Kimbangu's name in a post celebrating black pride.

Bababaswe was not the only one taking up Kimbangu's image during the first COVID-19 weeks in Kinshasa (10–30 March), nor did he 'invent' a new practice. Rather, several Digital Kinois posted Kimbangu's iconic image as a temporary profile picture. Such association with Kimbangu, now in the digital sphere, echoes the above-mentioned admiration for Simon Kimbangu as one of the earliest black voices contesting white colonial powers, and one that one hears regularly when political sovereignty and cultural independence are discussed publicly and privately.

3   *Second Flash of African Pride:* the Hype Around a Congolese
       Herbal Treatment

From mid-April, for about a fortnight, 'Digital Kinshasa' was enchanted by the announcement of the herbal treatment COVID-Organics (also called CVO and CVO-Organics), an infusion of Artemisia leaves. It all began with press reports, on 19 April, about Andry Rajoelina, the president of Madagascar, announcing that COVID-Organics would be offered freely to Malagasy schoolchildren in the fight against COVID-19. Malagasy media mentioned that the herbal remedy, already said to treat malaria, worked as a prophylaxis to prevent and cure COVID-19 infections.

Kinois eagerly remediated news reports about the Malagasy policy and called on the Congolese president to follow. The news generated new bouts of African pride. President Rajoelina's decision inspired hashtags calling for unity in Africa, sometimes the hashtags #StopCovid19 #AfriqueUnie (translated #UnitedAfrica); and #ThisTimeForAfrica could appear in one and the same post.

Heightening the excitement, people shared screenshots showing Congolese President Tshisekedi and Malagasy President Rajoelina teleconferencing about 'solutions' for COVID-19 in Africa. Someone wrote under one of these screenshots "for the very first time Fatshi [the moniker Kinois commonly use to indicate their President] is making me happy", followed by a happy emoji, "that is how it should be done bravo ya fatshi", and closing with an emoji of praying hands.

The 'ya' is significant, as it is a form of address that expresses intimacy: '*ya*' is shorthand for 'older brother' in Lingala (*yayá*). In this way, the poster expressed closeness to the president, and thus seemed to approve the latter's actions.

Such a sign of endearment is remarkable in a climate of general distrust towards the national government. Did this signal that the hype could become a moment for the Congolese president to gain affection and support? One of my Facebook contacts remediated a YouTube link to an excerpt[3] of the interaction between the two presidents and added the caption: "we will not wait for the WHO to tell us what to do, 60 years after independence. … DRC orders 5000 bottles of COVID-Organics in Madagascar. Felix Tshisekedi." Again, happy faces and praying hands punctuated the inscription.

In the midst of the hype that got so many Digital Kinois carried away, several people observed that international media were silencing COVID-Organics. Digital Kinshasa agreed that this was due to the cowardice of Global North media reporters, who dared not go against WHO decisions. Thus, rather quickly, the COVID-Organics product became framed in a competition between the Global North and the Global South.

This inspired some to become self-confident and to write audacious statements. Rolly, for example, a technological entrepreneur and employee of one of the DRC's largest banks, published hashtags for the herbal remedy '#CVO' and '#COVID_19 Killer', accompanying the message "the Malagasy drink, WHO will have to jazz along".

Others called to set up an 'African' agency of sanitary regulation and pharmacy. They did not only summon this on social media, but an online petition became popular as well (Rayan 2020). On its webpage, the WHO logo (OMS in French) and a photograph of three COVID-Organics (here CVO) bottles, were juxtaposed, visually reminding visitors about the conflict. By 10 May, the petition had already acquired more than 23,000 signatures.

Some Kinois argued that the discussion between 'Africa' and the WHO regarding COVID-Organics boils down to a discussion over 'tradition' versus 'modernity'. Other posts took the news about the herbal tea as an opportunity to formulate new possible futures for the continent.

Although international media ascribed ownership of COVID-Organics to the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research, Digital Kinois found a way of making it a 'Congolese' invention. Very quickly, Digital Kinshasa argued that the real inventor was the Congolese Dr Jérôme Munyangi, who had apparently been working in Madagascar at that time. Until the third week of April, Dr Munyangi had been an anonymous fellow citizen to most Digital Kinois. By the end of the month, his name had become a household word, and most Kinois knew that he was a medical scientist, who had trained at the University of

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3   In the meantime, the video has been deleted from the YouTube platform (last accessed on 28 September 2020).

Kinshasa, in Paris, and at the University of Ottawa. Some liked to emphasize that Dr Munyangi was an asylum seeker in Madagascar. This information only increased the excitement. News circulated that a few years earlier, Dr Munyangi had been imprisoned for a few months in the DEMIAP (Détection Militaire des Activités Anti-Patrie/Military Detection of Antipatriotic Activities) detention centre in Kinshasa, notable for the brutal tortures that detainees, often political prisoners, underwent there. A visa delivered by the French embassy, so the story goes, had enabled him to escape and travel to the neighbouring Central African Republic, from where he could flee to Paris. In late 2018, French TV news studios invited him to appear in a documentary attacking the pharmaceutical industry.

Several videos, some self-recorded, some parts of Internet interviews with Kinois web journalists, circulated on social media. In these, Dr Munyangi explained that he had been arrested because dark forces in the global pharmaceutical business saw his tea as a threat. The product provides a cheap and easily accessible cure for malaria, one of the biggest health challenges in Africa, and thus would mean a significant loss for the big pharmaceutical companies. He mentioned his eagerness to return to Kinshasa and consult the government in the COVID-19 battle, but requested protection from the Congolese state.

Dr Munyangi became 'the star of the moment' ('*la star du moment*'); his biography circulated in written form, sometimes some posters felt they had to correct the spelling of his name (not suffix '-i' but '-a'), or they added new information about his life; the overall mood was one of joy and anticipation. Dr Munyangi was applauded and cheered and, for the duration of the hype, he almost became a new cultural hero, despite or perhaps *because* WHO denied that the product had undergone the standard clinical testing. Digital Kinois reinforced his call for protection in writing and added a critique addressed to the Congolese government for having failed to protect him in 2018. Now, so they wrote, the government could make good that mistake.

Most Digital Kinois neither questioned the therapeutic efficacy of COVID-Organics, nor critically assessed Dr Munyangi's biography. Rather, they contributed to the promotion of the product by repeating the hashtags with the brand's name, posting the doctor's name, and showing pictures of the bottles. One person wrote in to say that Dr Munyangi "clearly had been contested too much by scientists who object [to] the indisputable results of his field experiences," while another commentator asked where he could find the plant, suggesting that he was definitely going to consume it.

By early May, some posts were announcing that Dr Munyangi was on his way to Kinshasa. In an attempt to substantiate the message, some added a

picture of him at the Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris. Hardly any of my social media contacts appeared to question the truthfulness or foundations of these announcements; rather, most of the messages consisted of congratulations, good wishes and expressions of gratitude for his patriotism and his assumed contributions to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not even a week later, the hype suddenly fizzled out and I stopped seeing publications bearing his or the product's name. However, on their online platforms a few newspapers mentioned that Dr Munyangi was still in Paris, but this information was rarely put on social media. One journal seemed to have interviewed him in early May. Under the heading "Covid-19: Announced to be in Kinshasa, Dr Muyangi still in Paris", the article was published online on 4 May, but did not attract much attention (Redaction 2020). A few days later, on 7 May, via Messenger one of my contacts forwarded me these reports and screenshots of an article in the online journal *Benin Times* describing adverse side effects Malagasy volunteers experienced from COVID-Organics, which they had documented on social media (Kylian 2000). These ranged from loss of general well-being, itching all over the body, sudden bouts of increased temperature, nightmares, nausea, headaches, and excessive urinating. None of my social media contacts circulated these screenshots on their (semi-) public pages, walls, profiles or statuses. The mere fact that I received this information privately, via the Messenger tool, is significant: it speaks to weighing up the publishability of content. The news report obviously countered the excitement that what by then an already faded hype had fuelled in 'Digital Kinshasa', and my contact, who hardly posts anything political on his social media platforms, told me that he risked accusations of being called 'anti-patriotic' or a party spoiler if he published these online.

Many online publications expressed an urge for a reappraisal of local scientific knowledge and innovation. For Kinois web users, COVID-19 provided an opportunity to showcase 'African' knowledge and expertise. Reports about the contributions of Congolese scientists were readily absorbed, and these experts were explicitly identified as 'African', even if they were working in the Global North.

For example, on 12 April, Code 243, which collects online national and international news about the DRC (243 is the international area code), announced the contribution of a US-based Congolese engineer producing respirators to protect the DRC from COVID-19. In similar efforts to provide exposure to 'African' contributions to COVID-19 care, Digital Kinois gladly shared reports about schools and institutions in Kinshasa producing medical equipment such as ventilators and face masks.

4   *First Spell of Moral Panic:* The Risk of Kongo Bololo

As of 10 March, in the very first weeks that COVID-19 had arrived in Kinshasa, pictures of Kongo bololo circulated in Digital Kinshasa. Just like COVID-Organics, Kongo bololo is a tisane (herbal tea) based on the leaves of Vernonia amygdalina. Many online commentators argued that Kongo bololo would prevent and cure COVID-19.

Some online commentators applauded Kongo bololo as 'the most efficient vaccine'; others heralded the local origins of the cure, and their familiarity with it. One of my friends wrote: "We have grown up with it! Return to authenticity; this is from our ancestors". This shout of 'return to authenticity' echoes former President Mobutu's programme to reinstate local tradition. That and the reference to the ancestors are discursive efforts to revalue cultural heritage in this global event.

Over the following two weeks, I noticed postings on Facebook and Instagram, or WhatsApp status updates carrying short clips or photographs of pots of boiling leaves (some with lemon parts). Yet, already by the last week of March, it had become clear that the concoction was doing more harm than good and warnings about deaths from drinking Kongo bololo quickly circulated online. Other publications claimed that a mother and her three small children had died from consuming a mixture of Kongo bololo and lemon. Reactions pointed at the toxic combination of the two ingredients, knowledge that was not apparently generally known.

(Digital) Kinois did not jettison all herbal treatments, as the earlier excitement about Artemisia suggests. What may explain people's hopes and expectations about the COVID-Organics product, may be the involvement of the already-mentioned Dr Munyangi. I have no knowledge of any scientific expert having been consulted to vouch for or reject the therapeutic properties of Kongo bololo. Rather, all opinions about it were transmitted via informal, domestic channels occupied mainly by mothers and grandmothers. If my assumption is correct, then herbal products gain different, even opposing, values during periods of public anxiety, depending on the type of 'experts' involved. Because Dr Munyangi is presented as an expert in biomedical treatments, he can translate the healing properties of the Artemisia plant into biomedical language, and position himself within the global world of the big pharmaceutical companies. Embedding the Artemisia plant in the global, commercial politics of public health is fully in line with portraying COVID-19 as a global affliction. The subtext of the different perceptions on Kongo bololo and Artemisia seems to be that a disease with a cosmopolitan allure, such as COVID-19, calls for a

treatment that carries equally cosmopolitan connotations, and all the more so if it originates from the African continent.

5   Second *Spell of Moral Panic:* Fear over Black Bodies Being Used as Guinea Pigs for the White Global Health Economy

On 4 April, Djora, an unemployed man with a degree in mechanical engineering, wrote on his Facebook page: "for everything, we [Congolese people] are waiting for 'the West' – ventilators, masks, thermoflash [digital thermometer], disinfecting and testing material, chloroquine, azithromycin, money; but if the West proposes to do a test, then you think he will kill you – he could have put that in the mask." Djora was pitting the Congolese community against an imagined West. He detected a certain ambiguity in Congolese attitudes. On the one hand, he recognized their dependency on Western equipment, but felt that when the West wants to run tests (thus calling on the Congolese people to make their contribution towards advancing scientific knowledge and developing medical treatments), then the Congolese people suspect the white man from the West of wanting to kill them. By saying, "he could have put that in the mask", Djora is reminding his readers that white men can find insidious ways of killing Congolese people, for example by putting toxins in the masks exported to the DRC.

Djora's comment reflects the fears and distrust about global health initiatives that Congolese populations have long held, and not without reason (see Hunt 2016; Lyons 1992). Many Kinois believe that medical interventions sponsored and/or carried out by people from the Global North are part of an evil plan by institutions like the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), Western governments, and Congolese state. Extractive procedures, such as collecting blood and DNA, and intrusive ones like injecting drugs, are seen as hidden attempts to damage people's fertility and life force, and to undermine African futures. This fear was most poignantly expressed in messages to mobilize people to refuse COVID-19 vaccine testing in the DRC. Most Kinois are in no doubt that testing sacrifices African lives. And, as I would read in various online posts, Bill Gates has become the anti-hero, the villain. Similar outrage was expressed on Facebook when two French doctors allegedly suggested testing vaccines on the African continent (Rossman 2020). This followed shortly after Congolese microbiologist and coordinator of the national response to COVID-19, Dr Muyembe, proudly announced at a press conference that the DRC had been chosen to partake in testing experiments for a vaccine.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr Muyembe had accumulated a lot of credit in Kinshasa, as well as a worldwide reputation, for his impressive work during several Ebola pandemics in previous years. In 2014, he was one of the experts WHO sent to Nigeria to coordinate the Ebola campaign in West Africa and, such was his renown, that he was very much a local hero. However, the announcement that Congolese citizens would become guinea pigs radically turned him into an anti-hero.

On the Internet and in the streets of Kinshasa, people quickly engaged in conspiratorial thinking,[4] despite similar tests being undertaken in the USA, China and Europe, and the DRC being one of many countries engaged in further testing.[5] Someone wrote, "Muyembe announces, most probably from the premises of the embassy of the United States, that we have been chosen." The commentator emphasized that Dr Muyembe was delivering the message from a peculiar location: he was clearly not in his office, the National Institute of Biomedical Research (INRB), nor was he speaking from a Congolese state building. Rather, he was probably in the US embassy, thus suggesting that the US government had a hidden agenda in the testing.

A young woman, who described herself as a medical doctor, with a "degree from a Canadian university", thus claiming a certain authority in the matter, added fuel to the conspiracy discourse by saying: "No, no, no! Suddenly, a new disease has appeared, and they find a vaccine in six months? This story is fishy." Other commentators stated firmly that they would not allow tests to be carried out on their bodies or on those of their family members. A rare voice warned others to be careful of conspiracy theorists, adding that "China and the USA are already testing potential vaccines". Rolly, the technological engineer mentioned above, wrote "just like you all, I am indignant. But before I react, I need to know the list of countries chosen for the test of this vaccine. @COVID19." Someone else commented, "we are not the only ones who will be tested. ... Furthermore, how has Ebola been conquered? Thanks to a vaccine, created by whom? Professor Muyembe." Yet, such publications did not get any approval, nor did they gain any traction.

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4 Conspirational thinking in the COVID-era is not limited to the Digital Kinois. In the USA and Europe, for example, Bill Gates was accused of being involved in creating the virus to benefit his commercial interests (Gruzd and Mai 2020). The Kinois' conspiratorial stories were obviously based on reports that had originated elsewhere. I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for noting the conjunction between global and local conspiracy theories.

5 As a reviewer remarked, many influential Africans spoke out against testing the vaccine in sub-Saharan Africa. Examples are Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the WHO (BBC 2020), and the Ivorian footballer Didier Drogba (Rossman 2020). Though these figures did not appear as highly influential in Digital Kinois' musings about the vaccine.

As part of the anti-vaccine mobilization, a hyperlink to a digital petition circulated, inviting people to sign "no! regarding anti-COVID 19 vaccination tests in Africa". By 10 May, an automatic counter on the petition's website announced more than 87,000 signatures (Toure n.d.). A Facebook post juxtaposed the scan of a letter issued by a Congolese representative of the World Bank next to a video of Dr Muyembe at a press conference. The document, with a World Bank in Washington letterhead and signed by "the administrator for the Democratic Republic of Congo", was addressed to the (Congolese) minister of finance. It confirmed that the advisory council of the World Bank had approved a loan of US$ 23.6 million, and a similar gift (another US$ 23.6 million). The goal, so the letter announced, was to assist the capacities of the Congolese state to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The commentator did not seem to question the authenticity of the document and, by publishing the two documents next to the video, suggested that the millions of dollars went straight to Dr Muyembe rather than to the Congolese government. The caption stated it almost explicitly – "All of that because of an interest in millions." Most comments on this publication were dominated by resentment. Someone wrote, "shameful", while another added, "*un négro de service*" (a black man working for others), although one commentator brought some cheer to the exchange by proposing "and what if we would all cough on him?"

This spell of moral panic ended with a minor flash of pride and encouragement. The coordinating office of the fight against COVID-19 published a clip of 2:23 minutes on social media in which Dr Muyembe provided more transparency regarding the vaccine testing (Muyembe 2020). At the beginning of the video, he mentioned that he had seen various messages on social media talking about COVID-19 testing in the DRC. Speaking from his office at the INRB, he expressed the need to calm the population and assured them that, as a Congolese citizen himself, he would never allow the Congolese to be used as guinea pigs. Rather, "if there was going to be testing on the territory, it would be after the current tests in the United States and in China generated good results."

Various captions celebrated this announcement as a victory for social media – "the power of social media", or "the collective of social media has pushed #Muyembe to shed more light on his propositions qualified as testing efforts." Reactions to this and similar digital content celebrated the influence that (Digital) Kinois seemed to exert over domestic politics. Some mentioned that the Congolese have become more demanding, and do not remain passive on issues of health politics. Often, such comments were accompanied by mobilizing shouts to stay vigilant, or reminded others that "we are in a war against Macron and Trump. This war has just begun, stop whining, we are

now in the right position." For some commentators, Dr Muyembe's statement proved that the population was more powerful than the Congolese president, who – after all – remained silent amidst this whole moral panic. Still, others did not believe his words and continued on to what can only be described as a witch hunt. Since the moral panic about vaccine testing, Dr Muyembe has received death threats and has temporarily suspended his participation in live press conferences.

6   Concluding Thoughts

The above moments of moral panic and African pride contributed towards the unfolding COVID-19 crisis in Kinshasa. They were socially significant because they gave definite form to Kinois' experiences, sentiments and expectations, from which one can conclude the following. First, online social networks are places in which to *mobilize for an African-centred future* through a figure of colonial resistance (Simon Kimbangu), African plants, a form of political participation (petitions), and a renewed interest in African futures. Second, online critiques of the global health system can reach a much larger audience: the absence or presence of care facilities and expertise are interpreted as manifestations of the racial imaginaries that govern global health. Most understood testing for COVID-19 as a new articulation of old forms of exploitation. In such a narrative, Bill Gates, WHO, and the World Bank are dangerous actors who are teaming up with their own Dr Muyembe. Third, it is clear that the digital world allows Kinois to *rewrite the saviour narrative*: some suggested that this crisis gives black (including Cuban) or African experts an opportunity to assume the saviour role. A narrative of confidence and optimism to the effect that Africans can care for themselves and even rescue whites reverberated. Social media then provided platforms from which to showcase those African inventions, or contributions of African engineers and medical doctors that remain largely invisible on the global scale. Finally, it is online that Kinois *attempt to implement political change*: the spells of moral panic and flashes of African pride were socially productive. They generated excitement, enthusiasm, agitation and disgust – all of which have immediate political ramifications. The effervescence generated digitally was performative: it unified people around common goals. Whether the public demanded more clarity on Congolese involvement in COVID-19 testing, or whether people wanted to protect one another from false information (as in the case of Kongo bololo), Digital Kinois were trying to make an impact on their immediate surroundings, and on those of their (virtual) contacts. At times, the effervescence was disruptive. However, when it

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Beyond the Dead End: Gikuyus and Englishes in Colonial and Postcolonial Debates on Language and Decolonizing (Kenya)

Inge Brinkman

1 Introduction

Africa's linguistic landscape shows signs of important changes in direction. While colonial history remains a crucial factor in language policies on the continent, more recent historical formations – related to migration, global capitalism, and other factors – start influencing the developments, choices and futures. The increasingly important role of English in French-oriented countries like Rwanda, the DRC and Morocco (Northrup 2013; Plonski et al. 2013; Soussi 2020) and the teaching of Mandarin in school curricula as well as the rising number of Confucius Institutes on the continent testify to this (for example Wheeler 2013).

At the same time, the role of African languages is institutionalized in some contexts. The choice of South Africa for 11 official languages, while promoting and ensuring respect for all other languages used in the nation, is a case in point. Until 1996 only English, Afrikaans and Dutch had formal status, while now isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga are also official languages. We can also refer to the 2013 constitution of Zimbabwe with its adoption of 16 languages as official, among these Shona and Ndebele, together spoken by some 90 per cent of the population.

Of course, we cannot now know how these developments will influence the future of African literature. Will the 'colonial moment' (Roberts 1990) subside in importance in the debates, and a post-postcolonial criticism develop? Will people's interest in African-language literature shift direction as the status of at least some African languages alter? In a special issue on African-language literatures, Sara Marzagora (2015; see also other articles in the special issue) invites us to connect Afrophone literatures to ongoing debates in comparative literature, postcolonial studies, and world literature, instead of the often binary approach to Europhone and Afrophone literatures. Such a more nuanced approach may start with studying how people in the past imagined linguistic futures, and how linguistic innovation was evaluated by African intellectuals at the time.

Vignette 1

The year: 1962.
The place: The prestigious Makerere University in Uganda.
The scene: A choice of African writers from various parts of the continent gathers to hold a conference, significantly entitled Conference of African Writers of English Expression. Among those attending are Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, John Pepper Clark, Kofi Awoonor and other important writers from West Africa; Ezekiel Mphahlele, Bloke Modisane, Lewis Nkosi, and Dennis Brutus from South Africa; Langston Hughes from the United States; Okot p'Bitek, Robert Serumaga and students from Makerere University, such as Grace Ogot, Rebecca Njau and (then still) James Ngugi from East Africa.

Notably absent are not only francophone and lusophone authors from Africa, but also authors writing in African languages are not present. Even Amos Tutuola apparently does not master 'English expression' well enough to fit the criteria (for more on the reasons for his exclusion, see Lo Liyong 1969: 159–60).

A year later, one of the participants in the conference, Obi Wali published his famous essay "The dead end of African literature" (Wali 1963). In it he held that literature written in the colonial languages should not be classified as African literature: only literature written in African languages would qualify for that label.

These events are usually taken as the start of the debate about language and African literature. Generally, the argument has been represented as one between the very famous Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe as opposed to the also very famous Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.

Ngũgĩ largely agrees with Obi Wali. He views English as 'Europhone', an imperial, foreign language that was imposed on Africans during the colonial era. In his well-known essay *Decolonising the mind*, he adopts an interpretation in which the assumed harmony of his youth – when there had been linguistic unity – had been broken by colonial education in English (Ngũgĩ 1986: 11). The policy of imposition formed part of a deliberate programme to destroy African languages and cultures, and to colonize the minds of African peoples. According to Ngũgĩ (2018: 125), this colonial project did not end with decolonization: it was continued, and even "completed and normalized" in the postcolonial period.

Ngũgĩ is not a man of words alone: since the end of the 1960s he has undertaken numerous actions in line with his thinking: as lecturer at the University

of Nairobi he played a key role in changing the department of English into a department of literature. He left Christianity, changed his name from James Ngugi to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, started a theatre project in Gikuyu in his home village Kamĩrĩĩthũ and, in his 1986 book *Decolonising the mind*, he bade farewell to English as a medium of his writing (Ngũgĩ 1986: xiv). He then wrote – among other books – the heftiest novel in Gikuyu ever, *Mũrogi wa Kagogo* (768 pages) (Ngũgĩ 2007).

Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe agreed with neither Obi Wali nor Ngũgĩ. He viewed African literature as consisting of ethnic literatures, written in the various indigenous languages of Africa, and of national literatures, written in "the language of the erstwhile colonial powers" (Achebe 1965: 27). English had been a colonial import, but so had the nation: "I have been given this language and I intend to use it" (Achebe 1965: 30), he laconically concluded. National and ethnic language literatures both have their place: "Theatricalities aside, the difference between Ngũgĩ and myself on the issue of indigenous or European languages for African writers is that while Ngũgĩ now believes that it is either/or, I have always thought that it was both" (Achebe 2009: 97).

These debates continue to engage African authors, like Wole Soyinka, Mazisi Kunene, Cheikh Aliou Ndao, Penina Muhando Mlama, Sahle Selassie – to mention a few – with a recent exchange in the *Journal of African Cultural Studies*: Ngũgĩ holding onto his position (Ngũgĩ 2018) and Nigerian Biodun Jeyifo maintaining that "English is an African language", adding "Ka Dupe!", a Yoruba expression of gratitude (Jeyifo 2018).

Vignette 2

The year: 1929.
The place: The Independent school in Gakarara, Central Kenya.
The scene: A young boy is standing on guard by the roadside. His task is to warn those inside the school in the event of a nearing school inspection party.

Why is he standing there? Inside the school, the pupils are engaged in learning English. As they are not yet in Standard V this is illegal: colonial law forbids any student to be taught English during the first four years of schooling.

Before 1929, English had been part of the curriculum, also for pupils beginning with their primary education. In 1929, however, the British government in Kenya ruled that Swahili should be taught instead, with English as a subject only starting after Standard IV.

This caused much resentment. Mostly, the crisis of 1929 in Central Kenya is termed the 'female circumcision controversy', to refer to missionary meddling in what were regarded as private family matters, but Derek Peterson (2004: 147) has argued it had better be termed the 'language policy controversy'. Learning Swahili, the language between settlers and their personnel, the language of the lower administration in the colony, was regarded as a mere waste of time: "The Swahili had never conquered the Gikuyu", organizers of the Independent schools insisted. They wanted English, 'the official language of the British empire', to be taught (Peterson 2004: 147), and called in the notion of *wĩathi*, usually translated as 'independence', describing it as "doing one's work without someone lording over him" (constitution of the Kikuyu Independent School Association, cited in Peterson 2004: 143).

Despite the resentment and the occasional act of disobedience, most Independent schools in Central Kenya stuck to educational regulations, earning general praise from the colonial school inspectors. (For more on the case, see Peterson 2004: 102–12, 121–2, 147–8).

The second vignette obviously complicates the first. When colonized people fought to have English included in the school curriculum, were they simply mistaken, running towards a dead end? The people in the two vignettes share a profoundly future-oriented notion of their projects. In both cases, ideas about a linguistic future – in the educational and literary realm – were connected to more than functionalist possibilities for upward social mobility, as they included the notion of countering domination and inequality, and to strive for independent decision-making and agency. In such imaginings of a just future, the past often plays an important role. Yet, in the struggle to reach for it, it seems hard to imagine that in the past people may have had different aspirations or different opinions about how to reach the same goal. The past serves as an argument in debate and, as such, historical complexity is often hard to fit in.

2   Historical Complexity, Colonial Hierarchies and Past Futures

In 1995, Karin Barber was already pointing out that "writing in English can be understood more richly if we abandon the picture of the colonial language as an all-enveloping blanket of repression, and the indigenous languages as stifled, silenced sites of muted authenticity and resistance" (Barber 1995: 25). Postcolonial theory, she argued, all too often reduces historical complexities by conceptualizing literary production in English and African languages in a

decontextualized and isolated way (Adejunmobi 1999; Barber 1995; Barber and Furniss 2006).

Barber's critique remains pertinent; with Jeyifo (2018: 135–6) holding that "it was Fanon who first theorized that all colonizers in the modern period act exactly the same way in imposing their languages, cultures and values on peoples and nations they colonize while simultaneously waging a total war of devaluation on the languages and cultures of the colonized." Not only does this resemble more a summary of Jean-Paul Sartre's argument in his preface to Fanon's (1991: 13) book rather than that of Fanon, Jeyifo's statement also reduces the complexities of colonial discourses, policies and practices into a generalized abstraction of 'all' colonizers' imposition and devaluation, unlike Fanon's subtle discussion of the inferiority complex on the part of the colonized.

Mukoma wa Ngugi (2018: 36–9) hints at historical complexity when he notes the stress on "vernacular languages" in colonial educational policy. He explains that many colonized people "wanted full English immersion" and regarded fighting "for more English and less African languages in the educational system" as "a contribution to the anticolonial political struggle". Yet, he gives this remark no further thought, concludes the citations on colonial educational policy with the statement that African languages were being used "to facilitate a smoother transition to English" and continues with writing about the hegemony of racist ideologies in colonial education of which "educated Africans" became "the immediate victims". Such an interpretation would not be subscribed to by the organizers of Independent schools in Central Kenya: they did not see their stress on English in terms of victimhood but rather as a means of striving for independence.

Ngũgĩ (2018: 125) also acknowledges historical complexity when he states that, "Ironically, in some countries, the colonial period had a more progressive language policy, which ensured basic literacy in mother tongue. That was how I came to learn Gĩkũyũ." As the second vignette indicates, his evaluations of mother tongue-education as "a more 'progressive language policy'" would not have been shared by many colonized Kenyans, least by the organizers of Independent schools. They would rather have felt that mother-tongue education amounted to a colonial strategy of exclusion and hierarchization.

Of course, language policies in the colonial context reflected the inherently hierarchical nature of the colonial system. This, however, did not result in a uniform, homogenous linguistic situation determined by colonial rule: "colonial language policies were heterogeneous, uneven, and often self-contradictory, and … what people actually did, linguistically, could not be encompassed by any colonial policy" (Barber 1995: 13).

In terms of language philosophy, Ngũgĩ's equation of harmony and African language on the one hand, and alienation and English on the other, is reminiscent of the stance of many missionaries in the colonial era. The German missionary linguist Dietrich Westermann, for example, wrote in 1934 that teaching English would "lead to the alienation of the individual from his own self, his past, his tradition, and his people" (cited in Peterson 2004: 121; see also: Mukoma wa Ngugi 2018: 36). In colonial thinking, such 'alienation' would only lead to 'natives' being unable to cope with 'modernity', misplaced arrogance and a threat to law and order. As Derek Peterson (2004: 120) pointed out, missionaries – and colonial officials and European settlers – were "terrified about Gikuyu who learned English".

The organizers of Independent schools who wanted English taught in the first years of primary education neither had their minds colonized nor were they wearing white masks (Fanon 1986). We cannot reduce their actions to mimicry or to subversion (Bhabha 1994). Through their stress on English, they "claimed a place for themselves within the British linguistic and political world. They contracted with colonialism, turning their English rulers into bargaining partners" (Peterson 2004: 155). This, rather than any theory of simulation, explains why missionaries were so terrified: education in English in the end challenged colonial structures.

The organizers of Independent schools would, in turn, probably have abhorred Ngũgĩ's writing of proper names – 'Njeethiberi' instead of 'Jezebel', and 'Herina' instead of 'Helen'. They insisted on writing English names "the way Englishmen spell them" (Ngũgĩ and Ngũgĩ 1980; Peterson 2004: 146, 224). Their insistence was no sign of their lack of patriotism: as indicated, they strove for *wĩathi*, a Gikuyu concept of self-mastery often translated as 'independence', and which the organizers of Independent schools described as "doing one's work without someone lording over him" (constitution of the Kikuyu Independent School Association, cited in Peterson 2004: 143).

3 Pragmatics and Linguistic Purity: The Views of Gakaara wa Wanjaũ

In *Decolonising the mind*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o singles out one Kenyan author in particular whose "faith in the possibilities of Kenya's national languages" had never been broken. He assesses Gakaara wa Wanjaũ as a writer "thrown up by the mass political movements of an awakened peasantry and working class" and maintains that Gakaara's "inspiration came from the mass anti-colonial movement of Kenyan people, particularly the militant wing" (Ngũgĩ

1986: 24). For Ngũgĩ, Gakaara's very act of writing in Gikuyu constituted a form of resistance.

Ngũgĩ had good reason to reflect on Gakaara's life. While Ngũgĩ's conversion (Gikandi 1992) dates from the end of the 1960s, Gakaara had already started writing in Gikuyu in the 1940s, had changed his name from Jonah Johanna Gakaara to Gakaara wa Wanjaũ in 1952, became ambivalent about Christianity during the Mau Mau period (Pugliese 1995: 140), had been detained for eight years during the emergency – though not as Ngũgĩ (1986: 24) suggests "because of his writing in Gĩkũyũ" – and Ngũgĩ took to using Gakaara's (1991) Gikuyu spelling conventions for writing his novels (Peterson 2014: 233).

Yet, Ngũgĩ's enlistment of Gakaara into the ranks of radical Marxist thinking is inappropriate (Pugliese 1994: 181–4). Gakaara had never been the radical Ngũgĩ wanted to make of him. For one, Gakaara never viewed his decision to write in Gikuyu as having anything to do with resistance. He had always made his language choices according to the audiences he had in mind. Thus, he said he wrote in Gikuyu because "I write only stories or I only deal with subjects concerning the Gĩkũyũ," he wrote a pamphlet in Swahili when he wanted to reach the colonial settlers (Pugliese 1995: 139, 147), and knew full well that English was needed to reach and/or impress camp officials, the governor or queen (Gakaara 1983: 30, 34–5, 43, 53, [1988: 38, 42, 65]). Of course, such pragmatics preclude neither critical writing nor arriving at alternative forms or reaching new audiences, but Gakaara himself did not view his writing in Gikuyu as an act of resistance and also, for example, used Gikuyu in his anti-Mau Mau writing while in detention.

For Ngũgĩ, the choice was a dichotomous one – either imperial Europhone English or unifying, popular, subversive Gikuyu. Gakaara, however, reflected on the far messier linguistic realities of colonial and postcolonial Kenya. In *Ũgwati wa Mũthũngũ Mũirũ*, he warns of the danger/disadvantage of a black European: a person who suffers from the disease of "mixing" languages and has a "colonial rooster" in his brain (Gakaara 1974: 3, 19). Even after colonialism, this "slave chain" remained in existence, leading to devaluation and the next to disappearance of Gikuyu customs and beliefs (Gakaara 1974: 7, 15). As it amounted to "marrying a colonialist without any bride-price payment", the "colonial rooster" could in the end result in complete language loss (Gakaara 1974: 12–13).

It was not the use of English per se that Gakaara warned against in his booklet. He had never been against employing English when necessary. In his diary (Gakaara 1983), he frequently insists on the importance of knowing English and throughout the text uses English words and phrases. In 1956 – while still in detention – he urged his wife to learn English: "Get one educated woman

to teach you English," he told her (cited in Peterson 2014: 230). In the 1989 introduction to his three-language textbook *Mwalimu wa lugha tatu pamoja* (Gakaara 2006: Reel 4C), he wrote: "It is advisable for a learner to put more effort in learning Kiswahili and English because both languages are widely used in schools, offices and large organizations throughout Kenya."

Even in the booklet *Ũgwati wa Mũthũngũ Mũirũ* (1974: 11) itself he holds that: "All the same, we do not deny that English is one of the most important languages in the world. Because of this it makes many people in Kenya and in the nations of the world mutually understand each other, and that is why it is learned so much." It is important to note that in this passage, Gakaara uses the term Kĩĩngeretha (based on the word 'English'), while in the rest of the book he employs the word Gĩthũngũ (a difference that is glossed over in the only translation of the essay (Pugliese 1994: 231–42)).

What was it then that Gakaara was worried about? Gĩthũngũ, from the Gikuyu word *mũthũngũ* used to denote a European with, was not quite English nor was it Gikuyu. Or it was both. Derek Peterson (2004: 25) described it as "a hybrid language that was at once Gikuyu and English." In line with the general colonial anxiety over hybridity (Young 1995), missionaries disliked Gĩthũngũ, as it might play "ducks and drakes with our beautifully logical rules of spelling," one missionary commented (Peterson 2004: 133: citing Barlow 1938).

The boundaries between Gĩthũngũ and Kĩĩngeretha were difficult to draw: where did Gĩthũngũ stop and Kĩĩngeretha start? Sometimes the term Gĩthũngũ is used to refer to English, and that was precisely the aim. "By making Gikuyu look like English, readers also made the Gikuyu look like the English, entitled respect from the British government" (Peterson 2004: 118). Gakaara objected to such Anglicization of his mother tongue and designed an orthography of "Gĩĩgĩkũyũ karing'a": "real, true, correct" Gikuyu (Gakaara 1991; Peterson 2004: 134, 223–5).

Unlike Ngũgĩ, however, the problem for Gakaara was not with English as an imperial or Europhone language. His was a concern for linguistic purity. A "real, true" Gikuyu ought not to mix languages. Why would spouses greet each other with *Harũ ndari* ("Hello darling") or *Maĩ ndia* ("My dear") instead of a polite *Nyina wa* or *Ithe wa* ("Mother of" or "Father of"). Would a son not forget his real Gikuyu name if he were consistently called *Mbooi wa ndandi* ("Daddy's boy"), Gakaara (1974: 4) wondered. Because of Gĩthũngũ, children no longer knew the proper greetings and the right kinship terminology. Why would Gikuyu use Gĩthũngũ if no speakers of other languages were around? Why could children in school not be taught in Gikuyu if all those present were Gikuyu speakers? Gakaara (1974: 7) portrayed Gĩthũngũ as negatively as he could: it was the language of boasting as people tried to impress others with their importance or

high education; it was used by drunkards who would swear: *Ndem'buu!* (Damn you!) in bars.

Gakaara (1974: 7; correspondence quoted in Peterson 2014: 233) held that knowledge of culture and history could only start properly with knowing how to "read and write correctly" in one's own language, and he insisted that Gikuyu had "grammar, vocabulary, just like English" (Pugliese 1995: 149; interview with Gakaara). He called for Gikuyu to be treated on a par with English: his argument was all about respect. As Gakaara (Pugliese 1995: 78; translated from *Gikuyu na Mumbi* 1978: n. 11) put it:

> When *Gikuyu na Mumbi* [the monthly magazine Gakaara published between 1976 and 1985] was started one year ago, some people thought that it was not important because it is in Gikuyu. And they went even further and said that the Gikuyu language is not loved and a magazine in Gikuyu would not work. ... We have been very pleased to see that the Gikuyu have supported us happily, thus showing respect for our language.

4   Conclusions

Ngũgĩ may have viewed Gakaara as a comrade-in-arms, but the latter's stance was much closer to that of the organizers of the Independent schools of the 1920s and 1930s, for whom the same term "real, true" (*karĩng'a*) was used, and who insisted on correct English, as did Gakaara on correct Gikuyu. Ngũgĩ (2018: 126, 131), whose views attracted international attention, rallies against "a Europhone modernity of monolingualism". He favours "securing African languages" as "part of a whole vision of Africans securing our resources"; for him, the choice of Gikuyu is about resistance and *ituĩka*, which Ngũgĩ used in the sense of "revolution". For Gakaara, whose views – if noted at all – have been equated with those of Ngũgĩ, decolonization did not mean writing in Gikuyu as such (although he was the Gikuyu author par excellence). It meant speaking and writing correctly in whatever language. His linguistic project boils down to respecting the Gikuyu language, history and culture. The organizers of the Independent schools in the 1920s and 1930s equated learning correct English with striving for self-mastery and agency.

Postcolonial theory and world literature analyses often gloss over the complex histories of educational and language policy in the colonies and deny the conflicts over English and African languages. Reducing English to one thing – an imperial Europhone language – and African languages to another – a unified pool of popular subversive forces – results in a denial of the histories

of linguistic innovation, the debates and conflicts over language at more local levels, and of past imaginings of linguistic futures (Barber 1995; Marzagora 2015; Peterson 2004: 222). In any case, the language debate and thinking about independence did not start with the Makerere conference, Franz Fanon or Obi Wali: in the case of Central Kenya, the debates over colonial language, English, mixed language, and 'real, true' Gikuyu started in the 1920s at the latest.

In this contribution, the focus is not so much on language history and linguistic development as such, but rather on language ideologies and imagined linguistic futures in their relation to the political. In these imaginings, language is presented as a unified whole, correctness an ideal for which to strive, and mixing – especially for Gakaara – a sign of lack of pride. Yet, clearly Gikuyu meant more than one thing in these debates; not only English should be pluralized into Englishes; we also have to pay attention to different Gikuyus, Igbos, Zulus, Arabics, and so on. Scholars studying language-in-use are ever more urging us to abandon the concept of language as a bounded unity, instead thinking of "repertoires as lived and living experience" (Lüpke and Storch 2013: 345–59). Debates on the language of African literatures stand to gain from these sociolinguistic insights.

While postcolonial linguistic hierarchies may be part of the colonial legacy, they cannot be seen in terms of direct continuity: for that, linguistic innovation and evaluation have been too dynamic. Not only did educational policies change after decolonization, but also one can hardly directly connect the status and uses of other than colonial languages, such as American English and Mandarin, to the colonial period.

I started this chapter by referring to some recent linguistic choices on the African continent. It remains to be seen whether these can be viewed as a sign of postcolonialism, even decolonialism, or, rather stand related to a process of recolonization. In this context, new evaluations of language may come into existence and new linguistic futures may be imagined. For a way out of the dead end, for a decolonized future, part of the process may precisely be to acknowledge the messiness and particularities of historical power relations, and carefully weigh the divergent voices on decolonization and independence, taking them seriously in their own right.

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PART 4

Imagining

∴

Introduction to Part 4

"In times of crisis the wise build bridges, while the foolish build barriers."[1] This quote from the fictional superhero and king of Wakanda, T'Challa, played by the late Chadwick Bosemann, Black Panther, tells us a lot about the contributions in this section. They show that the arts and creative thinking are such bridge builders, even and especially in the face of uncertainty and crises. They highlight the huge potential of imagination and creativity in making African futures.

The first contribution by Ute Fendler ties in precisely with the topic of superheroes. Delving into African comic arts, it demonstrates how drawing and storytelling can inspire free imagination and utopian worlds. Local super heroes, Fendler argues, draw on rich myths and legends and may ultimately incite the readership to follow these models.

In the second chapter, Kerstin Pinther takes us to the fashion worlds of Lagos and explores the vital role of craft and sartorial practices in shaping African textile and design futures. The third chapter by Anne Storch invites us to reflect on the communicative practices of future making and non-linear time. Sitting on chairs and humming, or the simple flow of conversation and the continuing presence of voices are suggested as alternatives to a future dictated by orders, directives and commands.

The tower is a self-made skyscraper, an urban landmark in the DRC's capital of Kinshasa and, as Steven Van Wolputte, Ann Cassiman and Filip De Boeck put it in the fourth chapter, a giant question mark that begs profound reflection on the nature of the city. The tower epitomizes the urban futures of makers and hackers, on which the authors reflect in the CityLabs project at Catholic University of Leuven.

The fifth chapter by Jonathan Ngeh and Michaela Pelican explores the creativity of African youth. Using the example of Google Code-in (GCI) competition winner Collins Nji and Afrobeats singer Wizkid, they demonstrate how young people in Africa, who are confronted with challenging political and economic environments, come up with a spirit of innovation and networking across cultural and geographical boundaries.

In the final chapter, Ludovic Ouhonyioué Kibora takes us to Ouagadougou's arts scene. Despite all the political crises and economic hardships, we encounter artistic expressions of Afro-optimism in the events and theatrical performances by Récréâtrales and in the sculpture workshop of Abou Sidibé.

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1 https://everythingmarvel.net/black-panther-best-tchalla-quotes/.

Animating the Future: Storytelling and Super Heroes in Africa

Ute Fendler

1   Introduction

Over the last fifteen years, one can observe a considerable change in the image of Africa ranging from its representation as the lost continent to the continent of the future. This involves a large variety of transmitted narrative elements taken from stories about Africa invented in the long history of narratives about the 'other' seen from a European perspective – from the dark and dangerous continent where archaic forms of life appear and reappear to the place of the threat of unknown pandemics. At the same time, it is the continent of nature and therefore of unexplored resources and living space. In both cases, Africa has been and continues to be the space for projections of imagined worlds. Kodwo Eshun describes this entanglement of predetermination by negative scenarios for Africa and an inability to imagine a better future for it in his reflections on Afrofuturism and the zeal of artists to create alternative scenarios (Eshun 2003: 291–2). More recently, Afrofuturism also became trendy in the African context, so that the few African films that could be labelled science fiction, like *Les Saignantes* (2005) by Jean-Pierre Bekolo (Bekolo 2009) or *Pumzi* (2010) by Wanuri Kahiu, attracted ongoing attention by critics. However, it is striking that in sub-Saharan Africa (with the exception of South Africa), very few films use genres or narrative patterns that can be linked to the construction of an imaginary of future times (Fendler 2018a, 2018b). The fantasy film genre in which super heroes might appear are also lacking in the African context. A rare exception is the Nigerian film industry, Nollywood. From its beginnings in the 1980s, it has used narrative elements of local storytelling that include mystical and mythical figures as part of films and series set in contemporary Nigeria that draw on local religious practices and mystical beliefs (Haynes 2016; Krings and Okome 2013). Special effects in films would be used to bring to life the interferences of mythical heroes and of witchcraft in daily life.

This is unlike Western film cultures, especially the American one, in which imagining the future has a long tradition in the numerous sub-genres of utopian and apocalyptic narratives that rely on strong heroic characters. Paralleling the growth of Afrofuturistic productions in the arts in Africa, are the

increasing numbers of futuristic films swamping the international markets. Mainly over the last decade, there have been striking tendencies in this realm of (fictitious) discourses on the future. Super heroes like Superman and Spiderman, invented in the USA in the 1930s and 1940s as part of a larger political discourse on political and military power, are back in new versions and media formats that fascinate spectators with technical innovations that turn imagined worlds – often based on novels and comics – close to the illusion of being real in feature films (Dittmer 2013; Regalado 2015). The most prominent example is without doubt the film *Black Panther* (2018), which not only brought the super hero of the Marvel universe to the screen but also became part of the larger discourse on the question of (a more positive) representation of Africans and African Americans closely linked to the imaginary of a future for Africa (Jackson and Moody-Freeman 2011; Nama 2011). While *Black Panther* has been very popular in African countries, it has also stirred numerous critical voices about the representation of Africa designed once again by US-American productions (Balogun 2018; Lebron 2018). As Achille Mbembe underlined in an interview with Françoise Vergès (2010: 294) about the relevance of the postcolonial, the need for local heroes and imaginative scenarios for the future has become integral to discussions about imagining and conceptualizing future settings for and from the continent. Imaginaries are important in that they are breaches opening up to a different vision of contemporary modes of living. Bill Ashcroft (2013: 96) also highlights the 'anticipatory' power of imagining Africa in a different way, while Chiara Bottici (2011: 24) stresses the "faculty to make present what is potentially absent". In the African context, this ability is crucial in the process of questioning existing representations and the imagining of the self and the continent different from dominant representations. Ashcroft underlines that these artistic modes of expression are the formats that enable the creation and the bringing into being of new images different from pre-existing ones, while drawing on examples from African literature and films (Ashcroft 2013: 97).

In this article, I turn to a rather recent trend in popular culture of inventing heroes for comics – mainly in urban hubs like Lagos, Cape Town, Nairobi (Omanga 2016), Accra (Pijnaker and Spronk 2017) and, to a lesser extent, Abidjan. It is striking that some super heroes invented in Lagos are linked to Yoruba myths and legends, which are now entering the field of animation (Coetzee 2016). Interweaving the past, present and future into a blend of myths and modern heroes is familiar in the genre of Western super heroes, as for example Thor drawing on Norse mythology, or the gods of Olympus appearing in both DC and Marvel universes. However, in the African context, stories that link a

contemporary theme to narrative elements from myths, mainly in conceiving the protagonist as a half god or super hero, but that adapt the historical figure to the demands of a new narrative genre, contribute to the high demand for local stories that can also stir interest and recognition at a global level. These stories bring African perspectives and a positive self-representation into global discourses, thereby slowly changing the old perceptions of Africa and African diasporas, as for example Pijnaker and Spronk show in their study on the work of the team of Leti Arts based in Ghana. The artists confirm that they try to create an imaginary, inspired by Marvel and DC, but with a view to creating their own aesthetics and style on a technologically competitive level in order to become global players (Pijnaker and Spronk 2017: 339). The recent evolution towards an animated imaginary drawing on local stories and settings and reaching out to a local, regional and global public is mainly based on animation in various formats, ranging from comics and cartoons to video games. The question addressed here is about the specific aesthetics of animation that allow for a combination of these two lines – the aesthetic linked to the question of representation and identity on the one hand and the economic and cultural on the other.

    Having briefly outlined the highly complex field of imaginaries in different formats and diverse settings of production and distribution in varying historical and socio-political settings, the following examples will permit the reader to grasp some initial arguments about how and why aesthetic practices enable imagining and make alternative perspectives and concepts visible or tangible in the context of the complex entanglements of chronotopical settings in a postcolonial dispensation.

2   Animating the Future

Comics and animation build on sketching and drawing rather than on picture taking. This is why art books – storytelling via drawing – might be the way forward in building an imaginary for a different future as practised by a growing number of young artists on the African continent. Contrary to cinema, where these stories are still rather rare, the number of comics with positive heroes has been on the increase across the continent in the last decade. Drawing (in all formats) seems to be the medium for free imagination from pregiven genres and patterns bringing up new combinations and genres. One explanation for a favourable setting of this medium in terms of creating new imaginaries might be the specificity of the process, of the 'gesture'. The visual anthropologist and

architect, Ray Lucas (2016: 217, quoting Vilém Flusser), explains that a drawing is not an image:

> Flusser, writing on the gesture of painting, describes gestures as enigmas rather than problems: "One analyses problems to be able to see through them, and so to get them out of the way. … One analyses enigmas to enter into them."
>
> Contrast this with his account of photographing (notably not photography): "A photograph is a kind of 'fingerprint' that the subject leaves on a surface, and not a depiction, as in painting." The subject is the cause of the photograph and the meaning of painting. …
>
> In painting, according to this tradition, we ourselves form an "idea" to fix the phenomenon on the surface. In photography, by contrast, the phenomenon itself generates its own idea for use on the surface.

This definition of drawing circumscribes the essence of the force of imagination bringing something into being. Further on, Lucas states that drawing is a process like thinking, quoting Maxine Sheets-Johnston's (1999: 485) view that "thinking is itself, by its nature, kinetic." Therefore, Lucas invites the reader to conceive of drawing as a process of thinking, of generating ideas and concepts. In the following, I would like to present two examples for the imagining power of comics to support my arguments.

Comic Republic is a company founded in 2013 by Jide Martin and based in Lagos, Nigeria. Martin explains that he was very fond of comics as a child but wondered why there were no African heroes. The foundation of his company is motivated by the need for iconic characters with which young readers can identify. In response to this need, he creates heroes who can solve problems, fight gangsters and change the difficult living conditions of the majority of inhabitants in Lagos – just like Superman or Batman could do. The big difference, argues Martin, is that no European iconic hero will come to the rescue of the African population, as in many blockbuster films.[2] The young generation needs icons, positive models based on local myths and history, so that readers will adopt the idea of being capable of solving their own problems.[3]

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2 For example, *Blood Diamond* (2006) and even the most recent version of the stories of Tarzan, *The legend of Tarzan* (2016).

3 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClwGwx9zqmM [23 February 2020]. https://thecomicrepublic.com/2020/CharacterBible.html [9 May 2021].

FIGURE 1 Guardian prime COMIC REPUBLIC

In their visual representation, some heroes, like those in the classical US comic strips, are physically very strong, muscular, with imposing statures and postures and a challenging gaze, usually masked to hide their civilian identity. The importance of the double-sided character for an icon lies in the invitation to identify with the hero who is a normal human being in daily life to whom nobody would pay attention. This is the case for the 16-year-old character Marcus Chigozie. He is presented as a "teenage boy with anger management issues, who had no idea he had powers until an event changed his life. Now, he has the ability to move at supersonic speed and this new discovery has led him into becoming the super-fast hero and member of the Extremes known as Maxspeed." His status is indicated as 'Hero' and announced with a quotation: "It's time for a new generation."[4]

Another character is Guardian Prime, Tunde Jaiye, 27, fashion designer:

> [Guardian Prime] is the fifth element, one of the five essential elements on Earth (earth, air, water, fire and man). He is the perfect man created how God intended man to be (in his image). He can do everything a normal man can do only magnified to almost God-like levels. He is the guardian born to the human race as customary every 2000 years. He is Nigerian. He is Guardian Prime.[5]

The characters are portrayed as normal young inhabitants of Lagos – a student, a fashion designer – with whom the reader can easily identify. They turn into heroes when they discover their supernatural powers, so they can fight villains and save citizens as well as protect nature from criminal dealers. Two quotations at the end of the book, *Guardian Prime*, summarize the main messages directed to the readers. The first is by the main character whose key point is taken from the story: "I believe that humanity can actually be more than it is." This is followed by a statement by Jide Martin, CEO of Comic Republic, linking the fictitious character to that of the real creator. This merging point of fiction and reality encourages the belief that the statements could become real in the future. The success of the enterprise run by Martin who trains and hires a growing number of young talent, reinforces this positive image. Martin invites his readers to realize that they can improve their lives by believing in the possibility of changing things for the better.

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4   https://www.thecomicrepublic.com/site/web/Characterbibleviewer.html?file=The_Comic
    _Republic_Character_Bible_May6_2020_Web.pdf; p. 55. (25.12.2021).

5   https://m.thecomicrepublic.com/comics/MightOfGuardianPrime.html [10 May 2021].
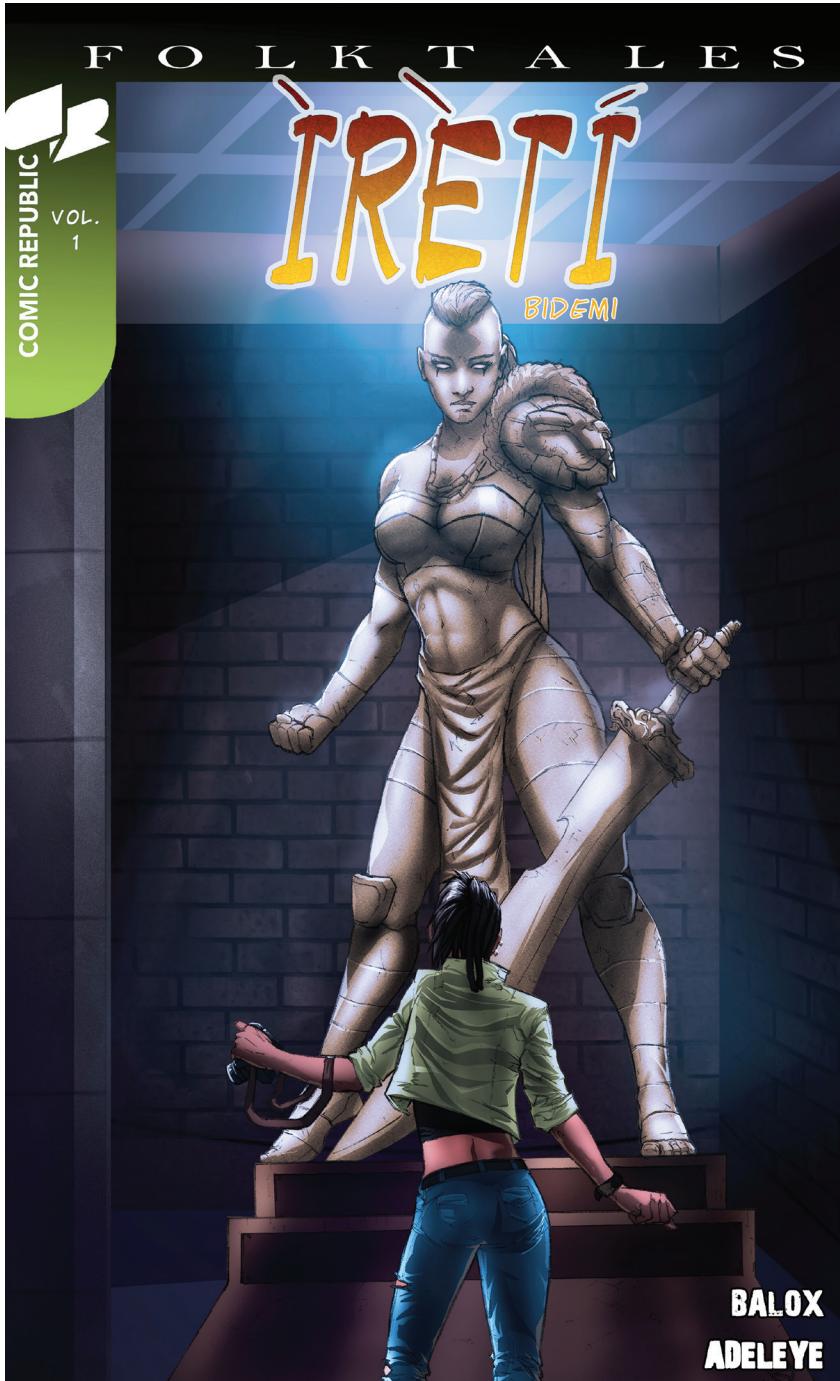
FIGURE 2   Cover of *ìrètí*, issue 2 COMIC REPUBLIC

2.1   *Hope Rising*

> I feel like we all have a calling, a reason, something we are all meant to
> do. Something we are born to do. I think mine is *Guardian Prime*. Why?
> Truth is I don't know. I am also finding it out along the way, but this I do
> know. … *Guardian Prime* has brought me faith. I believe that humanity
> can actually be more than it is. … That we have nothing but ourselves
> holding us back, and that with faith, nothing is impossible. That you are
> reading this is proof for me that faith works.
>   Till next time, always have faith.
>   JIDE MARTIN, Creator *Guardian Prime*.6

The drawings strengthen this message and allow the reader to enter the enigma
of the comic book to look for possible readings of daily life combining history
and stories with real life experiences and the young heroes who serve as role
models in their way of taking action. Following Ray Lucas, the comic would stir
up a process of thinking that is also kinetic, so that the readers might accept
the invitation to get involved in an 'animated vision' of the future, assuming
responsibilities to engage in making Lagos a better place in which to live.

Another example is the heroine Ìrètí Bidemi, an archaeology student at
Lagos, or perhaps the incarnation of the mythical Yoruba goddess Ìrètí. When
she visits the museum to view her namesake's statue, it turns into a monster
who wants to kill her and send her back to her ancestors. In response to the
danger, she unexpectedly acquires supernatural powers that later turn her into
an anti-crime fighter.

The story opens with images of the young student sitting on a bus heading
to the national museum. It places the story in contemporary Lagos where a stu-
dent is looking for more information about local history. In this way, the comic
links the past to the present.

The transformation of the young woman into a character with supernatu-
ral powers activates the present gap in which imagining a possible future is
lacking. Unexpectedly, the girl defeats the monster. Her newly gained power
enables her to project herself into the future as a fighter for a city without
crime.

With this story, the authors pick up some historical elements of oral his-
tory and link them to the present. The unexpected combination of orature
and institutional memory in the museum with the present that reactivates the

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6   https://www.thecomicrepublic.com/site/web/Characterbibleviewer.html?file=The_Comic
    _Republic_Character_Bible_May6_2020_Web.pdf, 41. (25.122021).

FIGURE 3 Page 8 of *ìrètí*, issue 2 COMIC REPUBLIC

FIGURE 4   Page 9 of *ìrètí*, issue 2 COMIC REPUBLIC

FIGURE 5   Cover of *ìrètí*, issue 4 COMIC REPUBLIC

legend opens up a breach in the act of reading, when the thought turns into a kinetic experience that could be prolonged into a future act. The two illustrations (Figures 2 and 5) visualize this transformation from a student to a heroine when the character builds up a relationship with the goddess whose name she is bearing. On the front page of the comic, the goddess is represented as a strong warrior in a posture of the frozen movement to step forward, ready to fight, holding her sword in a way that impresses the student standing in awe in front of the statue looking up to the goddess. The illustration of the character Ìrètí as a student shows the young woman running towards the spectator, ready for action, wearing the same shield on her shoulder as the goddess. The two women on the cover come up as a blended one of the young woman with superhuman powers. While the storyline is typical of legends and myths, as well as of comics with heroes that deal with the confrontation of good and evil forces in general, the twist comes with the use of Yoruba mythology, as this genre is usually occupied by the visualizations in predominantly US comics, animation and films. Comic Republic succeeds in using a visual aesthetic of comic books developed in Europe and the USA to bring forth stories that explain the world drawing on local myths. This opens up a new perspective on a possible future, as local knowledge and capacities solve the problems the population has to face.

Comics and animation have the advantage of being able to create stories about actual preoccupations without depending on a large team and production chain. Furthermore, this hybrid format of using visual and verbal techniques invites the reader to deconstruct and reconstruct the story (Dacheux 2014: 171). It contributes to a remediation process along the lines of Bolter and Grusin (1999) who distinguished between three major types of redress – reconfiguring media formats to bring up new ones; transposing processes from reality to mediated formats of representation; and the impact of the remediation process on reality by bringing about changes in reality. The two examples presented above contribute to the various processes of remediation as they propose new comic formats as a remediation between the past and future using the enigmatic and kinetic quality of the medium to stir some social changes. They can be placed in the larger context of producing comics and animation, which has developed into a growing trend, so that the animation of the future in Africa is taking place across the continent with artists like Roye Okupe in Lagos with his company Youneek,[7] Loyizo Mkize in Cape Town and his super

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7   https://youneekstudios.com/. The company is based in Lagos and in Laurel, Maryland, USA.

hero character Kwezi.[8] In the same vein, the production company Leti Arts[9] based in Accra and Nairobi turns the comics into interactive video games and, last but not least, Netflix is featuring Zambian artist Malenga Mulendema's story 'Mama K's Super 4'.[10] All these artists claim to have turned to animation through a wish to see African heroes in comics. They want their favourite childhood stories of super heroes to highlight the importance of African icons. They want young people to imagine themselves and to think of Africa in a positive and self-determined way. Most of them also train young artists and some bring the comics to new platforms like applications for cell phones or video games (Dunn 2015), so that the gesture of drawing as kinetic thinking is combined with a format that allows direct interaction with the hero and the story, which will be the next step in the development of animating the future.

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8   https://www.capetalk.co.za/articles/14058/homegrown-comic-superhero-kwezi-is-proudly-south-african [30 March 2020].

9   http://www.letiarts.com/about-us/ [30 March 2020].

10   https://www.shondaland.com/live/a27276236/malenga-mulendema-mama-k-team-4/ [30 March 2020].

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Conceptual Design and Fashion's Futures in the Afropolis

Kerstin Pinther

1   **Introduction**

Research into fashion and sartorial styles was and still is not a core subject of African studies.[1] Fashion's reputation as superficial and anti-fashion discourses have also likely left their mark on African studies. Even the earliest sociological theories addressed fashion in purely critical terms. Barbara Vinken has repeatedly pointed out how fashion has been stigmatized in Western thinking as effeminate and idolatrous. "To denounce fashion is part of a dark heritage of modernity", she writes (Vinken 2019: 61). Only recently has fashion been taken more seriously within academia and acknowledged as an essential part of contemporary culture and public life.[2] In addition, there is some evidence that among many intellectuals and artists in Africa this negative attitude towards fashion and its alleged superficiality is not shared. One need only refer to the Senegalese filmmaker Sembène Ousmane, whose films like *Xala* (1974) express a pronounced sensitivity to the language and meaning of fashion and dress. And, Lesley Lokko, a UK trained, Scottish-Ghanaian architect and writer, is generally critical of the pervasive conception of surface

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1   Important exceptions here are the art historical and anthropological studies of textiles or clothing practices, particularly their political significance as markers of identity (Allmann 2004; Eicher 1995; Eicher and Ross 2010). Within the last decade, however, empirical research on fashion design in Africa and its diaspora (Mustafa 1998; Richards 2016; Rovine 2015; Tulloch 2016) provided an important corrective and complemented hitherto mainly Westcentric fashion studies. These produce research on Africa's expressive cultures and speak to the changed cartography of fashion and question the dominance of Western fashion centres (Breward and Gilbert 2006; Potvin 2009) in favour of a more polycentric fashion industry.

2   It is in the context of rising research on fashion and, in particular, its relationship to the city and Afropolis, that the DFG project Fashion and Styles in African Cities is located. The collaborative project is led by Basile Ndjio (University of Douala), Kerstin Pinther (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich) and Frank Ugiomoh (University of Port Harcourt); it empirically explores the interrelationships between fashion and the city using the examples of Dakar, Douala and Lagos and combining art history and anthropological perspectives. Thus, this text draws on participant observation, informal conversations and interviews with designers and artists in the fashion field. I thank my colleagues and the reviewers for their valuable comments. For publications connected to the project, see Kastner (2019), Oberhofer (2012) and Pinther et al. (2022).

as lacking importance and being insubstantial – an antipathy towards colour included.[3] Instead, she introduces the concept of the thick skin, arguing that the surface is profound and essential; the appearance then plays a crucial role in the making of a person (Lokko 2018: 131–2). The following examples bear witness to the concept of the body and fashionable clothing as a repository of knowledge, identity and self-expression. It is the aim of my contribution to analyse fashion as a collaborative process between designers, artists and photographers, using the example of the vibrant fashion scenes in Lagos, Nigeria. I will show that craft and manual work play a vital role in shaping textile and design futures in Africa. In addition, I will demonstrate how designers not only research textile and sartorial practices, but also unpack hidden or forgotten societal beliefs and institutions.

Amaka Osakwe is certainly one of the most famous contemporary fashion designers from Nigeria. In 2010 she founded her label Maki Oh in Lagos, the cultural metropolis of the country and one of Africa's fastest-growing globally connected fashion cities. Since then, Amaka Osakwe has not deviated from her standard of producing exclusively in Nigeria and, above all, using locally sourced materials and textile techniques. Unlike some other Nigerian fashion designers – Lisa Folawiyo being at the forefront of those using and adapting Ankara (wax prints) into a heavy texture – Amaka Osakwe vehemently rejects Dutch Wax as a signifier of 'Africanness'. Instead, she believes in the valorization and exploration of locally available textiles and creates her designs around the resist-dyed Indigo *adire* and the narrow woven strips of *aso oke*. Characterized by a mix of disparate materials and fabrics such as handmade textiles, the fibrous strands of a loofah sponge, paired with chiffon and tulle, also lace and leather, jersey and silk, her garments often reveal the layered and draped appearance of 'traditional' sartorial practices. Some pieces in the autumn/winter 2016 season oscillate between clear cuts and more playful elements such as flounces, frills and other embellishments to evoke the body-accentuating silhouettes of the 'classical' Nigerian womenswear with voluminous blouses and wrappers. Printed and appliquéd eyes are recurrent motifs in this collection and, according to Amaka Osakwe, are reminiscent of the well-known *adire* motif of the 'inner eye', alluding to self-reflection on one side, and being seen and observed on the other side. Her autumn 2017 line of clothing again was inspired by the aesthetics of the bright yellow Danfo minibuses that criss-cross Lagos and that are covered with slogans and stickers – the latter translated into

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3   In his important essay "Style and Ontology", Daniel Miller (1994) also argues for the relevance of the surface within Trinidadian fashion and style practices.

various forms of painted *adire* and embroidery, wildly ornate and with unsewn threads.

The collection's underlying narration is that of a middle-class woman who travels through Lagos at night to see her lover – each single outfit speaks to local dressing habits and strategies.[4] As Victoria Rovine (2015: 3) remarked for some of Osakwe's early designs, these more recent collections also evoke place and culture through "two layers of sartorial references, one literal and one conceptual". Her designs are not only anchored locally through their materialities, colours and shapes, but also through subtle thematic references, taken up in the accompanying visuals, for which she often cooperates with artist friends like the architect and filmmaker Papa Omotayo.[5] Most of his fashion videos for Amaka Osakwe/Maki Oh transfer the ideas and stories behind the designs into an atmospherically dense and nuanced narration of Lagos and its specific urban milieux – visually and acoustically. *Omi – Water* for example, a film that won the Milano Fashion Film Festival award in 2016, evolved around the urban myth of Mami Wata. Omotayo placed a slide projector's switch into the hand of the female model as if to underline that she is the one who is controlling her image. With unfinished houses and other non-permanent sites being used as settings, the visual further suggests identities in the making. Another video plays with the variations of the word 'ehn', commonly heard in Lagos streets. Depending on context and intonation, it carries different meanings, from 'yes', to 'I guess' and 'is this how it's going to be?' As these visuals and designs are often associative, they are used to tell provocative and complex stories about female self-images, desire, sexual freedom and socio-cultural expectations of black womanhood.[6]

Amaka Osakwe is part (or even forerunner) of a growing group of fashion designers in and beyond Nigeria who understand fashion design practice as an active form of social commentary and critique. What in the past (at least in the Western context) was very much bound to subcultural styles has now been absorbed into the fashion industry itself, meaning that critical fashion – from Alexander McQueen to Rei Kawakubo and Hussein Chalayan[7] – aims to

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4   See her homepage: https://www.instagram.com/p/BQsivkRgbG-/ [7 November 2020].

5   The architect Papa Omotayou is the founder of the Lagos-based Whitespace Creative Agency. I met him there for an interview in October 2018. Some of his fashion clips can be watched on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMPQb6hG5UI [5 November 2020].

6   Because of its differentiated approach, a text by Alexis Okeowo (2017) on Amaka Osakwe, entitled "West Africa's most daring designer", for *The New Yorker* was particularly well received and discussed among designers and artists.

7   In this context, Chalayan's autumn/winter collection 2000 entitled Afterwords is a much cited example of a design for debate insofar as this Turkish-Cypriot fashion designer living in

disrupt societal conventions or to comment on political or social challenges
(Geczy and Karaminas 2017).

Because there are so few (fashion) design educational institutions in Africa,
several of today's designers from various places in Africa were trained in Europe
or North America. Their aesthetic and stylistic references, as well as their

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London was one of the first to tackle issues of migration and forced displacement by trans-
forming furniture into mobile garments. In the Nigerian context Buki Agbabiaka (alias Buki
Akib) marked her return from London, where she graduated from the Central Saint Martins
College of Arts and Design, with her Homecoming Collection in 2012. The chosen topic of
travel, movement and return – a well-known topos in African literature and postcolonial
thinking – was translated into fashion mainly by accessories and the accompanying look-
book with images taken by Lakin Ogunbanwo at the Nigerian Railway Corporation in Ebute
Metta, Lagos (see Pinther 2013).

FIGURE 2   Maki Oh, designed by Amaka Osakwe. Fall 2017, No Dulling, Look 3 INSTAGRAM
ACCOUNT OF MAKI OH, HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/P/BQSIVKRGBG-/

networks, are wide-ranging; fashion made in Nigeria is directed to both a local, predominantly urban clientele, and to the global fashion world, the black diaspora explicitly included. Amaka Osakwe was trained in England, returned to Lagos and now contributes to its fame as an important fashion city on the African continent. Moreover, she aims to redevelop the local fashion industry, which often means working with craftspeople and different trades. Her practices, and those of other designers, can be characterized by both a local rootedness and a global connectedness pursuing a conceptual approach to fashion. With many other designers of the continent, she shares a strong interest in local textile techniques and craft activities. Making and handmade practices in design gain new and even greater importance as they undergo updates through new forms that the digital and material experiences provide. It is this critical impulse in many fashion designers' approaches that is directed towards possible futures.

In 2007, at the age of 20, Papa Oyeyemi founded the menswear label Maxivive as an autodidact. Since then he has been producing from his studio in Yaba, a popular and mixed neighbourhood on the Lagos mainland. He is well-known for his gender-fluid approach and his Harmattan 2019 collection 'How to Marry a Billionaire' is probably most explicit about non-hetero-normative gender identities. Among the looks presented at the Lagos Fashion Week were many slogan sweaters and trousers with statements in bold glittering letters such as 'Bad Bitch No Underwear' or the ambiguous 'Buysexual'-shirt with sleeves ending in 'fingers'. Male models were dressed in tight, light pink or pale red velvet trousers and semi-transparent lace outfits; they wore wide skirts in bright colours, woolly jackets with side zips and yellow plastic gloves. Lurex as a continuation of the glittering theme of past collections was paired with more mundane, and rarely used in contemporary fashion design in Nigeria, materials such as PVC, bought at local markets. Some pieces, as Papa Oyeyemi said in an interview,[8] were inspired by the idiosyncratic way of dressing he recognized among the sellers in a nearby market. Thus, some of his designs showcased the everyday context of African cities as sites of intrinsic, but undocumented aesthetic values. For others – such as the green boysgirls-top – he made use of second-hand cloth which was modified after purchase. The collection comes as a journey through elaborately embroidered fabrics, optical illusions that revolve

FIGURE 3   Papa Omotayo (A whitespace) and Amaka Osakwe for Maki Oh, 'Omi'
              at the fashion film festival milano INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT OF MAKI OH,
              HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/P/BLLTTI_HSDT/

8   The interview took place in Yaba, October 2018.

FIGURE 4   Maxivive designed by Papa Oyeyemi: 'Buysexual'-shirt with sleeves ending in
             'fingers' PHOTO: KERSTIN PINTHER

around themes such as self-determination, relationships of dependence and
supposed wealth. In the middle of the show, the models started appearing in
bridal veils over their outfits. In a reversal of the common cliché that the very
last model wearing the very last look is a bride, Papa Oyeyemi sent the whole
group of models onto the stage – all with pastel bridal veils of tulle as if to cel-
ebrate a collective wedding ceremony.

FIGURE 5   The glittering aesthetic in the studio of Papa Oyeyemi / Maxivive in Yaba, Lagos PHOTO: KERSTIN PINTHER

The designer, who not only refuses to accept the Western fashion calendar, but also introduced more appropriate seasons for the Nigerian context such as Harmattan, the wet and dry season, stands for a provocative yet highly nuanced conversation on non-conformity in fashion and society. And – as one has to keep in mind – this happens against the juridical background of

homosexuality in Nigeria, which has been punishable by law since 2014 when the former President Goodluck Jonathan passed the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill. Maxivive uses and plays with material considered inappropriate in more mainstream fashion or not in accordance with conventional concepts of male beauty. In terms of fabric, pattern cutting and construction, his designs often contradict sartorial norms in Nigeria, as they tend to follow the religious conventions of a predominantly heteronormative society. And so the reactions to his show were ambivalent: some felt he went too far, they considered the show too controversial and not representative of the prevailing values of a society that, despite all its flamboyance, is conservative.[9] Maxivive's approach already provides an idea of how fashion design is being used as a vehicle to spark conversations on social development, gender fluidity and androgyny. Oyeyemi thus stands for a new group of designers from Nigeria who question the conventions of men's fashion and create new freedom in fashion – and thus aim to renegotiate the meaning of masculinity completely.

Another artists who uses her work to address gender issues and challenge heteronormativity[10] is Yagazie Emezi, a self-taught documentary photographer and cultural anthropologist from Aba, in southeast Nigeria. The fashion photography she made for the Vlisco brand, the famous but, because of its colonial past, controversial Dutch producer of wax prints, is particularly interesting in terms of a re-evaluation of long sidelined social practice in fashion and its media. Together with stylist and photographer Daniel Obasi, she set the stage for the fashion designs by Fruché and Gozel Green, a fashion line founded by the sisters Sylvia Enekwe and Olivia Enekwe-Okoji in 2012.[11] Whereas the

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9   From the blog *Magnus Oculus* by Mazzi Ozu, https://magnusoculus.com/tag/lagos-fash‐
     ion-week-ss-2019/ [7 November 2020].

10   Of course, there have been examples of fashion crossovers before – in street style as Misty
     Bastian (1996) showed for Onitsha in the 1980s or in high fashion. Shade Thomas-Fahm,
     for instance, adapted various elements of men's dress for women's fashion, most impor‐
     tantly the men's *agbada*. Thomas-Fahm, who was one of Nigeria's fashion pioneers of the
     1960s constructed these garments through the careful interweaving of global and local
     styles. Her aim was to uphold Nigerian historical dress practices but at the same time
     update them. Cross-dressing then was mainly a way of protesting against gender stereo‐
     types, as they were reinforced under British colonial rule and to challenge older forms of
     status and authority. Interview with Shade Thomas Fahm in Lagos, October 2017.

11   The twin sister's label is another example of a fashion design that stands against far reach‐
     ing aesthetic premises of shininess and a desire for opulence and a heavy texture so prom‐
     inent in mainstream design and a culture of ostentation and luxury. Their minimalist
     designs not only refer back to the 1960s via cuts and materials; furthermore, they are
     inspired by the poems and writings of their late father, the well-known writer and poet

collection's pieces – through asymmetric cuts, the mixing and interruption of patterns and textures in the case of Gozel Green, and with folding techniques and playing with volumes and an oversized silhouette with Fruché – already challenge conventional assumptions of gender conforming dressing – media images reinforce this direction even further. They stage the androgynous silhouettes and designs that blur female and male dress codes. Daniel Obasi, in particular, already had a reputation for work that critically engages with heteronormative expectations of how to dress, look and behave.[12]

For the Vlisco campaign, Yagazie Emezi mainly took up this theme by rediscovering and focusing on a cultural practice known among the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria but that for several reasons had disappeared. Against the setting of a concrete backyard veranda and its forged fence, her lens captured women holding hands and applying dark paint to each other's arms and hands. *Present and Forgotten* highlights two, once important but, in the course of colonization and Christianization, partly oppressed, partly discouraged cultural traditions. With the models adorned with calligraphy like patterns and signs in natural dyes, the images refer to the technique of *uli*: women's art of decorating their bodies and houses. Under British colonial rule *uli* was considered 'primitive', and patterns and colours were forced to move onto fabrics or, as in the case of the Zaria Rebels as an artists' association, onto canvas. In accordance with contemporary fashion photography, Emezi's images surpass the mere display of the garments, but instead focus on the relationship between the women.

Thus, the second element on which Yagazie Emezi focused with the models' body language stems from the Igbo custom of same-sex marriages as they existed in pre-colonial society. "The works created are an amalgamation of Igbo culture, present and forgotten," she writes on Instagram. "Before Christianity was introduced," the post continues, "women were permitted to choose a wife on the death of a husband where no child was born."[13] In particular, in fashion design, the research into nearly forgotten or sidelined techniques of textile production or into the characteristics of materials has become a common practice among Nigerian fashion designers in the last ten years. Nothing less is done by Yagazie Emezi – the only difference being that she is concerned with local ways of knowledge, of 'traditional' epistemologies and cultural practices

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Onuora Ossie Enekwe. For the Vlisco collection they used repetitive prints, which were cut out and appliquéd onto different fabrics next to other insignia and thus not only created a different kind of visuality, but also referred to the local women's technique of altering imported fabrics. The interview took place in their atelier in October 2018.

12   https://www.yagazieemezi.com/present-and-forgotten [12 July 2021].

13   https://www.instagram.com/p/BsEL83VAZI0/ [7 November 2020].

associated with same-sex relations. Against the common image in the Western press, but also in the contemporary art discourse of presenting African societies as (per se) homophobic, Emezi's approach represents an important corrective and a complication of these stereotypical narratives. Fashion understood as an eminent part of contemporary culture sets out to spark debate; moreover, fashion designers are time unravellers who imagine possible futures.

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Future Tense

Anne Storch

1   Introduction

In her book *Imperatives and Commands*, Alexandra Aikhenvald discusses the many meanings of 'future'. Imperatives constructed in the future tense are a rich and interesting category, ranging from a 'delayed imperative' (Aikhenvald 2010: 133) to 'indirect commands' (Aikhenvald 2010: 266) – directing someone to do something later, at another place, from here to there, or from top to bottom. The latter is what indirect commands do; they encode both the difference in social status between the speaker and addressee, and the command to perform certain tasks on the part of the addressee. In such constructions, the future expresses a deontic modality, which is used to indicate how things ought to be in this world, how we expect them to be, what we should do to remake them according to our norms, standards and desires. In other words, in imperative constructions the future tense indicates normativity and some kind of unquestioned adherence of hegemonic order.

The concept of the 'future', Souleymane Bachir Diagne observes, belongs to the most contested topics in African philosophy – those that are hybrid, negated, othered. The future, he argues in his work on *The Ink of the Scholars*, needs time: "Our capacity to create time by means of our project has nothing to do, anymore, with a cultural conception expressed in the calendar used in the sorcerer's village, or in the verbal tenses of the languages spoken there. We do not need to find out if the future is *given* in these languages as the time of a sufficiently far-off future: we assert that the future is what we *create*" (Bachir Diagne 2016: 45).

'Future' is a word that helps us speak not so much about tomorrow as about the order of things and our capacity to create that order. Yet, we not only have to speak in the future tense, but we also have to think how we can 'speak anew'. Michael Taussig (1984: 470), writing about terror, the complete annihilation of any future, urges us to think about a counterdiscourse and its possible form: "the question is raised not only concerning the power to speak and write, but as to what form shall that counterdiscourse take."

Perhaps an answer to this question is to sit and hum: do something that is not easily interrupted by time, and that replaces imperatives with hospitality. Does this make sense? Time remains unconnected to words, does it not? Unless language is made to last – as a description, magic, or inscription – it

evaporates after it has been produced. We speak, are heard (or not) and then that is that. Gottfried Benn (1948), in his poem 'Ein Wort' [A word], reflects on this evasive nature of words in the sense of an utterance, or as a language. A word offers a sudden revelation, an understanding of the world and of life, and then returns to nothing, returns to 'darkness', as he puts it. Words, says Benn, do not fill empty spaces. What a liberating way to think about language, now removed from the impositions of writing, standardizing, mother-tonguing and correcting. Just a voice, and nothing else. Whatever there may be as well: that is a different matter. There is an inferred sense here of what we impose on a voice, through linking whatever sound it produces to the complex episte-mologies and ideologies that are at the basis of fixing language and turning it into material culture. Yet, these impositions seem necessary because, with-out them, what remains? The fading memory of lightning, a shooting star, an expiring flame – not very hospitable. And language should be hospitable, as of course it is – although Benn might not see this in the same way as others do, his poetry being closely connected to his experiences of the catastrophe of war – and it is precisely the elusive word from which this hospitality comes.

To make this more inviting, let us bring in a bit of material culture right now so that the hum can really take place. Let us think of a chair, of all the many chairs, benches and stools that are everywhere. Walking around cities, villages and farmlands, one normally sees such chairs. Often, these chairs are simply there, and nobody sits on them. But one could sit there, and if one does, one may chat. One word would follow another, and there would be the sound of soft talk, some laughter, silence, and again more words.

We might hang out for a while to see what people are doing, what they like to eat, or where they buy their fruit and meat, and then we spend some time at a corner shop and sip a malt from a dusty bottle, while eyeing the stickers and advertisements that local spiritual doctors have left on the poles of the street lights. We get up and go on a bit further, noticing a chair or two more, and decide to visit somebody, and sit there and chat. A stream of words forms a humming sound, something with no end, and also no beginning, as there can-not be any first or last word in anything shared quite as intimately as language.

It is interesting to think of different kinds of hums emerging from time spent together. How intense does it become, and how polyphonic? Perhaps the chair could be conceptualized as context, in a sociolinguistic sense: then its placement, condition and form would be relevant for whatever kind of hum there was. In any case, however, it remains a hum; as we continue to think about the materiality and space of hospitality, the chairs in question are meta-phors and instruments for spending time together, resulting in a hum. Words flowing out of conversation – a continuous hum.

FIGURE 1   Chair, Alice ANNE STORCH

What might also transpire, however, is that one does not sit on a chair in an area with which one is familiar. One could also be a pilgrim, or one could get lost (though this can be the same thing really), finding oneself walking down an unfamiliar street. After a while, this might become tiresome, the chair becoming a welcome sight. Somebody else might be there, and one could ask this person for assistance: the right direction, or the nearest bus stop. Perhaps

the chair in question is a comfortable one, a comfy seat. A cat might come and sniff at the soles of our sandals. A neighbour might join in: where is it that you want to go? And we would bend over a map and hum. Other people would see that we are looking for a place on a map, but the hum would not reveal which or why.

On such a chair, with neighbours coming over for help, there would be a foreseeable ending to the hum. Time would pass, words would be shared, but at a certain point hospitality would be over. We would need to go on in order to reach somewhere. There would be talk about the future.

There is also the possibility that one does not reach somewhere on one's own account, but rather because one is brought there. For example, one could be told that what one is looking for is somewhere else, somewhere to which one needs to be taken: let me bring you there; it is difficult to find. It is not far. I really wanted to go there myself. But then one is brought after all. And being brought creates potential, as it places us in the hands of others. Because of all of this opacity business of the 'other', there can be all kinds of intentions behind such an offer, which – this we must confess – is per se a fundamentally hospitable offer. But who knows? It could also take us to an abyss where we never wanted to be. Another future tense construction might be in place.

Of course, such fears come from reading too many books on youth languages or related topics. As if those whom one meets in the street were always gangsters! Most people are like us, this is clear, kind and ready to like others and to be likeable. This might not always work out (especially the latter), but so what. We decide to come along, perhaps even to sit in a car. And then we are brought.

We can also be brought right from the beginning, for example when travelling to the field where a marginalized language needs to be described. This would entail a lot of being brought, to far places and to the homes of people who lead marginalized lives and utter marginalized words. The interesting thing that happens after we have been brought, is that this entire marginalization business of the 'other' becomes really weird. Because there too, we will sit on a chair, we have to, this is hospitality, and it is not a cat that comes by but a chicken, and the chicken is slaughtered immediately because of all this hospitality business of the 'other' and also because of politeness strategies that need to be made clear to us. So, we sit on the chair (we share one now, this is a rural area), and try to make conversation. Hi, we come for fieldwork. Is the chief at home? We would like his permission to fill in a few questionnaires.

And because the marginalized language is only marginalized elsewhere but not in its home, everybody speaks to us in this language that we still do not understand (we have not yet begun to fill in the questionnaires, right). The only thing that is marginalized here is the part of our respective buttocks that

cannot rest on the chair. Thus, we balance, and smile shyly. Not enough sta-
bility to make gestures, we would otherwise fall off the chair, and that could
be face-threatening. A hum unfolds. We listen and add things such as hmmm
ahhh hmhm to it, *Urlaute*, ancient Vedic noise. The hum continues as we eat
the chicken. The marginalized language sounds pleasant.

Of course, we do not understand what the hum is about in detail, but we
remain comfortable. The stackable plastic chair is there, the mighty metaphor
for language as something shared and as a means of building connections to
others. And we know that even though we bumped in, were brought without

FIGURE 2   Chair, Cairo ANNE STORCH

previous notice of our coming, this is somehow fine. Alessandro Duranti, with reference to Heidegger's observation that the other is always already there regardless of what the focus of our intentions may be, suggests that "different cultural traditions may or may not recognize or encode in their language the wide range of our human ways of being-with-others, but we know that they are there. Our intentions, together with our language, are always in a world of others" (Duranti 2015: 232). We always consider the other as a possible presence, and *vice versa*. Otherwise, there could be no self. And without a self, there is no use for menus and different colours and wine and so on. Just imagine: what would *you* like to eat? – I don't know, I don't even have an idea of the self, so I never had a chance to develop a personal taste. I eat what grows between highway lanes. At least you wear a nice shirt. I like the colour. Do I wear a shirt?

In order not to digress, let us look for a restaurant and sit there. A refreshment would be good. Perhaps no wine right now but rather a coffee. Surely there will be chairs too, and hospitality. Isn't the tourism industry also called the hospitality industry? Restaurants and cafés belong there. We select a place and enter and take a seat on the veranda. We are not made to sit down, but we take one – a seat. It does not matter. This is sunny and quiet and one has a nice view of the garden.

The difficulty with the seat right now is that it is not accompanied with a hum. One may have a hum if one brings one's hummers along, but the chair itself does not automatically offer a hum in places where hospitality is an industry. Instead, there is something else, namely an upgrade of language materiality. There are not only chairs (metaphors), but usually also tables and on them menus. Menus are based on the discovery that language can be transformed into written text. The graphemes used for writing have an arbitrary relationship with the sounds they represent, and because this is part of an incredibly complex history, we need to take into account the notion that written text makes these complexities visible; it turns hummers into ladies and gentlemen. On the doors of the lavatories of the cafés and restaurants where we sit and read menus, there are usually also 'Ladies' and 'Gentlemen' signs.

> Ladies + Gentlemen
> "Man is a talking clock"
> man, as talking clock.
> Silence against Time.

This short text by William Kentridge (2011: 43) is part of his work on *The Refusal of Time*. It is on the discovery of Einstein and on everybody in motion carrying his or her private time. Time is not a universal rhythm, and being presented
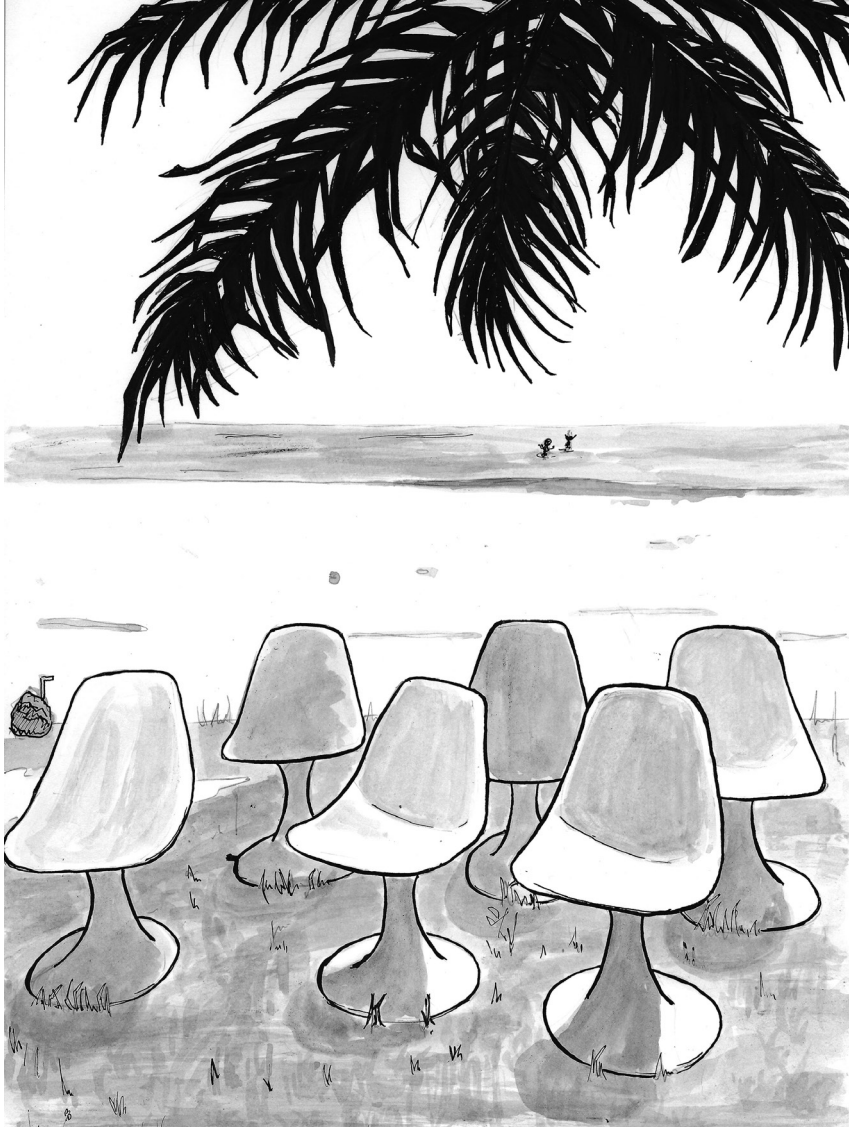
FIGURE 3   Chairs, Diani ANNE STORCH

as universal is, Kentridge suggests, a form of political power over people and nature. This is the refusal of time as something that cannot be refused because it is in everything that moves, it is an act of colonization and a form of power. With this in mind, we take a look at the menu:

The opposite of a hum and of an *Urlaut* – not private time but stereotyped time. We want to say, but hey: time is private with everything that moves. It
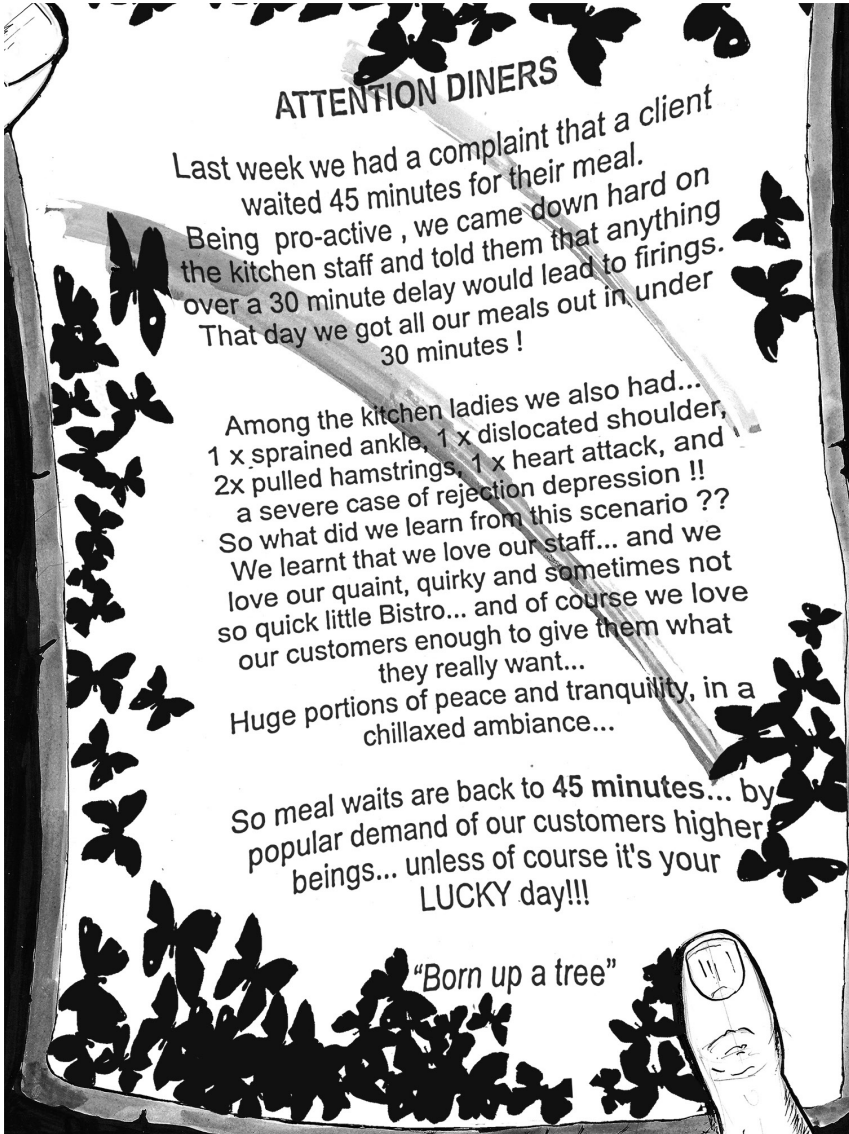
FIGURE 4   A menu ANNE STORCH

is a totally complex physical problem, how can you even ...? But the owner is busy elsewhere. Such places are busy places and one cannot use such a table to spend time at, as one would a shared chair. We share one coffee instead and then leave. Time is not simply something one shares. It is power, for example in its potential to be used to construct allochrony. As Johannes Fabian (1983)

has shown, a powerful instrument of the colonial disciplinary production of knowledge on the colonial other was the placing of this other in another time. People elsewhere thus became the Europeans' *Wiedergängers*, representations of their imagined medieval or Neolithic pasts. Here, something similar seems to be at work: just be generous and gift them with some extra time (for 'development' Fabian would have said). This is the super deontic future tense, and since such constructions are neither about shared time, nor about hospitality, but rather about given time and hostile generosity let us move on.

"Time: Is iconic," Michael Taussig (2015: 157) writes in his chapter, 'Iconoclasm Dictionary'. In a reflection on Walter Benjamin's observation that one can distinguish between homogenous and heterogeneous time (Benjamin 1968), Taussig draws our attention to heterogeneous time as the "time of the now" (the other time is the unruptured time of the clock and of progress; it is boring and inhospitable). Heterogeneous time is rupture, allowing us to link the present to the past, which all of a sudden can become part of the now. It jumps into our faces, just like that. This is what happens when we look at menus and forget about food and wine. Taussig suggests that ruptures in time have much more power because they are the cracks in the wall of time-as-power through which a messiah could emanate, through which salvation (or healing) could come, or does not come. This depends on what chair one sits on. Taussig also writes that Benjamin has thought about vacation and certain memorial days as vestiges of these ruptures, vestiges that seem to have been more salient in the past.

Which brings us back to travel. We move on, and as we do this, we stand still. Sit in a waiting room to wait for a flight. Time stands still so that it can later pass quickly. While sitting there, one can hastily write two or three emails. Not waste any time. Waiting rooms, like holiday resorts, parking lots and supermarkets are what Marc Augé (1995) has called non-places. Places, in other words, where one spends but does not share time. Talk is cheap here. The non-place is where one wastes time. Should you ever be undecided as to whether some place is a non-place or a place, just ask yourself: Is this a place where one wastes one's time? If you *quickly* need to do something completely *unrelated* to this very place (for example, send messages to people), then you can be almost 100 per cent sure that you are at a non-place. Any place can turn into a non-place by the way; it is a matter of economy, not of architecture, even though architecture is crucial, as there is a particular way these places are built. They also sound particular, because they have their own music (ambient music). Imagine a waiting room where Dido and Aeneas are played from beginning to lament, in an adequate volume (rather loud).

But they don't. Instead, soft piano. The man next to us asks, "Where are you from?" Conversation, small talk. From Cologne, Germany. "Ah, this is why you are early. Always on time." Turns the page of his magazine and dies.

Acknowledgements

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CityLabs: Making Cities, Making Futures

Steven Van Wolputte, Ann Cassiman and Filip De Boeck

1 Introduction

This chapter is part of an ongoing research project ('CityLabs') focusing on the role that so-called makerspaces and hackerspaces (may) play in developing new forms of bottom–up urbanity. While too soon to lay out the project's findings (ethnographic fieldwork is ongoing in Accra, Cape Town, Lomé and Nairobi), the intention here is to present the project's vantage point and ambitions.

While the scholarly literature has long emphasized the resilience and creativity of urbanites around the world, public discourse on African cities is still dominated by dystopian views of lack (of money, infrastructure, interest) and precariousness, usually introduced or followed by a dire warning that within a few decades half the continent's population will be living in an urban environment. Similar fears about the urban poor were raised in nineteenth-century Europe. It took two world wars and a global pandemic (not the current one) before effective change was about to crystallize.

It is against this background that the project's starting question was how actors in the broad field of the creative economies across the African continent (not only engineers, architects and urban planners, but also hackers, artists and tinkerers) imagine and redefine the city of the future. Along with Harvey (2000), we indeed see these makerspaces and hackerspaces as 'spaces of hope' where local solutions to local challenges are being forged. These solutions are not imported, but generated on the spot, as part of a process that could be viewed as an urbanization from below.

2 The CityLabs Project: A Brief History

The CityLabs project started in 2018 with funding from the Catholic University of Leuven. It is the third component of a research triptych on African cities initiated and carried out by members of the same university's Institute of Anthropological Research in Africa. A first project (on secondary cities, 2007–12) started from the observation that most research on African urbanity has concentrated on the continent's megacities, often taken as a *pars pro toto* for the

nation.[1] Though obviously not without its merits, this rather one-sided focus diverts attention away from how these urban centres relate to wider national (or international) and peripheral, semi-urban and rural contexts. Moreover, this focus on major urban centres frequently disregards the much smaller secondary cities 'off the map' (Robinson 2002), even if they often 'work' better than the metropole where life is fraught and shaped by much stronger social and economic tensions and contradictions, and even if most people live not in the metropolis but in these secondary, smaller cities (De Boeck et al. 2010; Ruszczyk et al. 2020).

A subsequent project (on planning poverty, 2013–17) honed in on the many satellite cities mushrooming throughout the continent, on the increasing inequality that planning interventions engender and on the growing gap between urban planning and the daily, lived experience they exemplify. In many cases, the gap is widened not only by the total absence of any participatory urban planning strategies, but also by the increasing role of new forms of volatile venture capital. To varying degrees, governance institutions across Africa are increasingly dominated by the forces of globalization and by the private sector being able to transcend the powers of local, provincial and national states. These dynamics are particularly concentrated in urban areas (De Boeck and Plissart 2004; Lund 2007; Trefon 2004). As a result, in many cities throughout Africa (whether Kinshasa, Accra, Dakar, Kigali, Luanda, Nairobi or Khartoum) official urban reform plans seem to generate rather than overcome new geographies of inclusion and exclusion. There is a constant tension between the reality lived by millions of urban dwellers, and the official vision of the urban future that political leaders and urban planners seem to share.

When we started preparing for the CityLabs project, we realized that we had perhaps paid too little attention to the resilience and creativity of urbanites, and that we had gone along too far with what Gyan Prakash (2010) poignantly labelled 'noir urbanisms'. Indeed, the literature on African urbanscapes is replete with analyses that stress the dysfunctional character of urban spaces across the African continent. In the field of urban anthropology, this tendency to read the African city as a pathological space of 'enduring failures – to the exclusion of almost everything else' (Myers and Murray 2006: 2), was perhaps further enhanced by the turn in anthropological theory since the 1980s towards what Ortner (2016) called 'dark anthropology', namely an anthropology that focuses on the harsh dimensions of social life (power, domination,

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1   The term secondary cities is, at first sight, confusing: a smaller city such as Kikwit (800,000 inhabitants by now) is small in comparison with Kinshasa with an estimated 12 million city dwellers, but still quite large in comparison with most European cities.

inequality, and oppression), and on the subjective experiences of these dimensions in the form of depression, uncertainty, and hopelessness. Insightful as such a focus on the perils of urban lived experiences might be, it also runs the risk of portraying urban residents as the passive victims of processes beyond their control.

3   Making Cities, Making Futures

From its onset, CityLabs has sought to highlight how the inhabitants of Africa's urban worlds claim or reclaim their cities, become active urban agents, invent new forms of cohabitation and collective action, and design alternative futures for the urban contexts in which they live. The aim is to tap the existing potential to fabricate new urban futures, to turn what Simone (2016) called 'uninhabitable' into a possibility beyond either the tired, broken dreams of 'modern' urban life propagated by former colonial urban planning ideals, or the latest images and spectres of the new neoliberal city that circulate widely across Africa (see De Boeck 2011, 2019; Watson 2014; for an exploration of futuring, see this volume's introduction). For most urbanites, however, these models remain in a distant utopian future towards which no real or feasible roadmap seems to exist.

During the design phase, it was decided to concentrate on four cities (Lomé, Accra, Cape Town, and Nairobi), and to understand the impact of these hubs on the urban landscape along three axes – (a) *knowledge* (how to reconcile hi-tech innovations with local skills and worldviews); (b) *environment* (how the actors envision sustainable urban development); and (c) *products* (what technological, cultural or aesthetic void do they intend to fill?) Thus, by thinking and working with 'makers', by analysing utopian or dystopian ideas of what the future may hold, and by scrutinizing the kinds of solutions or alternatives actors may offer, CityLabs plans to introduce an anthropology of what is possible (Kleist and Jansen 2016; Sliwinski 2016; Zigon 2009).

4   Making the City

A first source of inspiration came from De Boeck and Baloji's (2015) research in Kinshasa where, during their fieldwork, they stumbled on the 'Tower', a 12-storey building soaring high above a desultory landscape of warehouses, industrial plants, railroad tracks and new houses under construction. In defiance of gravitational laws and urban zoning rules, this unusual architectural

statement is one of the city's strangest and most enigmatic landmarks – a giant question mark begging us to reflect on the nature of the city, the heritage of its colonial modernist architecture, the awfulness of its current infrastructure, and its continuing capacity to generate utopian urban dreams. In the words of the middle-aged medical doctor who started to construct this ragged skyscraper without a plan or the professional help of architects, the tower is an attempt to transcend bare life and the mere level of survival that the city of Kinshasa imposes on its inhabitants, and to propose an alternative vision of a better urban world.

FIGURE 1   The tower, 7th street, municipality of Limete, Kinshasa, 2015 SAMMY BALOJI

A second inspiration was AbdouMaliq Simone's (2004a) description of *La Nouvelle Liberté* (the new liberty), a statue that in Douala, Cameroon, transformed an anonymous but crucial roundabout into a thriving meeting point and bustling hub. Made of scrap material by Joseph Francis Sumégné, the construction and placement of the statue was financed by a crowdfunding campaign organized by the NGO Doual'Art. Its main outcome, says Simone, was that it got people thinking and talking about what kind of city they wanted. Moreover, to the extent that La Nouvelle Liberté became a public landmark it also forced the municipal authorities to improve the surrounding infrastructures and the roads leading to the roundabout. Also, as Dominique Malaquais (2006) convincingly demonstrates, the statue instigated lively political debates on identity and self-determination, and inspired other artists to work along

similar principles. As Malaquais (2011: 8) argued elsewhere, these STEAM-related activities have a real impact on the cityscape. What they have in common is that they exemplify alternative, grassroots ways of shaping city space. They offer alternative locations to reflect on, think about and do something with the challenges contemporary urbanites are facing. The city they have in mind differs radically from the official urban propositions envisaged by politicians, urban planners or real estate investors.

Around that time, in 2017, the so-called maker movement made a few headlines in the national and international press and, although none of the inspirations above had any formal association with the maker movement, La Nouvelle Liberté was inaugurated in 1996, both projects were run along very similar principles. In Lomé, Togo, WoeLab and its founder Sénamé Koffi Agbodjinou acquired instant fame in 2016 by assembling a 3D printer from discarded printer parts (even if his more encompassing vision on architecture and the city received far less attention). This news item reflected the words of Emeka Okafor (founder of Maker Faire Africa) when he observed that, 'Making is central to leading Africa where it needs to be: a developing, problem solving region. ... It's imperative that communities from Cairo to the Cape unfetter their populations with tools from within' (King et al. 2014).

In more than one sense, Okafor's words heralded the coming of age of studies on science and technology in Africa. Until recently, these studies concentrated mainly on the creative use of 'imported' technology (for an incisive critique of this presumed 'lack' of innovation in Africa, see Gewald et al. 2012; Hart 2016; Pype 2017). However, creative minds throughout the continent are increasingly developing their own technologies to cope with local demands, making Africa the world leader in, for instance, mobile banking. As Clapperton Mavhunga (2017: 19) notes, 'Credit often unfairly goes to the gadget, as in *see how mobile technology is changing Africa.* Wrong! We should instead see *how Africans are changing mobile technology*' (italics in original).

What most approaches to innovation and technology in Africa have in common is that they are usually firmly located in the city, but they say little *about* the city, or about the interrelationship between the city and technology. Much recent urban research has illustrated how newly built infrastructures (including the infrastructural platforms of so-called 'smart cities'), invariably implemented top–down, have exacerbated existing inequalities and created new 'urbanisms of exception' (Murray 2017; see also De Boeck 2011; Parnell and Pieterse 2014; Watson 2014). Conversely, scholars who take urbanity as their focus have started to concentrate extensively on the importance of (often crumbling or failing) material and social infrastructures in shaping life in the African city (cf. Larkin 2013; Simone 2004b). Recent scholarship has given us

detailed examples of how local actors craft new destinations for abandoned landmark buildings, or find new uses for existing but deficient hydraulic and electrical infrastructures (Anand 2017; De Boeck and Baloji 2016; Hoffman 2017), or creatively recycle locally available scrap and waste materials.

5   Decentring the Global Maker Movement

By 2017, the global maker movement had gained some visibility after its formal baptism the decade before. It quickly spread its wings and, at present, more than 2000 makerspaces are recognized throughout the world, a large and growing number of them in the Global South. Though extremely heterogeneous, the maker movement inspires people to 'do something', gather around a common project and build a sense of common purpose, accrue social capital through online and offline networks, and wrench control over their lives from the hands of experts and elites (Davies 2017: 19–27). As such, it is often heralded as a new industrial revolution, or new culture of (global) citizenship (Anderson 2012) that is part of, and speaks to, a broader social movement that addresses some of the social anxieties (such as food and job security) that, in Europe and the USA, gained salience after the 2008 financial crisis (Davies 2017).

Yet, there is considerable tension between the movement's rhetoric and practice, and the way 'making' is being commercialized and propagated in Europe and the USA has attracted quite a lot of criticism. This includes the observation that, despite its staggering heterogeneity, mainstream maker culture caters mainly for a highly educated, predominantly male, white middle-class that strongly identifies with the STEM disciplines, a bias that is also apparent in what they are making and in a strong emphasis on individual brilliance and achievement. Bearing this criticism in mind, one can indeed expect local makerspaces elsewhere, while subscribing to the same ideals, to lay different emphases. Over the past five years, for instance, some 200 (and counting) recognized makerspaces have popped up in various parts of the African continent, voicing a "commitment to origin, ingenuity and innovation … [to redefine] the future of the world's most promising continent through our own authentic, relentless African ingenuity" (MFA 2021). Like their American, Asian, or European counterparts they are characterized by a particular attitude towards knowledge (emphasizing open and communal access), an overall anti-authoritarian ethos, and a deeply rooted concern for the environment and issues concerning sustainability. As they engineer their "inventions for the

everyday" (Mavhunga 2014) – homemade answers to local problems rather than imported and often ill-adapted foreign-made technological solutions – these creative economies reconcile hi-tech with local ingenuity, worldviews and modes of learning.

Though the maker movement was an initial source of inspiration for the CityLabs project, the makerspaces and hackerspaces (and we quickly learned to use these terms in a very broad sense) with which the team ended up did not necessarily have links with the mainstream maker movement. In fact, it would be wrong to see the various initiatives (from seamstresses and cell phone hackers in Accra, Ghana, to coding lessons in Lomé, software developers in Nairobi, or city furniture makers in Cape Town) as mere outlets of a Euro-American 'maker culture'. The rationale behind CityLabs, however, is *not* to look at how 'Africa' is 'adopting' maker culture (in the words of one blogger "as though Westerners had invented 'making' and Africa were a homogeneous spot") (Yoder 2015; see also Nkoudou 2017). If anything, the relative success of maker culture on the continent has more to do with the affinity between 'making' and locally existing ways of knowing and learning and with the social, economic and political dynamics of its cities, such as the presence of a large cohort of young, highly educated and skilled but jobless professionals (Cooper and Morell 2014; Mavhunga 2017).

6   Futures, Hubs and Cities

Though it is too soon to arrive at conclusions, tentative results suggest that it might be a good idea to operationalize the three axes identified at the beginning of the project into five arenas. The first such arena would be knowledge. How is technical knowledge being reconciled with other ways of knowing? What does an Africa-centred knowledge look like, and how is learning organized? How open is open access in the context of the Global South, given that access is often blocked or at least impeded by structural inequalities and power imbalances? Given that makerspaces tend to be highly gendered, and to be dominated by male professionals, what impact do they have on gender relations, or on intergenerational tensions? How does one stop more powerful markets hijacking this open access (as happened, for instance, with traditional medicine)? What about patents and property rights?

A second arena is art. Makerspaces and hackerspaces obfuscate the boundary between artist and engineer, between craftsperson and designer, or between professional and amateur. All these scenes function more or less according to

the principles set out by the maker movement. From the tools they invent to the devices they engineer, the codes they hack, or the statues they erect, what is it that makerspaces and hackerspaces produce? And how do they do it?

Third, this emphasis on produce and materials implies an ethnographic focus on the processes involved in their production and on how these skills and techniques, and indeed the technology itself, change as they travel through these makerspaces. At the same time, however, it is also important to realize that technology is not gender-neutral: in small-scale gold mining sites in Tanzania, the introduction of new technologies (such as metal detectors) only widened the gap between male and female miners (Verbrugge and Van Wolputte 2015). Hence the project also looks at the social life of techniques, and how local knowledge is welded together with more innovative and grass-roots ways of doing things.

A fourth arena concerns how these makerspaces relate to the particular urban ecology of which they are a part, and on how makers and hackers imagine their future and that of their neighbourhood and city. Indeed, across the African cityscape urban inhabitants develop their own specific forms of urbanism and infuse the city with their own praxis, values, moralities and temporal dynamics. The small-scale modes of action and creation that punctuate urban and peri-urban living still provide residents with an urban politics of the possible. These – often unsteady, provisional and constantly shifting – possibilities and action schemes are perhaps not the only ones available to urban dwellers; it is, however, impossible to underestimate their importance as a lever for collective action. One aspect of this maker ecosystem, then, certainly is the sustainability of urban development. In the hubs under consideration recycling may be one of the preferred 'methods' of the maker movement, and waste a preferred resource, this often is not a matter of choice but of necessity.

Fifth and finally, urban residents – as local producers and controllers of infrastructure and technology, rather than as local consumers of imported technology – are highly skilled at discovering itineraries beyond the obvious, and at exploiting more invisible paths and possibilities that lie hidden in the folds of urban domains and experiences. These city dwellers have successfully trained themselves to tap into this imbroglio, and to exploit to the full the possibilities it offers. Of what then consists such entrepreneurship? How do makers finance their projects, and are alternative routes (such as pyramid saving schemes) sustainable in the long run? To what extent are the alternatives they propose (the sharing economy, crowdfunding, see the example of La Nouvelle Liberté above) viable, when the alternative is all there is or, at best, is unpredictable and unreliable.

7   **Concluding Thoughts**

Makerspaces and hackerspaces – in the broadest possible sense – are indeed urban phenomena. First of all, in their contemporary form, they require access to (social and virtual) networks and infrastructure – including people as infrastructure (Simone 2004b). Second, as people regain control of the means of production – be it as a lifestyle or as an ideological choice, out of necessity or for artistic reasons – 'making is returning to cities in new and surprising ways' (Hirschberg et al. 2016: 24). Third, this also implies that makers, living *in* the city, are increasingly involved *with* the city, trying to rework and improve it, or at least prevent it from worsening, in their own, idiosyncratic ways and according to their own utopian ideals or dystopian fears (Pieterse 2008; Ringel 2016). This also implies that makerspaces or hackerspaces are invariably oriented towards the future and the future of their urban environment, especially when taking into account their shared ideals of open access, open source, and sustainability.

This project thus also proposes looking at city futures through the window of makerspaces as examples of creative hubs where, often quite literally, the future is made; where attempts are engineered to bridge the growing gap between the haves and have-nots, or between those with access to global mobility and those 'stuck in the compound'; where the different reference frames, registers, repertoires and velocities of the city are negotiated; and where a more just, equitable and sustainable future – again, quite literally – is being assembled or hacked.

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Innovation, Music and Future Making by Young Africans in a Challenging Environment: Examples from Cameroon and Nigeria

Jonathan Ngeh and Michaela Pelican

1   Introduction

The Africa continent has the youngest population in the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, the focus of our analysis, 62 per cent of the population is below the age of 25 (UNDESA 2019). If productively employed, a large working-age population is a potential resource for economic growth and development (Ashford 2007).

The staggeringly high rates of youth unemployment in Africa (Baah-Boateng 2016) indicate that the continent is making poor use of its youthful population. Mohamed Yahya, regional programme coordinator of UNDP Africa wrote in 2017 that Africa is "stubbornly inhospitable – politically, economically, and socially – to young people" (UNDP Africa 2017). At an event in March 2018 in Kigali, and in the presence of the Rwandan president and other African leaders, the Sudanese businessman and philanthropist Mohammed Mo Ibrahim criticized Africa's gerontocracy. "We are the only continent in the world where we have presidents at ninety years old starting new terms; I mean you guys are crazy or what? We see people in wheelchairs, unable to raise their hands standing for elections, this is a joke" (Ibrahim 2018). Ibrahim's critique resonates with African frustration with their long serving dictators and reflects a popular sentiment among those who oppose such practices. A notable example is former Botswana president Ian Khama who openly criticized several of his African peers for hanging onto power well beyond the limits of their terms (Hall 2015).

Policy proposals to solve high youth unemployment and exclusion from governance are numerous and include investment in education, training and healthcare and promoting youth-friendly policies, peace and security. To varying degrees, African states have taken concrete action to match the urgency of these proposals, mainly through creating national employment and empowerment programmes to equip high school and university graduates with the skills they need to find jobs (Zukane and Tangang 2017). Complementing the efforts of African states in this endeavour is the support of intergovernmental organizations. For example, the African Youth Charter established in 2006

by the African Union provides a strategic framework for youth advancement and empowerment across Africa at continental, regional and national levels (African Union 2006). The United Nations collaborates with the African Union Commission to support the capacity development of young Africans through the umbrella initiative of the UN programme Youth4South (UNOSSC 2019).

A common thread in the above initiatives is their top–down approach, which sidelines young Africans at the levels of both conception and execution. Because of this shortcoming, we view the current approach to the delineated problems affecting African youth as cosmetic and superficial, for it does little to change the status quo allowing for the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of mostly elderly African men, some of whom have been part of the ruling elite since independence.[1] Our aim in this think piece is, through the example of Collins Nji, a young man from the English-speaking parts of Cameroon who won the international Google Code-in competition despite an emergent political crisis, to unlock the potential of young Africans as agents of future making and key actors in transforming their communities and the continent. We explore how African youth – confronted by challenging political and economic environments and riddled with uncertainty, lack of governmental support and gerontocracy – come up with a spirit of innovation and determination for future making. To substantiate our argument, we also draw on examples of young African artists, such as the Nigerian Afrobeats singer Wizkid, who have gone global and have placed Africa firmly on the map of global trendsetting.

2   Agents of Africa's Booming Tech Industry

The past decade has witnessed a growing rise in tech innovation and entrepreneurship across Africa, driven almost entirely by African youth. Across the continent we have seen an increase in the number of active tech hubs, which provide space in which start-up companies can grow (Bayen and Giuliani 2018). Also, we have seen the CEOs of tech giant companies visit Africa and meet young tech developers. Microsoft's Satya Nadella visited Kenya in 2015;

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1   For example, the current Zimbabwean president Emmerson Mnangagwa has occupied senior cabinet positions from 1980 when Zimbabwe gained independence to the late 1980s, then became the speaker of the parliament from 2000 to 2005, occupied other cabinet positions after leaving parliament until 2017 when Mugabe dismissed him from the position of vice president, and a few months later, he succeeded Mugabe as president. We get a similar picture in Cameroon and other African countries where the president and many of his cabinet officials have served in various political positions since independence.

Facebook's CEO Mark Zuckerberg visited Kenya and Nigeria in 2016; Google's CEO Sundar Pichai went to Nigeria in 2017 and later in 2018 visited Ghana; Alibaba founder Jack Ma has been to several African countries since 2017; and Twitter's founder and CEO Jack Dorsey travelled to Nigeria, Ghana and Ethiopia in 2019 (Forbes Africa 2020). Africa's tech industry is also attracting the attention of European leaders. In 2017, the French president Emmanuel Macron and Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte visited the Impact Hub in Accra (Ayitey 2017), a non-profit organization aimed at building a globally integrated entrepreneurial community to promote high impact developments in West Africa. A year later, the German chancellor Angela Merkel visited the Impact Hub in Accra.

Compared with Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco and Egypt, where the tech industry is fairly well established (Bayen and Giuliani 2018), Cameroon lags far behind. Yet, in 2016, Collins Nji, then a 17-year-old anglophone high school student, took part in the annual Google Code-in (GCI) competition and won a grand prize (Figure 1). This made him the first African to win the competition since its launch in 2010 (BBC Africa 2017). Most remarkable about Collins's success was that his participation in the competition coincided with the beginning of a political crisis in the English-speaking parts of Cameroon, which resulted in the closure of schools and internet interruptions. In total, 1340 students from 62 countries participated in the competition in 2016 and Collins was one of the 34 grand-prize winners from 16 countries. They were awarded a trip to Google's main headquarters in San Francisco to meet Google engineers (Radomile 2017).

Collins's achievement received international press coverage for its historic nature and for succeeding in the face of near insurmountable obstacles, caused by the political unrest in his home town.[2] With only 40 computers between more than 1500 students at the government bilingual high school in Bamenda, to study coding at school Collins had to struggle to gain access both to a computer and to the internet. At home, he sought knowledge mostly from freely available online sources, which he read and applied on his father's computer. Most challenging was the final phase of the Google competition when regular internet shutdowns complicated the completion of the tasks. Impressed

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2   A Google search of the name Nji Collins [Gbah], for example, will generate hundreds of hits on the story in different languages around the world. Different news articles about Collins have interchanged the order of his names, a problem caused by the fact that in Cameroon it is common to have an African name as the first name and a European first name as the second name. In our conversation with Collins he gave us the right order of his names as Collins Nji.

FIGURE 1   Chris DiBona, director of Open Source at Google, congratulating Collins Nji to his
             prize in June 2017, Silicon Valley PHOTO CREDIT: COLLINS NJI

by Collins's creativity and stamina, in a tweet Google CEO Sundar Pichai
expressed his admiration and desire to meet with him in person (Pichai 2017).

Collins's success inspired other young people in his school and beyond to
embrace coding. Later, in 2018, Enjeck Cleopatra, a high school student in
Bamenda, won the GCI grand prize, the first young woman from Africa to do
so. Unfortunately, she received less media coverage than Collins, but her suc-
cess was equally impressive and even more challenging insofar as she com-
peted and won at a time when the political situation had degenerated into
active armed conflict and high levels of insecurity (Human Rights Watch 2019).

Importantly, Collins and Cleopatra were embedded in a network of young
innovators in the small tech community of Silicon Mountain in Buea, about
300 kilometres from Bamenda. In 2015, the Silicon Mountain pioneers organ-
ized an outreach programme to high schools in Bamenda, where they met Col-
lins and other young tech enthusiasts with whom they maintained contact and
mentorship (Cleopatra was still in secondary school then). That the creators
of Silicon Mountain, mostly in their twenties when the project began (Ngwa
2017), are responsible for building the leading tech hub in Cameroon without
any support from the state, is a testament to their contribution towards attract-
ing investment, impacting lives and driving mobile technological change in
Cameroon. Their success (and that of many young Africans across the conti-
nent) indicates that Africans are not only consuming mobile technology but

also adapting it to fit local needs and, in the process, changing it (Mavhunga 2017). Their achievement in hosting start-ups and global tech companies has gained them financial support from local and international investors, including companies and Cameroonian business people with an interest in IT. In February 2020, the French ambassador to Cameroon visited Silicon Mountain with a delegation of French entrepreneurs. They donated two heavy duty standby generators and acknowledged the contribution of young innovators to crafting Cameroon's future.[3] Unlike local and foreign investors, the Cameroonian government has largely failed either to support innovative tech enterprises like Silicon Mountain in Buea (Atabong 2019) or to recognize the young people's creative potential.

Like Silicon Mountain, tech innovators in other African countries have also pioneered profitable economic niches to attract foreign partnerships and contribute to global tech innovation, the most notable, specifically from Kenya, being M-Pesa, Ushahidi and mHealth. The mobile phone-based money transfer innovation M-Pesa provides formal financial services to the masses at very low rates (Onsongo 2019). In fact, Africa is now the world leader in mobile banking and the African inventiveness behind the initiative caught the attention of the then president of the USA, Barack Obama (King et al. 2014). Ushahidi, which is a crisis crowdsourcing platform, started as a website in the aftermath of Kenya's disputed 2007 presidential election. It collects eyewitness accounts of reported incidents by email and short message service (SMS) and places them on Google Maps (Pánek et al. 2017). Lastly, mHealth, which uses information technology to manage patient care, is already making a positive contribution to Kenya and to the rest of the continent (Hampshire et al. 2015). Several other tech innovations from Africa are transforming different sectors of the local economy, promoting efficiency and creating economic opportunities (Mavhunga 2017). The most notable are multimedia platforms for music sharing, for example Simfy Africa (South Africa), Spinlet and Las Gidi Tunes (Nigeria), and Mziiki (Tanzania). They have opened up possibilities for African artists to reach new audiences and benefit financially from their music streaming services of the platforms (Mavhunga 2017). This development has no doubt contributed to the growth of African music, another economic niche on the continent dominated by young Africans. We now turn to our second case, young African artists who have emerged as new global trendsetters.

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3   The original tweet by the French ambassador Christophe Guilhou (21 February 2020) reads: "Le future du #Cameroun passe par l'innovation et la France est au rendez-vous. Bravo et merci!" (see also Nadesh 2020).

3   Shaping and Exporting African Popular Culture

The last decade has witnessed the rise of Afrobeats as arguably the fastest growing cultural export from Africa. "Not to be confused with Afrobeat – a genre fusing traditional Yoruba music with jazz, West African highlife and funk – Afrobeats … mixes Afrobeat with hip-hop and electronic influences as well as Caribbean beats and highlife" (Easter 2019). Afrobeats gained traction in Europe's and North America's urban underground music scene in the late 2000s. By 2016, leading artists of the genre were filling some of the biggest music arenas in Europe, North America and the Caribbean. In the 1980s and 1990s, African artists like Manu Dibango, Youssou N'Dour, Miriam Makeba, Angélique Kidjo and King Sunny Adé, among others, became famous in world music, selling out big arenas in Europe and North America. Primarily produced for and largely consumed by Western cosmopolitan audiences, world music relied heavily on Anglo-American music executives and their music networks for organizational matters, production, distribution, and marketing (Connell and Gibson 2004). In contrast, Afrobeats is widely popular in the urban music scene across Africa and Afrobeats artists have been able to retain some influence in the production and management of their music (Stassen 2019). Like the African tech innovators above, Afrobeats artists are exclusively young (millennials). The following story of a leading Afrobeat artist highlights the appeal of the genre to a world audience and the artists' commercial success.

Take the case of the 29-year-old Nigerian Afrobeats artist Wizkid who rose from nothing in the mid-2000s to being one of the scene's biggest names today. In 2008 Wizkid was invited from Nigeria to perform at a 300-capacity nightclub in East London and, after the performance, slept on the event promoter's sofa (Obkircher 2020). Ten years later, in 2018 and 2019, Wizkid performed in and sold out the 20,000-capacity O2 Arena in London (BBC News 2018). Back in Africa he had sold-out stadium concerts in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Cameroon, and South Africa (McCarthy 2018). Since 2013 he has collaborated with several renowned artists from different parts of the world. His single 'one dance' with the Canadian rapper Drake was a big success internationally, topping the prestigious US Billboard hot 100 chart for ten consecutive weeks in 2016. The song also became number one in 15 different countries including Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and France (Odusanya 2019). In 2019 Wizkid was one of several Afrobeats singers who collaborated with Beyoncé for the soundtrack of the Disney movie *Lion King 2*. His hard work has earned him international recognition in the form of profitable business deals and

prestigious musical awards, both at home and abroad. Among his awards are BET, Billboard Music Award, iHeart Radio Music Award, MTV Europe Music Awards, Grammy Awards and the MTV Africa Music Award.

The fame enjoyed by Afrobeats artists has translated into lucrative economic deals that are beneficiary to the artists and their communities. Davido (a 27-year-old Nigerian singer) in a recent interview captured the economic and cultural potentials of Afrobeats so succinctly when he stated: "It's [Arobeats] our new oil. When I lived in America, being African wasn't cool. … Now, people talk about the culture, the food. Now everybody wants to make African music" (Obkircher 2020). In 2017 Wizkid signed a lucrative deal with RCA Records and Sony Music International. The deal has been described as the biggest recording deal given to an African artist (Platon 2017). Moreover, he has enjoyed major endorsement agreements by Pepsi, MTN Nigeria, Guinness, Nike and Dolce & Gabbana among others (Nigerian Finder n.d.). His agreement with Dolce & Gabbana saw him walk the runway in Milan with British supermodel Naomi Campbell. Also, Wizkid has established his own clothing line and, partnered with Daily Paper, an Amsterdam based men's African streetwear fashion brand, will work on a limited-edition collection of clothing and accessories.

In 2013, Wizkid launched the Starboy Entertainment label and signed up several young artists from Nigeria and Ghana, including Mr Eazi, a 28-year-old Nigerian who has enjoyed wide success internationally in the past few years. He was one of two African artists to perform at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival (one of the biggest and most profitable music festivals in the USA) in 2019.

Culturally and politically, Afrobeats' success is a source of pride for many young Africans, and especially so for those of an African background in the diaspora. Echoing Davido's statement above that being African was not cool when he lived in the USA, a young Surinamese-Dutchman said that, "A lot of dark [skin] youth are ashamed of their roots; you see that in how they present themselves: in the past they looked down upon Ghanaians and Nigerians. But now with Afrobeats, Afrodance, Azonto … everybody feels attracted to Africa" (de Witte 2019: 63). According to London-based radio and TV presenter Olajide, Afrobeats has an identity-strengthening impact because fans see no difference between its artists and US or UK rap artists (Obkircher 2020). Teenagers in Europe frequently see Afrobeats artists collaborating with peers in Europe and North America, and they listen to their music on the same airwaves. In other words, if Afrobeats artists are as popular and cool as European and North American ones, then it is easy to identify with them and their African roots. Furthermore, the young people's embrace of their African identity and

of Africa as their 'motherland' has political undertones. These are reflected in recent initiatives calling for Africans in the diaspora to return to Africa, as well as in the Black Lives Matter movement across the world, whose black emancipation slogans have entered Afrobeats' lyrics (Burna Boy 2020). Generally, the identification of different audiences with Afrobeats artists valorizes African popular culture on a global scale. Moreover, with their professional success, Afrobeats artists are helping to craft potential pathways for future generations of African artists.

4   Conclusion

It was our goal in this chapter to shed light on the agency of African youth, a segment of society largely left out of decision making on vital issues affecting their lives and the broader society. These issues, among others, include the high level of youth unemployment and Africa's perceived abjection. As we have shown, Africa has great potential in innovation and creativity despite significant political and economic hurdles. The drivers of these developments are not the established elites but young, gifted people, often from modest family backgrounds. They stand out because of their entrepreneurial spirit and their willingness to reach out, establish global networks, and form equal partnerships. In this, they differ strongly from conventional development approaches, in which development is construed in terms of financial and technical assistance flowing from the Global North to the Global South, and which generally exclude the targeted populations from designing development programmes and crafting their own solutions (see for example Sachs and McArthur 2005). The case studies presented in this chapter suggest that instead of external assistance, young Africans are showing a preference for joint investment initiatives with business enterprises in the Global North, which allow them to develop their own products and sell them in the local and global markets. With their youthful driving force and networking across cultural and geographical boundaries, they succeed in placing Africa on the global map of technical innovation, in setting global musical trends, and in shaping African futures.

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A Future of Hope: Artists in a Context of Insecurity

Ludovic Ouhonyioué Kibora

1 Introduction

After dark centuries of slavery and colonization, the socio-political conditions under which the countries of the African continent acquired their political independence have made it exceedingly difficult to kickstart any real development dynamic. For a long time between the wars, famines and various epidemics that have been ravaging it, the continent's prospects have been accompanied by a steady beat of 'Afro-pessimism', and current conditions in the Sahel region are not about to change that. Indeed, the deterioration of the security situation in the West African Sahel (particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger) is worrying. In fact, in Burkina Faso this deterioration has accelerated so much since 2018, that many Western governments have increased the number of red and orange zones on the country's map to which their nationals are not allowed to travel. Despite this situation, however, another future is possible, for Burkina Faso and for the entire African continent (see Mbembé 2010, 2020; Sarr 2016).

Despite its economic poverty, Burkina Faso is an important cultural crossroads and its popular cultural events attract many foreign tourists.[1] Growing insecurity, however, has instigated a kind of psychosis and has exacerbated the despair many Burkinabè feel about the country's socio-economic prospects. Yet, in stark contrast to the usual Afro-pessimism, its artists emphasize a need to resist and paint a much brighter African future, a vision that many youngsters share via their social networks. The strong and sustained mobilizations resulting from this optimism were contributory factors in the socio-political transformations that took place in Burkina Faso at the end of October 2014 (Hagberg 2017).

This chapter is based on my empirical research with two artistic initiatives. The first, the *Récréâtrales*, is a festival staged in Ouagadougou on a biannual basis, the eleventh of which was held in 2020. The second took me to the studio of Abou Sidibé, a Burkinabè sculptor whose work was shown at the Future

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1 Ouagadougou's Pan-African Festival of Cinema and Television and its International Craft Fair have been regular occurrences in Burkina Faso's capital since the 1970s and 1980s respectively.

Africa Visions in Time (FAVT) exhibition.[2] With them, and through our shared experiences of collaborating as artists and researchers, I analyse the future as one of hope. How can artists act as mouthpieces of the communities of which they are part? How can they, in the footsteps of many intellectuals, heed Joseph Ki-Zerbo's (2004) cry of *For when Africa?*

This, and the lived experiences of these artists, is the vantage point from which I want to look into this African future, but not without first sketching a brief outline of the research framework.

2   Burkina Faso: from Hoping for Socio-Political Reforms to Multiple Insecurities

Since gaining its political independence, the socio-political life of Burkina Faso has been both dynamic and hectic (Hagberg et al. 2017). As far back as January 1966, workers and their unions mobilizing against the austerity measures imposed on them were able to depose the country's first president, Maurice Yaméogo. Then, in 2014, the people again took to the streets – over which the paltry showing of security forces were unable to maintain control – to oust President Blaise Compaoré, who had occupied the highest office since 1987 (Chouli 2015; Frère and Englebert 2015; Hagberg 2015; Kibora et al. 2017). On 30 and 31 October 2014, almost twenty-seven years to the day since Compaoré had risen to power, a strong coalition of workers, civil society organizations and ordinary citizens initiated a series of socio-political reforms (Hagberg et al. 2017). It is worth remembering that Blaise Compaoré assumed power after President Thomas Sankara's assassination in a bloody *coup d'état.* Despite his short period in power (1983–87), Sankara's charisma, actions and speeches led the Burkinabè revolution and united the African youth (Jaffré 1997; Martens and Meesters 1989; Sennen 1989; Somé 1990). This positive image helped to mobilize many Burkinabè youngsters, for whom the fall of the Compaoré regime provided the perfect opportunity to continue Sankara's unfinished work.

After a year of political transition (during which 'popular resistance' thwarted an attempted coup) the citizens of Burkina Faso resolutely directed the country towards a new horizon. During these tense moments in the

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2 FAVT was an exhibition held from 27 October–3 November 2018 at the National Museum in Ouagadougou and organized by the Goethe Institute of Ouagadougou, in collaboration with the Academy of Advanced African Studies, Iwalewahaus, University of Bayreuth.

country's history everybody knew that nothing would ever be the same again, or, as they put it, *plus rien ne sera comme avant.*

The wish to launch a new democratic experiment in the country was real, and the first democratic elections after the popular insurrection installed Roch Marc Christian Kaboré as the new president. At the same time, however, the country entered a period of insecurity (Hagberg et al. 2019; Kibora 2019; Kibora et al. 2018). For a long time, many Burkinabè had considered terrorism a distant prospect, and one not to be confounded with old territorial claims (as in Mali and Niger). In 2015, however, unidentified armed men launched attacks first in the west and later in the north of the country.[3] Since then, insecurity has mounted to the point of affecting all sectors of the country's socio-economic life.

This resurgence of terrorist violence and insecurity undoubtedly desta-bilizes the inhabitants of the Sahel, and has profound physical, psychological, social, political and economic effects. It is, however, in this context that artists, through their actions, insist on a positive vision of the future, beyond insecurities. Burkina Faso (or its neighbours Mali and Niger) are of course not isolated cases: many countries on the African continent had to go through hardship before finding themselves on the road to an African renaissance (Do-Nascimento 2008). Many years ago, the eminent scholar Cheikh Anta Diop (1954, 1996) advocated that the key to an African renaissance lay in its culture. This also is the vision of the Burkinabè artists who feature in the remainder of this chapter.

3   Artists Show us an African Future

In Burkina Faso, four professional theatre companies joined forces to pursue their artistic projects under the telling banner of *Fédération du Cartel* (federation of the Cartel). The idea was to set up an administrative structure to manage the common vision of a theatre that does more than just entertain, it is also instrumental in raising consciousness and pointing out new venues (and ethics) of possibility (Appadurai 2013). This initiative brought together *Théatr' Éclair* (under the direction of Alain Héma), *Théatr' Évasion* (Ildevert Méma), *Falinga* (Étienne Minoungou) and *Grâce Théatre* (Anatole Kouama) (Kibora and Bationo 2010). Together they launched a common project called Récréâ-trales (or, to be more explicit, pan-African residences of creative writing,

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3   Hitherto, very few of the hundreds of terrorist acts committed so far have been claimed.

training and dissemination in theatre), which made its debut in 2002. It had gained from previous experiences by Étienne Minoungou and Alexis Guingané as part of the *Théâtre de la Fraternité* (Theatre of Brotherhood). Jean-Pierre Guingané had started this theatre company in 1998 with a view to producing theatrical performances built on conviviality, to question the problems Africa was experiencing and to find traces of hope.[4] Hence, the emphasis lay on improvisation, as when a dream does not order you what to do, but suggests a better tomorrow. A second edition in 2003 also included the Burkinabè actor and playwright Alain Héma and sought to 'Africanize' the experiment of the first edition by also inviting participants from Ivory Coast, Mali and Niger. Thus, the Récréâtrales became an original and unique concept that foreshadows an African future that could not exist without this confluence of actions and ideas and that is to be built on cooperation and solidarity. Art without sharing ends in sclerosis, and meeting others allows you to challenge yourself and move forward.

Other aspects of this artistic experiment included the emphasis on training and the relationship with 'the population from below'. Each course requires the participants to receive two months of residential training in all aspects of the performing arts, after which they showcase their performances to the public at the festival. Early on, however, the artists realized that only joint productions with theatre companies from the Global North would open venues for a truly international encounter – even if Africa bursts with talent, it still needs to get recognized.

This is a fundamental element of the dream of an African future, a dream that needs to start from below, which is why the Récréâtrales productions stress popular themes (Hagberg et al. 2017; Kibora 2019). Its headquarters are in a popular neighbourhood in west Ouagadougou and, during the festival, the artists decorate the streets and each evening's performance takes place in a family shop where people buy kitchen utensils, firewood and domestic animals. Art is thus taken to the street, as close as possible to ordinary citizens. More than simply being immersed in their community, the artists demonstrate the need to act the future into being together with the other community members. Hence, the Récréâtrales offer a true training and immersion not just for the performing artists but also for the neighbourhood's residents. In the margins

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4   Jean-Pierre Guingané, was a Burkinabè writer, university professor and dramatist who created the Theatre of Brotherhood and the Ouagadougou theatre and puppet festival held in Burkina Faso every two years and, for the last ten years in Mali and Niger as well. He died on 23 January 2011 at the age of 66.

FIGURE 1   The Récréâtrales festival A. MARANÉ

of the manifestation's tenth publication, Aristide Tarnagda, the new director of the Récréâtrales, rightly remarked that

> If we want to live with the continent, it is essential to link up with the various countries on the continent, in order to get to know each other and to share the concerns and reflections we all have in common. The Récréâtrales festival is dedicated not only to African artists but also to exploring new horizons, African as well as international ones. We want a contemporary festival, a pan-African festival that opens its doors to the world.[5]

It was with this future vision of Africa in mind that the artists managed to invite the president of Burkina Faso, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, to the neighbourhood on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. The theme was *Tresser le Courage* (Weave Courage), which the security situation made pertinent.

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5   The original French reads: "Si nous voulons coexister avec le continent, il est essentiel de créer des liens entre les différents pays d'Afrique afin de nous connaître, de partager les questionnements que nous avons en commun. Le festival Les Récréâtrales est dédié non seulement à la rencontre des artistes du continent mais aussi à la rencontre de nouveaux horizons, africains comme internationaux. Nous voulons un festival qui soit de son temps, un festival panafricain qui ouvre ses portes au monde" (IFO 2019).

The sculptor Abou Sidibé, who lives in the Gounghin neighbourhood, has turned his family home into an art gallery and studio in which he works in wood, bronze, or recycled materials: "I live with my sculptures. I think that is an advantage, because it allows me to revisit my creations no matter when, and to add something depending on my inspiration of the moment" (interview with Abou Sidibé, Ouagadougou, 2018).

This Burkinabè artist was born in Ivory Coast, but in 1999 moved to Burkina Faso (from where his parents had come) and, now aged 42, is one of the most eminent Burkinabè artists. He acquired his fine arts degree from Bingerville in Ivory Coast, but not at the expense of his inborn modesty. In 2001, he introduced himself to the art world as being from the capital of the country of 'upright people'[6] when he took part in an exhibition on *Les grandes religions révélées* (The Great Religions Revealed) at the Olorun Foundation.[7]

Abou Sidibé forms and composes installations. In preparation for the international FAVT exhibition at the National Museum in Ouagadougou (27 September–3 November 2018), the organizing committee asked me to take part in an interesting experiment: based on a series of discussions i had with an artist, she or he would create an artwork depicting an African future. Abou Sidibé was the artist I was allocated. I had seen his works in various exhibitions in Ouagadougou, but this was the first time we met in person.[8] After our first encounter at the Goethe Institute in the capital we met a further three times in his home studio. Abou Sidibé's called his installation *Hèremakono* (an allusion to the customary salutation for happiness in the Bambara, Dioula and Malinké languages spoken throughout West Africa). Mindful of the tensions and turbulences of today's world, *Hèremakono* is a vision of the future inspired by the idea that happiness does not await us – it requires effort, self-confidence and creativity; we need to provoke it, construct it, create it. Abou Sidibé created this assemblage from recycled materials and objects he found around him. With *Hèremakono* he says that it takes more than words to heal the ailments that stand in the way of a radiant future. Africa can and should succeed by

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6   In the national language, "Burkina Faso" means *patrie des hommes intègres* (homeland of upright men).

7   The Olorun Foundation is an gallery and studio in the Gounghin neighborhood in west Ouagadougou, and directed by a European. For several years it has been working on training and promoting Burkinabè sculptors and designers. Unfortunately, the principal collaborator who commuted between Europe and Burkina Faso to sell the work of his artist collaborators abandoned them. After a few failed attempts these young artists have now been able to set up a new studio and art gallery, the Centre Lukare.

8   Since 2009 I have been on the organizing jury of the *Fête international des Arts plastiques de Ouagadougou* (Ouagadougou International Festival of Plastic Art).
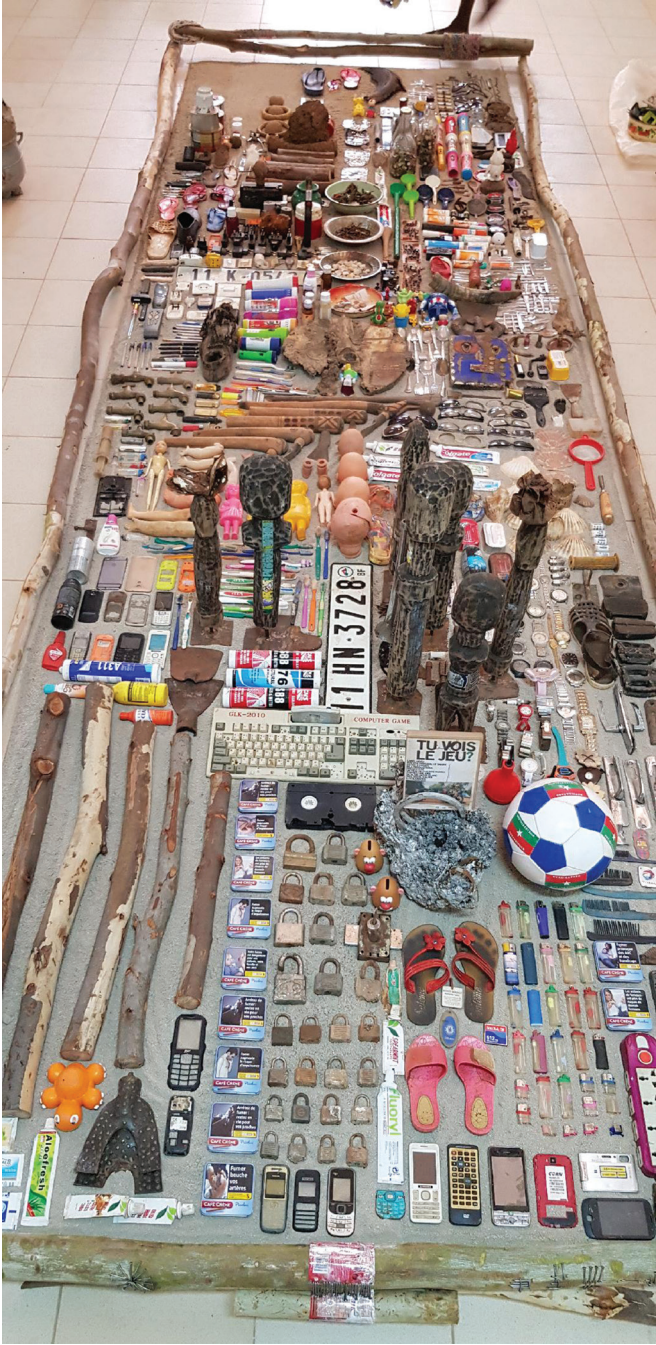
FIGURE 2   Installation by Abou Sidibé. FAVT exhibition at the
National Museum in Ouagadougou ABOU SIDIBÉ

drawing from its cultural and historic treasures, from the creative diversity in today's world.

   This understanding of the future is symbolized by a shared vision of the solidarity and inventiveness of Africa's youthful population that knows how to engage with its rich heritage. Eggs will hatch.[9] Night becomes day. Abou Sidibé's installation claims that before it merges with the larger whole, each object is a message on its own. Thus, he brings across a unique discourse, a strong signal of an Africa that (so far) has made only limited use of its creative potential. This artist's view of the future is a renaissance that takes into account the past of often unequally divided responsibilities. Africa has a rich cultural and historic heritage and must be able to take advantage of the technological advancement of humankind. The artist is in harmony with his world that, consciously or not, whispers these messages in his ear. Bereft of the gift of certainty, through this installation Abou Sidibé invites himself to intellectual debates on development, democracy, and so forth. Without letting himself be influenced by theoretical considerations far removed from his studio, Abou Sidibé shares with us his vision of an endogenous development at the root of a new African identity. This allows him to adopt and adapt things from the outside, without losing sight of the inside. His works breathe lived realities, common concerns and shared dreams in anticipation of happiness. The diversity so central to his art resonates in the way he conceives of the relationship between Africa and the rest of the world. With *Hèremakono*, Abou Sidibé takes a new start. Unlike those sisters and brothers who fight the adversities of the desert and ocean to reach the other shore, he shows that a model of happiness is possible – it suffices to line up existing forces with the expression of the ideal. To do so, the installation reinvents the spoken word, which speaks with one and the same voice, which heals the evils of the past to inspire (give breath to) a shared vision of renewed solidarity. Thus, in many ways the sculptor converges with the performing artists in their joint vision of the future of the African continent.

4   Africa, in Hope the Future

In 2014, on the eve of the popular uprising, the eighth Récréâtrales took place in a climate of considerable concern about the future. The theme of the festival, which started in February, was *Tenir la main au futur – qu'il ne tremble*

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9   In one of its corners, *Hèremakono* holds a few chicken eggs.

pas, qu'il sourit (Hold hands in the future – let it not tremble, let it smile). The programme included a work choreographed by Serge Aimé Coulibaly called *Nuit blanche à Ouagadougou* (White Night in Ouagadougou), which premiered on 30 October and, as its title suggests, it prefigured the October uprisings, not least because the rapper Smockey was playing the leading role. Smockey was also a co-founder of the Balai Citoyen (citizens' broom) movement, and with other musicians like reggae artist Sams'K Le Jah, was at the forefront of the popular movement that ousted Compaoré the very next day.

Artists have a particularity in common: they are quick to distil from the collective unconsciousness the circadian phenomena and objects trivialized by the daily grind of everyday life. The quotidian, the banal is hence endowed with a sense beyond the common, and this only reinforces its expressivity. Looking at the performing artists of the Récréâtrales or at the *Hèremakono* sculpture – they all share a view in common, which leads to the following fundamental conclusions.

First, any African future needs to be built on a solid cultural and historic foundation. Local knowledge and know-how are underutilized and insufficiently understood by researchers and politicians (Diop 1954; Kibora 2010; Ki-Zerbo 2004). It is only there that one can find the necessary resources for a genuine vision, one that is not copied from others.

Second, training is essential for developing and perfecting different forms of knowledge, even if they are localized. In this, recognizing the diversity of knowledge and ways of knowing is a guarantee for success, but it needs work.

Third, for this vision to be commonly shared, solidarity between African countries is vital. Despite state organized divisions, the solidarity the Récréâtrales have been bringing for the past twenty or so years, has still not been properly realized. At the launch of the 2020 festival, its new president Odile Sankara, younger sister of President Thomas Sankara, said, "We cannot do this job and ignore what is going on around us, so standing up is also a way of continuing to dream, to believe in life" (Revelyn 2020, author's translation).

Fourth, the future of Africa resonates with cultural diversity and openness to the world. This dimension clearly permeates the two forms of art discussed above. While it is unnecessary to copy the West, to further one's own goals it is important to tap into progress made elsewhere in the world.

Despite the turbulences we experience nowadays, artists and the vast majority of the young population still seem to share a certain optimism in their contemporary understandings of the world and vision for the future. As Claude Frochaux (1996: 330, my translation) eloquently expressed it, "This is not wrong: artists are ahead of the crowd. But one understands the phenomenon

better if one starts from the crowd than when one starts from the artist. It is not the artist who is ahead. It is the crowd that is behind."

Africa needs to complete its decolonization and abandon the balls and chains that drag it down – and there are many. Yet, the most important one is the desire to adhere to a technical vision of human development without having sufficiently explored local cultural resources. It is in this sense that artists like Abou Sidibé, or the performing artists in the Récréâtrales, emphasize the need to reinvent development by brazenly promoting an endogenous take on socio-economic progress. This reinvention of 'development' by the artist is key to the relationship between Africa and the Global North. Any future history of democracy and development, the two main gauges by which Africa is measured and judged, should incorporate the continent's enormous internal cultural potential, which has been poorly explored and hardly exploited. To do so, culture must be at the centre of each social initiative and every political decision. This is why artists are the torchbearers of this message of hope and why it is from them that an African future will spring.

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Relating

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Introduction to Part 5

The future, Marc Augé writes, "even when it concerns the individual, always has a social dimension: it depends on others" (Augé 2014: 2).[1] The contributions grouped in this section get to the bottom of this statement. The authors show that the negotiation of futures is always about relationships sought, socially and individually, and about the political implications and normative configurations of these relationships.

In the first chapter, Adeline Masquelier questions the assumption that modern education entails a break with the past, particularly when school systems are dysfunctional and resource deficient, as in Niger. The globalized mobilization of 'girl power', she argues, is an alibi for the depoliticization of collective welfare and a step towards the privatization of responsibility and, ultimately, tyrannical futures.

George Paul Meiu enquires about queer practices of shaping the future in the second chapter. Based on the work of Kenyan artist Kawira Mwirichia, Meiu explores how such futures materialize amid and against a rising homophobic rhetoric. In the third chapter, Julia Pauli suggests that marriage in Namibia has changed into a (neoliberal) class-based, privileged institution. Unmarried Namibians, it is demonstrated, rely on kin networks rather than building their futures on heterosexual bonds.

The fourth contribution turns to the future of female genital mutilation. Tammary Esho analyses the growing demand for specialized medical services to replace traditional cutting, as well as a switch towards cosmetic genital surgery, suggesting that these changes threaten to slow down the progress achieved through decades-long campaigns to end these harmful practices.

In the fifth chapter, Akira Takada and Yuriko Sugiyama explore the rich ritualistic practices of two closely related San groups in Botswana, suggesting that the rituals are tools for conviviality and for the reconstruction of lifeworlds disturbed by state resettlement policies. The section concludes with a speculative short story by Martha Ndakalako. Drawing from black feminist futurity, her narrative envisions the connections and possible influences between women in Namibia and those in the diaspora.

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1   Augé, M. 2014. *The future*. London: Verso.

'Girling' the Future and 'Futuring' Girls in Niger

Adeline Masquelier

1   Introduction

"There are no rules against girls going to school, only the poverty of parents," three senior men from Zinder, Niger's second largest city, responded when I asked about the low school enrolment of girls in Niger. Echoing other Nigerien parents who described schools as "opening the mind" and "offering possibilities," they made clear that formal education figured prominently in the dreams they had for their children, including daughters. Yet, they also intimated that the path to social mobility was pitted with obstacles, frequently discouraging the best-intentioned parents from keeping daughters in school. For one thing, the quality of teaching had gone down in past decades. Moreover, schooling came at a cost. It exacted an especially heavy price from poor households dependent on the labour of girl children. In rural areas, where school is said to free youth from the "suffering of village life", parents noted philosophically that it was neither possible nor desirable for all children to complete their schooling. Their sobering comments are reflected in the numbers. While formal education in Niger is mandatory between the ages of seven and fifteen, school enrolment and attendance rates remain startlingly low, particularly for girls.

Girls' schooling, it is worth noting, was a cornerstone of the millennium and sustainable development goals, which rationalized the global turn to girls by yoking education to female empowerment. In recent years, national campaigns have heralded girls' education in Niger as a key strategy for enacting gendered social changes and confronting poverty. These campaigns in turn have inspired local sensitization projects that frame schooling as a catalyst for national development. In the 2015 issue of *Echo des jeunes*, a newsletter designed by a team of Dosso-based youths to inform, educate, and sensitize,[2] a graphic vignette entitled 'Girls' education, the fight for development', encourages parents to grant their daughters bright futures by sending them to school. The vignette features a couple – rural dwellers judging from the farmer's hat the man is wearing – who finds out their young daughter Zara, who has been entrusted to a tutor in a nearby town so she can attend school there, is abused.

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[2]   A Zarma-speaking town in southwest Niger, Dosso is a trading hub linking Niamey, the country's capital, to Benin and to eastern Niger.

The couple just received a letter from Zara's teacher informing them that Zara is "treated like a slave" by her tutor. Zara's father, who sold two cows to pay for his daughter's room and board in town, is incensed. He sets off, determined to find another tutor for Zara, one who will properly look after her so she can do well in school. "Nothing has more impact on a nation than the education of girls," reads an accompanying statement. Parroting slogans coined by governmental organizations, charities, and NGOs to highlight the benefits of investing in girls, the statement casts female children as subjects imbued with unique potential, including the capacity to transform their country's fortunes. By framing the economic advancement of Niger as contingent on the education of its girl children, the vignette sends a clear message to readers: girls who go to school grow up to be resourceful, goal-oriented women who build businesses, empower their communities, and propel the country forward.

What the message leaves out is that the push to widen girls' access to education in Niger is part of a wide-scale effort to 'economize life' (Murphy 2017) in the Global South based on a neoliberal narrative of progress that correlates girls, education, fertility, and income. This narrative is built on the assumption that girls who complete their schooling (rather than marry early) postpone childbearing and enhance their wage-earning capacities. In the long run, they lower population growth while also improving their country's economic prospects. "Let's put her in a school uniform … [and] she will do the rest," is the bold message of an award-winning video which the Nike corporation (not exactly a disinterested party as regards the financialization of self-empowerment narratives) put out to promote the Girl Effect, their philanthropic brand (The Girl Effect 2008).[3]

Launched in 2008 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Girl Effect campaign proposes a model of development in which the weight of the world's future rests on the frail shoulders of the female child – typically represented as a destitute girl from Africa. In this model, stubborn traditions (such as early marriage) are identified as the main challenge to girls' health, success, and empowerment. By attending school, girls escape the shackles of culture and become successful entrepreneurs. Schooling thus emerges as the most effective tool for unlocking girls' potentialities and, down the line, putting an end to chronic poverty. The notion that girls are entrepreneurial "subjects in waiting" (Koffman and Gill 2013: 105) who, if only given a chance, overcome marginalization and empower communities has led to a flourishing of initiatives aimed

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3   In 2015, the Girl Effect split from the Nike Foundation to become an independent NGO.

at enhancing girls' and young women's educational and economic opportunities in the Global South.

According to the Girl Effect telos, the future follows a predictable trajectory determined by global capital: a corporate donor's financial investment in a girl's formal education triggers a cascade of events that ultimately produce a better world (Thakor 2011). In the 2008 Girl Effect video, a cow purchased with a loan by the educated girl becomes a herd, the herd turns the girl into a businesswoman who brings clean water to her village; her success prompts men to invite her to the village council, and so on.

In this chapter, I interrogate the conceptualization of futurity that philanthrocapitalism peddles through a reliance on "anticipatory ... calculations of value" (Murphy 2017: 115) that cast poor girls as lucrative investments. Focusing on spiritual attacks taking place in secondary schools in Niger, I discuss how the possession of schoolgirls by vengeful spirits obsessed with the past troubles the teleology of neoliberal narratives of female empowerment that frame schooling as a critical step along an upward trajectory. I suggest that the mobilization of 'girl power' – an alibi for the systematic depoliticization of collective welfare and the privatization of responsibility – ultimately produces tyrannical futures that, by requiring significant sacrifices, may well make the present uninhabitable.

2 Making Futures

More than any other institution, modern education conjures possibility, promise, and futurity (Agnagnost 2008; Stambach 2017). It frames dreams and desires based on the promissory nature of human capital. Put simply, school is where one invests in the future. In the Global South, schools are said to nurture aspirations by breaking with traditions (Stambach and Hall 2017). The overly optimistic modernization models guiding development policies portray education as a catalyst of social change, harnessing the potentialities of youth for the benefit of the nation (Stambach 2000). Rather than building on a shared past, schools serve as incubators of a common, and importantly, preordained future.

In Niger, where schools are routinely described as engines of progress, girls' education is now the unprecedented focus of humanitarian and developmental attention. Adopting a "school-to-the-rescue" (Stambach 2000) model of development that casts girls' education as the pathway to self-empowerment, gender rights activists and development workers unveil initiatives, including scholarships, conditional cash transfers, and basic school facilities like clean

drinking water and toilets. During campaign visits, workshops, and public broadcasts, they flaunt girls' schooling as the solution to a number of societal issues, including 'child' marriage, uncontrolled fertility, poverty, underdevelopment, and gender inequality. Schoolchildren are taught mantras such as "when a girl attends school, the whole nation matures." Parents are urged by community leaders to take girls' education seriously. Girls are featured on billboards advertising loans to parents needing cash to purchase school supplies, while posters show responsible fathers dropping off their daughters to school and encouraging others to do the same. Meanwhile, through a creative blend of feminist and financial calculations of value, big players like the World Bank imbue Nigerien girls with the capacity to unleash financial growth, empower communities, and lift entire countries out of poverty. In the words of World Bank president Jim Yong Kim, "if girls are equipped with the education and human capital they need, they have the potential to secure the future of their countries" (World Bank 2018).

In Niger, the least educated country on the planet, not all children attend school. Significantly, those who will never see the inside of a classroom are more likely to be girls. Despite the government's commitment to gender equity and the array of legal instruments, strategies, and policies initiated by multilateral donors, sizeable gender disparities remain with regards to educational opportunities and outcomes. While female primary school participation rests at just over 50 per cent, the literacy rate for women between the ages of 15 and 25 is less than 25 per cent. Predictably, the poorest girls are least likely to complete primary school. The promotional campaigns and development projects targeting girls and funded by the US Department of State, the United Nations, and transnational NGOs as well as corporate responsibility projects, such as the Girl Effect, are part of a global effort to combat social inequality and narrow the gender gap. With an eye to curbing Niger's birth rate, they have attempted to shape compulsory school attendance policies (on the assumption that girls attending school postpone marriage and childbearing). These efforts have been challenged, highlighting how *boko* (Western education) has become a lightning rod for Muslim activists' discontent with foreign intervention: in 2012 the Nigerien government, pressured by a group of Islamic associations, abandoned a bill aimed at protecting the right of girls to attend school until 18. It later issued a decree preventing the marriage of girls for as long as they attended school.

Projects aimed at curbing population growth by keeping girls in school function within "gendered fields of justification for intervention" (Scully 2011: 27) saturated by the neoliberal rhetoric of female empowerment. The implementation of structural adjustment programmes in Niger resulted in market deregulations, shrunk public services, and flexible employment structures.

People were expected to rely less on government and more on themselves. Under this new social contract, education was touted as the path forward in an increasingly competitive labour market. The catch-all term 'girls' education' here refers to a tangle of issues centred on the empowerment of girls and women. It encompasses gender equality and access to education as well as broader problems, such as poverty alleviation. Ironically, what the language of female empowerment obfuscates is that these interventions are less about education (that is, preparing for the future) and more about schooling as a project that, by engaging girls in age-appropriate activities, delays marriage and motherhood. Put differently, schooling is ultimately about *presenting* girls, so they don't grow up too fast.

Like other pamphlets, posters, and sensitization messages I came across over the years, the vignette about Zara's struggles puts the accent on the investment parents should make to ensure girls thrive in school. By presenting the case of an ordinary farmer who believes his daughter "must succeed just like every other girl in the country", the vignette encourages other parents to commit to their daughters' education, regardless of what obstacles surface. It makes clear that it is not only Zara's future but also the future of the country that is at stake.

Many girls seem to have absorbed the notion that they are agents of change. "School helps us pull our parents out of poverty" is a common refrain I heard, that hints at the responsibilization that education entails. Girls speak of attending school so they can make the world a better place. "Once I become a judge, I will send my parents to Mecca and help my village," a schoolgirl said. In the neoliberal vision of development, the investable girl – described as both the poorest and "the most powerful person in the world" (Murphy 2013) – is implicitly propped up against the threat posed by rebellious youth – adolescent boys whose lack of compliance (or idleness) imperils the planet's biopolitically engineered futures. In sum, the girl is not only a repository of future capital, she is also a national security solution.[4]

3   Cruel Promises

The girl-centred model of education is based on the assumption that hard work is key to individual success. Accordingly, students who make school their

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[4] Yoking economic calculus and feminist notions of empowerment with tired clichés, journalist Nicholas Kristof (2015) writes about the demographic and other benefits of educating girls in war-torn countries: "Education is also a bargain. For the cost of deploying a single American soldier abroad for a year, we can start more than 20 schools." He concludes that "sometimes a girl with a book is more powerful than a drone in the sky."

priority are a step closer to achieving their dreams. Yet, the myth of meritoc-racy obscures social inequalities as well as other challenges students, especially girls, face. It takes more than determination to succeed in school, as Niger's education statistics reveal. Take retention rates, for instance. While more Nige-rien children than ever are currently enrolled in primary school, 30 per cent of these children will drop out before reaching middle school. And more will leave before they reach high school. The problem is particularly acute for girls. Only one out of ten girls ends up in high school. Even there, educational trajec-tories can easily be derailed.

Recall that the primary aim of Girl Effect and other projects is to keep ado-lescent girls in school so they postpone marriage. Niger, which leads the world when it comes to the practice of *mariage précoce* (early marriage), has been the focus of numerous interventions designed to rescue girls from prejudice and patriarchy. Education is a human right, girls' rights activists and other lib-eral actors argue as they frame local 'custom' as an impediment to progress and gender justice. The moral arguments deployed by human rights activ-ists to eradicate *mariage précoce* have earned limited traction in Niger, espe-cially in rural areas, where they often compete for legitimacy with an Islamic model that defends early marriage as morally suitable for girls and their fami-lies (Masquelier 2020a). Adolescent girls face enormous pressure to conform to pious norms of Muslim femininity and domesticity; many leave school to marry and start families (roughly 50 per cent of Nigerien girls are married by the age of 15). In households that rely on their labour, the girls' academic requirements compete with domestic duties or income earning occupations (as the case of Zara demonstrates, girls are easily exploited, and the gift of a scholarship only partly alleviates the problem). In some cases, the sexual har-assment and other forms of sexual violence girls confront in school constitute significant obstacles to the completion of their studies.[5] They undermine the Girl Effect depiction of schools as safe places offering protection from preg-nancy, STDs, prostitution and other threats.

What does it mean to invest in girls as 'human capital' when school systems are dysfunctional and resource deficient? Girls may well dream of becoming teachers, lawyers or doctors, but in contexts where the quality of education has worsened and inequalities have deepened, such dreams often remain out of reach. Liberal feminist discourses that bind narratives of girl power, individu-alism, and 'just do it' subjectivity with the language of revolution – "Girls are

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5   A 2004 study of sexual violence against girls in secondary schools and higher education reported that more than 50 per cent of secondary girls have been victims of sexual harass-ment or rape (UNICEF 2004).

the most powerful force for change on the planet" the Nike Foundation asserts on its webpage – paper over the structural features of neoliberal capitalism that generate the very global inequalities the Girl Effect professes to address (Koffman and Gill 2013). In impoverished countries like Niger, the promise of education dangled by politicians, corporate elites, development workers, and rights activists often turns out to be 'cruelly optimistic' (Berlant 2011).

There is another sign that in its current state education may not be the panacea envisioned by the Girl Effect. Secondary schools throughout the country are experiencing outbreaks of spirit possession. Adolescent schoolgirls are targeted by violent, vindictive spirits seeking justice for wrongs suffered in the past. Possession is often contagious. Minutes after a girl shows signs of being overtaken by an invisible force, several others in her vicinity will exhibit similar symptoms. The incidents have raised concerns about school safety, prompting debates about the place of girls in school and the role of secular education in Niger,[6] a Muslim-majority country where Islam has assumed an increasingly visible role (Masquelier 2009). Besides wreaking havoc in schools and forcing establishments to close momentarily, possession often brings great disarray in the victims' lives (Masquelier 2020c). Some girls recover but others must abandon school.

Through the voice of the possessed, spirits reveal how they lost their homes when the trees they inhabited were felled to make room for schools. By reappearing years later to broadcast grievances, they force people to confront a past that never ends. At another level, these tales of eviction point to a broader history of iconoclasm aimed at purifying Islam from unwarranted innovations. In the last century, Niger witnessed waves of religious fervour that resulted in the erasure of spirit-centred practices in some regions. In Arewa, the Hausa-speaking region where I have conducted research since the late 1980s, spirit possession, once a central dimension of health-seeking practices, became progressively vilified as a source of immorality and an index of backwardness (Masquelier 2001).

In schools where spiritual attacks took place, the presence of spirits is generally understood through the lens of the past – a past that puts constraints on the present. School administrators and government officials occasionally finance purification rituals to rid the establishment of spirits. Though these procedures are said to be effective, one can never be sure that the spirits have left for good. A school director I knew turned on recordings of Koran recitations at night in some classrooms to keep the spirits at bay. Many people told

6   Spirits have been known to haunt faith-based schools (école franco-arabes). Nevertheless, most possession incidents I have heard of occurred in secular schools.

me the schools were haunted. Some teachers warned students not to wander in parts of the school suspected of being 'infested' with spirits. Here the past is apprehended as a looming menace, an unwanted burden threatening to overtake the present. Spirit attacks are perceived as the inevitable offshoots – the never-ending ripples – of a violent, iconoclastic past (Masquelier 2020b). Since one does not know when and where the spirits will strike next, there is a great deal of uncertainty. Yet life must go on, children must attend school. In such contexts, time is experienced "in the tension between the visible and the invisible, presence and absence, voice and silence" (Lambek 2002: 29). The present people inhabit is fissured. The uncanny infiltrates ordinary life through the fissures, constraining agency and reshaping trajectories.

4   Haunted Futures

Once, in July I visited a middle school in Dogondoutchi, a town in Arewa I have come to know well. The place stood silent and empty, devoid of the laughter, babble and animation that typically filled the air during the school year. I cautiously avoided the beans stalks planted at regular intervals across the entire schoolyard (during the rainy season people grow food wherever they can). My guide, the head of the school's parent association, was more worried about inadvertently disturbing a spirit. He proceeded guardedly, warning me to follow him and not to go near the latrines (which can be dangerous since spirits are known to congregate in 'dirty' places). I felt at times as if I were walking in a minefield. At last we stopped by the water pump where, a year or so before, a girl had been attacked by a spirit, setting off wild pandemonium among students (some of whom became possessed) and forcing the authorities to cancel classes momentarily. As we were leaving, the man pointed to the wall surrounding the school and, from a distance, I noticed that part of it had collapsed. He blamed today's brash, undisciplined male youths for the damage: "They have no respect, these delinquents. They jump over the walls and they shit in the schoolyard. I attended this school as a child. Back then it was a nice place; kids were well-behaved. Now this place is going to the dogs."

To do justice to the stories of nostalgia and haunting, hope and failure, trance and iconoclasm that bind together schools, spirits, and adolescent girls in Niger, one must let go of the notion that time unfolds in a sequential, unidirectional, and predictable fashion. A number of social theorists have recently come to reject the conceptual primacy of 'the future' (Berlant 2011; Goldstone and Obarrio 2017) while others have disrupted our models of linear time and progressive history (Chakrabarty 2000; Derrida 1994). Drawing on

their insights, I have argued that insofar as schools in Niger encode potentialities, these potentialities do not necessarily spawn foreseeable trajectories. It is not simply that these schools typify the inadequacy of the Girl Effect and its cohort of assumptions (and speculations) about girlhood, agency, capital, and futurity. They are also instantiations of temporal entanglements. The "time of entanglements", Achille Mbembe (2001) notes, is not a linear series of events in which each moment annuls and replaces the moments that preceded it. It is instead an "interlocking of presents, pasts, and futures that retain their depths of other presents, pasts, and futures, each age bearing, altering, and maintaining the previous ones" (Mbembe 2001: 16). This time is made up of disturbances, "bundles of unforeseen events" (Mbembe 2001: 16), that unsettle the modernist perception that history proceeds in a straight, segmented line – a sequence of events and their aftermaths (Hunt 2016).

By troubling the assumption that modern education entails a break with the past, the possession of Nigerien schoolgirls offers a demonstration of what Mbembe's temporal disturbances entail. It points to the limitations of models of development based on irreversible, future-oriented temporalities for capturing how people inhabit time. When raging spirits irrupt in classrooms to demand redress for past injuries, a troubled past is uncovered that stubbornly refuses to go away. This past is 'imperfect' (Lambek 2002: 12) in the sense that it is incomplete and unruly. In her work on imperial formations, Ann Stoler (2008: 196) invokes the concept of ruination to register the 'protracted quality' of damages to bodies, landscapes, and relationships. From this perspective, the spirits' expulsion from their homes may be described as a single event, but it is more accurately captured through its multiple, diffuse, enduring effects. After Mina, a 17-year-old girl, became possessed by a spirit at school, she was never the same. Hoping for a cure, her mother took her to a number of healers. Mina kept having terrifying visions. She slept poorly and did not eat much. She was afraid to leave the house. She never stepped foot in school again.

By interrupting school life and wreaking educational trajectories, spiritual attacks uncover the imperfectness of the past while putting the accent on the tyranny of futurity – the kind of ideology of progress that is at work in Zara's story. Built around the premise that schools are engines of development, the story hints at the ways the future is *girled* and girls are *futured* in Niger. Schoolgirls themselves routinely imagine and plan for the futures that education, in theory at least, opens up for them. For some of them, however, the aspirations that unfold against a teleological horizon of progress are too burdensome. They require a faith in 'girl power' that social realities, including the widespread recognition that a woman's worth depends on her fertility, frequently undermine.

The oppressive logic governing the promise of a better tomorrow, that is, the perception that events are the realization of a predetermined telos, is what Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) calls the 'future perfect'. As an aspirational mode that frames current hardship as the necessary precursor to futurity, the future perfect demands sacrifice, such as the investment poor Nigerien parents make in their daughters' education to secure a redeeming future. Recall the two cows that Zara's father sold so that she could go to school. In a very real sense, some Nigerien schools are haunted by the violence of the past as much as by the promises of the future.

Acknowledgements

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Queer Futures, National Utopias: Notes on Objects, Intimacy, Time, and the State

George Paul Meiu

On 17 May 2017, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia, the Goethe Institute in Nairobi displayed the work of six Kenyan artists in an exhibit provocatively named *To Revolutionary Type Love: A Celebration of Queer Love.* At the forefront of the exhibit was a remarkable collection of *kanga* fabrics. Kangas are cotton sheets (1 x 1.5 metres) imprinted with colourful geometrical and floral patterns and displaying, along their lower rim, a short proverb, riddle, or aphorism. Worn by women of different socio-economic means, both in cities and the countryside, in a wide variety of ways, kangas are sartorial markers of an African modern identity anchored in respect for tradition (Amory 2017; Beck 2006; McCurdy 2006). Kenyan and Tanzanian elites have long used kangas as national folk dress items and, recently, some residents of the Swahili coast (for example Zanzibar) called on UNESCO to recognize these fabrics as their 'cultural heritage' (Boswell 2006). Emblematic of tradition, kangas display proverbs that celebrate heteronormative love and marriage, their pleasures and intrigues.

For the exhibit, artist Kawira Mwirichia designed 22 kangas that called for affects and attachments that are more expansive and inclusive, more accepting of queerness. The artist dedicated each kanga to a different country in the world, decorating its surface with designs inspired from that country's history of LGBTQI+ activism. She then printed on each of them a saying in the Swahili language collected from members of the Kenya queer community. "Love is my religion, come worship with me,"[1] reads one kanga as it seeks to divorce religion from homophobia. "Let's not bring hate into love,"[2] warns another. Yet others proclaim proudly, "My queerness is not a vice, not deliberate, and harms no one;" "Beautiful souls like us don't belong in closets;" or "I see a day where love shall be prosecuted nevermore."[3]

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[1] In Swahili, *Huba ndo imani yangu, njoo tuabudu* (English translation by the artist).

[2] In Swahili, *Tusilete chuki mapenzini* (English translation by the artist).

[3] In Swahili, *Ushoga wangu si dhambi, sio chaguo, na haliumizani*; *Wazuri kama sisi, hatujitengi hatujifichi*; *Natabiri itakuja siku, hatutateswa kwa kupenda* (English translations by the artist).

Turning a salient cultural object long wedded to nationalist imaginaries of tradition and 'African morality' into a medium of queer activism, Mwirichia, I suggest, set out to imagine a different sort of future. According to the exhibit's catalogue, she hoped "to inspire and instil a sense of self-love, pride, and well-being in our queer community here in Kenya as it reaches out to the world." In an interview with the national newspaper the *Standard*, the artist expressed her wish for a day when her work "might be considered this different and powerful thing that came out of Kenya and spoke on behalf of many marginalized people, people who should be accepted as part of the fabric of society". "My kangas stand for that," Mwirichia said, "a fabric of society" (Ombogo 2019).

Building on the homonymy between kanga *fabrics* and the *fabric* of society, Mwirichia's installation stages what I see as a ritual of future making. The artist told the *Standard* that her idea for the project came from attending a wedding. There, in an intriguing ceremony, women laid kangas on the floor and the bride walked on them. As she stepped forward, looking down, the bride encountered moral lessons inscribed as proverbs on these kangas. She would then carry their lessons into her marriage. Inspired by this ritual, the artist paved the exhibit hall's floors with the kangas she designed and, covering them in a transparent plastic sheet, invited guests to walk, like the proverbial bride, on them. In what resembles a rite of passage, visitors stepped into a space and time the artist had envisaged in conversation with the local queer community – a microcosm that, one might argue, insists on a different kind of future. Borrowing designs from other countries' queer activist traditions, the artist appropriates power from an extrinsic world, seeking to impart it to a marginalized Kenyan people. This ritual sets out, as the artist put it, to empower local queers "to reach out to the world."

I also wish to suggest that, using an object otherwise associated with tradition, the kanga installation claims queerness as customary, implicitly dismissing claims that homosexuality is somehow 'un-African'. Numerous politicians, religious leaders, and civil society groups have made this claim to denunciate same-sex intimacies as foreign and polluting (Epprecht 2007). Promising to secure heteronormative gender, family, and reproduction, they have described homosexuality as dangerous to nativist sexuality – a set of intimate norms claimed as timelessly autochthonous. With the help of the media, leaders and reformists spread the idea that rescuing nativist sexuality would grant people easier access to a respectable future (Cynn 2018; Makumbi 2018). Basile Ndjio (2016: 115) called this process the "culturalization of sexuality", a set of "enduring efforts by some African rulers to construct a more racialized and autochthonized form of sexuality" as a basis for citizenship. It is such attempts to codify, rescue, and reinforce nativist sexuality that Mwirichia subverts when

she uses a customary object of nationalist, nativist utopia to envision what appears as a distinctly *queer* future.

Mwirichia's art can also inspire anthropologists to reflect on the importance of attending to queer future making practices, past and present, and of activating, through ethnography, their critical and transformative possibilities. 'Queer' must not refer here simply to a subjectivized sexual identity. Rather, the term can also designate modes of *becoming* that are, if not oppositional to, then out of line with normative expectations of intimacy, attachment, work, consumption, or respectability (Nyanzi 2014). This broader meaning also echoes Kenyan uses of the term. In a YouTube documentary, *We Must Free Our Imagination*, writer Binyavanga Wainaina (2014) recalls how, as schoolchildren, he and other pupils were not allowed to raise critical questions in class. "Here, to challenge a thing in class," Wainaina says, "is to be bringing, as my math teacher used to call it, queer behaviour." "That is very queer behaviour," he remembers his teacher say. Inflected perhaps with an older, Victorian sense of the term as 'disobedient' or 'out of line', this use of 'queer' may also apply to any futures that subvert the straight time of the life course, progress, or development. The term 'queer' is perhaps less commonly used in Kenya today. It is either invoked by older educated people in the sense that Wainaina discussed or adopted, of late, by mostly middle-class LGBTQI+ activists. More specific Swahili terms such as *mshoga* or *msenge* (for a gay male), and *msagaji* (lesbian), or the Ugandan neologism *kuchu* (gay), along with the English terms *gay*, *lesbian*, *bisexual*, or *trans* are far more common (van Klincken 2019: 104–8). But, for my argument, it will be useful to think with *queer*'s simultaneously identitarian and non-identitarian connotations. A young woman from Nairobi told me she identified as 'queer' rather than 'lesbian' because "I don't want to be put in a box," further suggesting the term's subversive connotations. *Queer* is thus about both LGBTQI+ people *and* 'out of line' moments and desires, spatial and temporal orientations. It is the meaning of *queer*, that queer theorists, for example, have used to describe temporal asynchronies as 'queer time' (Freeman 2007; Halberstam 2005) and the anticipation of non-reproductive times as 'queer futures'. What would it mean then, inspired by Mwirichia's kangas, to pay closer attention to 'queer futures' through ethnography?

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In *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, José Esteban Muñoz (2009) uses the concept of the 'queer future' to reflect on the political currency of a certain kind of utopian imagination. This imagination can emerge when we turn to art, artefacts, practices, and places with the intent to recognize in

their shapes and contradictions unrealized, emancipatory potentialities. Such potentialities can exist virtually as futures-past, paths not taken in foregone moments, but also – simultaneously – as 'not-yet-conscious futures'. "The not-yet-conscious," Muñoz argues, "is the realm of potentiality that must be called on, and insisted on, if we are ever to look beyond the pragmatic sphere of the here and now, the hollow nature of the present" (Muñoz 2009: 21). To recognize such potentiality, says Muñoz, "we may need to squint … strain our vision and force it to see otherwise, beyond the limited vista of the here and now" (2009: 22). Hence, queerness is also what is "not quite here," "the thing that is not-yet-imagined" (2009: 21), "a field of utopian possibility … in which multiple forms of belonging in difference adhere to a belonging in collectivity" (2009: 20). This understanding of queerness is important if we are to grasp normativity itself as a dialectical process. Normativity never simply *is*; it is neither singular nor given, neither fixed nor timeless. Rather, it exists as a struggle to sustain and reinvent itself, while identifying and excluding particular queer bodies and possibilities (Wiegman and Wilson 2015). Requiring the hard work of its constant reiteration, normativities are thus fragile, prone to ruptures and failure (Butler 2002).

It is precisely this fragility, the looming danger that heteropatriarchal norms can rupture (and often do), that the state has growingly promised to prevent by securing 'national values'. In an effort to legitimize their own *raison d'être*, since the early 1980s, numerous states across the world have deemed dangerous and promised to foreclose the possibilities of myriad queer futures (Alexander 1994). Liberal economic reforms prompted the devolution of government and the outsourcing of welfare to corporations and NGOs, intensified mobility; and mired claims to citizenship in anxieties over 'the foreign' (Ferguson 2006; Nyamnjoh 2006). In this context, the link between the nation and the state has come sharply into question (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001). As political leaders claim to rescue nativist (hetero)sexuality as national identity, for example, they seek to legitimize the state as the ultimate source of security for national values. It is then less surprising that the first decade of the new millennium saw a surge of homophobic rhetoric and violence in Africa and elsewhere (Bosia and Weiss 2013). Rather than speak of an essentialized 'African homophobia', a concept premised on a racist colonial construal of Africanity as alterity, queer African studies scholars have emphasized the importance of understanding homophobia both as part of the histories of particular states and in its wider political economic context (Awondo et al. 2012; M'Baye 2013; Ndjio 2016). To understand queer futures under these circumstances, it is necessary to engage critically with the state and its new forms of governance, in both their local and global instantiations.

How then can queer futures materialize amid (or against) rising homophobic rhetoric and violence, or growing investment in national utopia, whether sexual or otherwise? And how can such futures be made manifest in a contemporary political economy so desperately invested in rescuing heteropatriarchal normativities? One might argue that the point of queer futures is surely not to materialize as imagined, but to produce collectivities sustained by the pursuit of their utopia; in other words, to offer themselves as objects of desire in the quest of which new, emancipatory social attachments can emerge. In *Kenyan, Christian, Queer*, Adriaan van Klinken (2019) illustrates this possibility compellingly for a context in which conservative Christian values could, in principle, too easily efface queer worlds. Drawing on Muñoz's notion of 'cruising utopia', he shows how, for many LGBTQ+ Kenyans, many of them Christian, imagining a queer future becomes a modality of world-making. Various kinds of activism through art – or, *artivism*, for short – including hip hop or storytelling, respond, he suggests, "to social and political homophobia … presenting a range of lgbt-activist strategies and opening up alternative queer imaginations" (Van Klinken 2019: 17). The actualization of queer futures might be hard to envision under current circumstances. But a desire for it nevertheless sustains world-making, even if, in Nairobi, art works most efficiently as a means of political opposition primarily for middle-class and elite activists. Like emerging forms of queer African art, ethnographies of queer worlds in Africa have also proliferated in response to growing discrimination.[4] Such studies have excellently captured modes of imagination, attachment, and affect that sustain potentialities of the kinds described by Muñoz. Like art, ethnographies can thus help us recognize virtual possibilities, paths not taken, not-yet-conscious futures.

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What if we were to recognize that, with the historical transformations of late capitalism, much social life sustains queer articulations? That the making of otherwise normative futures often involves queer means, circumstances, and outcomes? Or that futures can be queer even when people seek to disavow, displace, and repudiate the queerness of their own actions, desires, and livelihoods, to reclaim the narrowly straight line of progress, development, and reproduction? And how would this simple realization change how we can understand the current politics of sexual nativism and national utopia?

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4   Such ethnographic monographs include Dankwa (2021), Gaudio (2009), Lorway (2015), Reid (2013).

With late capitalism, one can claim, futures in general have become queer. In 1980, Kenya's national newspaper, the *Daily Nation*, published a cartoon it called 'Forecaster's Map of the 1980s: Alternative Prognostications, 1980–89'. Designed by the World Future Society, "a Washington based association of people interested in what may happen during the years ahead," the map depicts futurity as confusingly rhizomatic. Rather than the straight line associated with the temporality of modernity, progress, and development (Koselleck 1979), the future figures as a net of numerous, intersecting, and diverting roads, streets, and alleys peppered with imaginatively named stops and destinations – for example, 'Status Quo Boulevard' leads through 'Great Depression' and 'Welfare State' to its final destination 'Chaos: War, Famine'. Smaller paths are called 'Refugee Crossing', 'Back to the Good Ol'Days', or 'Soft-tech Bypass' and lead respectively to 'Cybernia', '1970s', and 'Ecotopia'. Evocative of a sense of temporal disorientation and uncertainty at the time, the map's strong resonance with the realities of Kenyan life must have informed the editors' decision to reproduce it in their newspaper. Many Kenyans with whom I have spoken over the years are certainly aware that their futures are rhizomatic (see also Smith 2008), even if they do not necessarily celebrate such futures as ends themselves. Although the straight linear time of modernity and progress continues to inform ideals of respectability and ideologies of governance, it works in dissonance with the rhizomatic future of life-as-lived; and this dissonance is quite queer.

Mwirichia's kangas reminded me that, during my fieldwork, I had already encountered these fabrics, quite unexpectedly, as queerly entangled in the production of futures. Since 2008, I have worked in the town of Mtwapa on the Kenyan coast, pejoratively known as the country's 'sin city' for its sexual economies. Contrary to dominant narratives that see Kenyans who live or travel to Mtwapa as morally decadent, the town's residents – mostly migrants and migrant settlers – struggle to produce respectability while engaging in various kinds of 'illicit' work. Early on, one practice caught my attention. Women who engage in sex work at night, leave their homes in the evening and walk or ride motorbike cabs from their residential neighbourhoods (*mtaa*) to bars and clubs along the town's main road. For these short trips, they cover their mini-skirts or open blouses, which they wear to attract clients, with kanga fabrics. Upon arrival at the main road, they remove the kangas, fold them, and place them in their handbags. Then, before returning home in the morning, they cover themselves again. I asked a woman what this practice meant. "You know," she replied, "here, by the road, everyone knows you're a prostitute [*malaya*]. But there, in the *mtaa*, people don't know what you do at night. So, you have to make yourself respectable a little." In this practice, kangas cover

up a perceived contradiction between women's desire to produce respectable futures and their use of sex work as a means of doing so. They congeal another kind of queer futurity, one whose queerness emerges with the sharp dissonance between ends and means – an exceptional, momentary queerness.

To understand this kind of queerness, it is important to think further about how alignments and misalignments of the means and ends of livelihood temporalize the future distinctly. Jane Guyer (2007) argues that the uncertainties of late capitalism have marked anthropological concerns with an "enforced presentism" and a "fantasy future", at the expense of attention to the "near future" – the concrete ways people make a tomorrow. Guyer (2007: 416) emphasizes the importance of attending to "a time that is punctuated rather than enduring: of fateful moments and turning points". Practices of concealment involving kangas are part of a vast repertoire of tactics through which people resort to exceptional means to make near futures, without jeopardizing the possibility of a remoter, fantasy future. Without such tactics, the results could be drastic. When women in Mtwapa, for example, were outed as 'prostitutes' to their parents and relatives back home, they often lost any chance to return to their home communities or to build the kinds of far futures they desired. In this instance, without concealment, queer means to the near future short-circuit long-term plans, the fantasy future. The use of the kanga outlined above is thus emblematic of attempts to produce futurity queerly, through distinct alignments of means and ends.

Numerous value-making practices that anthropologists have described in recent years have already entailed similar contradictions. For example, in the absence of employment, young men who create new ways of waiting, of spending their surplus time, whether by brewing tea, chewing khat, or consuming conspicuously, are often scolded by leaders and elders for 'wasting time', being lazy or idle (Honwana 2012; Mains 2007; Masquelier 2019; Newell 2012; Ralph 2008). So too, women who, unable to marry or feeling "stuck in the compound" (Hansen 2005), seek alternative lives through transactional sex and migration, attract social opprobrium (Cole 2010; Mojola 2014). In such contexts, as Jeremy Jones (2010) argues for Zimbabwe, "nothing is straight": a shadow economy of various "zig-zagging" survival practices operates in the "shadow" of the "normal". In my own work, I have described such moments of being out of synch with the temporal rhythms of the normative life course and respectability as "queer moments" (Meiu 2015). This then is how the dissonance between the means, outcomes, and circumstances of future-making could be read as queer, as not-yet-conscious potentialities of a queer future.

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It is precisely with the proliferation of such queer rhythms, moments, and cultural productions that a fetishistic overinvestment in the promises of the security state become saliently resonant with people's everyday struggles and concerns. Paul Amar (2013) describes the security state as based on a form of governance sustained, among other things, through moral rehabilitation, the policing of 'perverse' sexualities, 'criminal' masculinities, and the rescue of vulnerable citizens. In this context, by promising to straighten queers, the state, religious leaders, and other parastatal actors and organizations actually also promise to set queer time straight, to reclaim the linearity of temporal progress, whether in life course, work, wealth-accumulation, or national development.

If a general queerness can indeed be said to permeate conditions of everyday life today, then queerness as objectified identity – the body of the 'homosexual' – becomes an externalized representation of that condition of dissonance and, therefore also, its object-cause ("it is *because* of homosexuals that *our* futures are in jeopardy"). In other words, one can argue that the subversive means of near futures are perhaps less troublesome to people than the desire for an explicitly queer far-future, one that challenges the straight time of national utopia. And thus, the security state's legitimacy thrives off its promise to contain and eliminate bodies explicitly dedicated to such queer futurity. The 'homosexual' body is then overinvested with anxieties over an otherwise collective condition of life. It is an object through which anxieties are displaced from this collective condition and externalized onto an 'other' to be disavowed as foreign, polluting, demonical – indeed, as the *anti-future.*

Against this othering tactic, it is important to recognize the multiple potentialities, paths not taken, and not-yet-conscious futures that exist in every object or moment. This is what I have suggested through the example of the kanga. It is not surprising perhaps that the kanga has also of late become iconic of the moral rehabilitation campaigns of the state, churches, and civil society groups, thus adding a distinctly 'African' signifier to their crusades against the "perversions of globalization". *Bi Mswafari*, a Saturday evening television show that has been running for the past few years on the Kenyan national channel Citizen, features Bi Mswafari, a female marriage counsellor who, in conversation with different guests, offers moral advice on sex, love, and the family. Though contested among viewers, the show presents a set of pan-ethnic cultural values that foreground patriarchal, heterosexist national utopias. Here, Bi Mswafari and her guests appear dressed in kangas and the studio is richly decorated with numerous such fabrics. Kangas thus visually brand the African morality the show is trying to produce.

At the same time, the kanga, as its use by sex workers suggests, has also been employed in ways that seem queer, involved in forms of expression,

concealment, and transgression emerging, ironically, as people seek to acquire normative respectability. Mwirichia's art reminds us of this capacity of the kanga, its potentiality for queerness, for a future that is more inclusive, more loving. What would it mean to embrace this queerness against normative reinscriptions of time as straight and linear, against futures that seek to rescue nativist sexuality? Queerness and the queer future are not external to normative worlds – not reducible to either LGBTQI+ people or to an imagined radical 'outside' to society and normativity – but inherent potentialities of the objects, moments, and contexts therein. Echoes here of Walter Benjamin (1999: 459) who, like Muñoz, argues that such potentialities can be activated "by a displacement of the angle of vision", so that "a positive element emerges, … something different from that previously signified." And, if we do acknowledge the more generalized queerness of social worlds – something ethnography, like art, allows us to do – then, are we not better positioned to look into the far future?

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Futuring Together: Inside and Outside of Marriage in Namibia

Julia Pauli

1　Introduction

What is the future of marriage in Namibia, possibly southern Africa? A woman from rural Fransfontein, northwest Namibia, told me many years ago that marriage is always about "futuring together". If you don't future together, she said, then the relationship will not last. At the time she was in her mid-twenties, unmarried and the mother of a three-year-old daughter. In detail, she described how the father of her child had disappointed her, not seeing their future together. Although he made some money in construction work, he did not put any of it aside for their marriage. He is a selfish person, she said, not thinking ahead. To get married, it takes a lot of effort, and marriage is expensive now, she sighed. Her frustration was not, however, pervasive. She was living with her mother, unmarried like herself, and with a permanent income as a government employee. Mother and daughter shared what they had. By local criteria, their standard of living was high. When I met the mother one Sunday after church, we got into a conversation. She explained that several years ago she had decided that she had had enough of marriage and men. Why compromise, she asked, when you don't have to?

In a nutshell, these two episodes pinpoint why marriage is desirable but not necessary in contemporary Namibia. Marriage in Namibia has changed from an inclusive into an exclusive institution. Similar dynamics have been described in Botswana and South Africa (Mhongo and Budlender 2013; Mohlabane et al. 2019; Pauli and van Dijk 2016; Posel and Rudwick 2014; Reece 2019; van Dijk 2017). In inclusive times, in Namibia approximately until the 1970s, most Namibians were either married or on their way towards marriage. In a process that sometimes took years, marriage was negotiated and eventually finalized between kin groups. Exclusive marriage emerged when wedding costs started to soar about forty years ago. In a long-term process, economic stratification, fostered by the apartheid state, turned into deep class differences. Increasingly, only wealthy Namibians could afford the ever more costly weddings. Namibia changed from being a country with a high marriage rate to one with a low marriage rate. As a result, contemporary intimate relations can be characterized as bipartite. On the one hand, a small group of middle- and

upper-class Namibians appropriated marriage and turned it into a class project. This appropriation has reconfigured the meaning and practices of marriage along neoliberal lines. On the other hand, intimacy, conjugality and parenthood continue to be of great importance for the vast majority of the unmarried population. There is a lot of 'futuring together', albeit outside marriage.

If the future of marriage in Namibia continues along these lines, what does this mean for kinship, care networks and general social organization? I suggest that the bipartite division of intimate relations into married versus unmarried Namibians leads to different, but connected social universes for the respective groups. My informed guesswork is based on long-term fieldwork undertaken in rural and urban Namibia since 2003 (Pauli 2019, 2020). Between 2003 and 2006 I focused on rural livelihoods in Fransfontein, northwest Namibia, where most people consider themselves to be Damara and speak Khoekhoegowab (Schnegg 2019: 834). However, given the high level of intermingling between rural and urban populations (Greiner 2011; Pauli 2020), I undertook a follow-up study in Windhoek, in urban Namibia, in 2015/16, in which I deliberately focused on the so-called rising middle classes and their marriages. My urban sample consisted of interlocutors I already knew from Fransfontein who had meanwhile moved to Windhoek. To broaden my view, I decided to include married middle-class couples from other ethnic and language groups, mainly Oshiwambo speakers (for more details see Pauli 2020).

Married Namibians under forty most likely live in an urban middle-class environment. Kaylee and Adam, who married in October 2015, communicated with one another in Khoekhoegowab, but sometimes switched to English, and addressed each other by their Western names (for which I am using pseudonyms); they only used their Damara names when visiting rural kin. Kaylee was 31 and Adam 32 when they celebrated their wedding at an expensive safari lodge outside Windhoek. They had fallen in love at a soccer game in the national stadium in 2009 and, a few years into their relationship, Kaylee moved in with Adam. When I met them in 2015, they were saving up to buy a house in Rocky Crest, one of the new middle-class neighbourhoods of Windhoek. Kaylee explained that the big house was an investment in their future as a family and that she had stopped using contraceptives a few months earlier. Adam and Kaylee, who have international university degrees in accounting and taxation, worked for insurance companies and were enjoying incomes way above the average. They dined out several times a week, went on nice holidays, and lived comfortable lives.

Kaylee emphasized the preciousness of her love for Adam and, like many other married urbanites I interviewed in Windhoek in 2015 and 2016, she saw her marriage as something that needed constant effort to grow. At length,

Kaylee listed the many things she did for her own growth and for the growth of their relationship. Three times a week she went to Virgin Active, a fitness club, to stay slim and fit. Because Adam loved outdoor sports, she organized trips to the countryside. They had special date nights and went shopping for each other. Constant reflections on how to improve the quality of their relationship complemented this "consumption of the romantic utopia" (Illouz 1997; see also Mupotsa 2014, 2015). Kaylee stressed how much work they put into their communication skills. Despite their heavy workloads, the couple tried to spend as much time as possible together, investing in their relationship. Adam also worked on his growth. "I love him so much," Kaylee said, "because he decided, besides his background, he could still excel and try to grow himself."

Working on love as aspiration and labour, Danai Mupotsa (2014) has shown how South African weddings are performances of the neoliberal idea of "the good life" (Mupotsa 2014: 256). Kaylee and Adam's futuring together builds on comparable neoliberal constructions of the self (Freeman 2014; Gershon 2011). Emily Martin has pointed out that the quintessential foundation of neoliberal selfhood is the perception that people are "a collection of assets that must be continually invested in, nurtured, managed, and developed" (Martin 2000: 582). For the married, middle-class Namibians with whom I spoke in 2015 and 2016, only multiple investments in one's self, one's relationship and one's partner led to fulfilling marriages; and these investments were highly time consuming. Many couples complained that their kin did not understand these social priorities. The couples wanted to invest time and resources in their coupledom and not their kin. Unclear distributions of time and resources caused conflicts among couples and with their kin. While Kaylee came from a wealthy middle-class family, her father was a university professor and her mother a teacher, Adam's unmarried mother had raised five children from four different men on her own. Adam was the only married child and he supported his mother with visits and a monthly allowance. Kaylee felt ambivalent about this and the couple quarrelled. She feared that his mother's demands would interfere with the quality of their own relationship. "I will tolerate it," Kaylee said, "as long as it does not influence our future and our growth as a married couple."

In contrast to married middle-class Namibians like Kaylee and Adam, unmarried Namibians under forty are most likely to be living with their kin. In both rural and urban Namibia, femifocal households (Pauli 2013), which centre on strong female kin ties like mother–daughter or sister–sister, are widespread. Male relatives are attached to these households but seldom form their core. While living in rural Fransfontein with my husband and fellow anthropologist Michael Schnegg in 2003/4, I discussed motherhood and marriage with

four young women between the ages of twenty and thirty (Pauli 2019: 199). All
were unmarried mothers and I wanted to know if they considered a child more
important than a boyfriend, husband or partner; they all insisted that they did.
"If a partner should not accept my child from a previous relationship," one
woman said, "then I would leave him." Another woman spoke of how her child
would stay with her until she grew old and died. Contrary to their married
counterparts, unmarried women invested most of their time and resources in
their children, their kin and their wider care network, including female neigh-
bours (Pauli 2007a), and not in their heterosexual relationships. For example,
25 year-old Isabel maintained a large reciprocal network of mostly female kin.
With her relatives, she exchanged food, clothes, job opportunities, housing and
money and shared childcare responsibilities. When I met her in rural Namibia
in 2003, she and her three-year-old daughter Holly were living in her mother
Dina's household. Dina, a hard-working woman in her sixties, owned and
headed the household of 12 people, which basically comprised her mother Ver-
ena and five grandchildren; however, Isabel, two of her older brothers, a female
cousin and a brother's friend were also temporarily staying there. The only
married, now widowed person in the household was 84-year-old Verena (Pauli
2019). Isabel and Dina had never married, and both women expressed scep-
ticism towards men. Occasionally, the fathers of their children helped them
with something, they told me, sometimes money, sometimes food, maybe a
goat, but these gifts were not to be relied on. "My mother and my small moth-
ers (mother's younger sisters), they make me live," Isabel said. Vice versa, Isabel
did everything to support her mother and her female kin.

Catherine Allerton (2007) has argued that it is very Euro-American to view
unmarried people, especially women, as 'alone', 'lonely' and 'needy'. Building
on Erving Goffman's distinction between 'single' and 'withs' (Goffman 1971),
Allerton observes in relation to her Indonesian fieldwork, "Although unmar-
ried women may have a 'single status' with regard to marriage, in terms of
wider social life they are most definitely 'withs', whether connected with
another unmarried sister, their parents, or their brother and his children"
(Allerton 2007: 21). Like Allerton's Indonesian interlocutors, most people in
Namibia thought it terrible to be 'single' in Goffman's sense. However, contrary
to Euro-American and middle-class Namibian perceptions, marriage was not
necessarily considered the only way of avoiding being 'single' and lonely. Shar-
ing a house and food, fostering a child and living and 'futuring' together were
some of the many ways in which unmarried people in rural and urban Namibia
became 'withs'. Unmarried Fransfonteiners do not need marriage to be socially
accepted and have socially satisfying lives and futures.

To conclude, I want to relate my observations to findings from other regions.
Jane Guyer has described two different 'logics' of marriage and reproduction

for Nigeria (Guyer 1994). The 'lineal' logic is based on marriage. The tie created through marriage is long-term and stable, but it also limits a woman's agency and flexibility. The second logic is classified as 'lateral'. Many Yoruba mothers in Western Nigeria cultivate co-parental ties with more than one father of their children, resulting in an arrangement that Guyer (1994: 231) terms 'polyandrous motherhood'. Polyandrous motherhood leads to complex social networks based on co-parenthood. Women gain flexibility and can claim support from multiple men in times of need. Guyer's lateral logic describes the social universe of many unmarried Namibians. Co-parental ties to several men are very common for unmarried Namibian women (Pauli 2007b). Furthermore, support from multiple fathers is embedded in dense female kin and care networks. This social organization has developed over decades in southern Africa and is very likely to continue in the future (see for example Boehm 2006; Hellman 1974; Preston-Whyte 1978; Van der Vliet 1984).

Guyer's 'lineal' logic is also helpful in understanding the social universe of contemporary married middle-class Namibians. However, Guyer's 'lineal' logic, highlighting the genealogical connections between generations, has been reconfigured into a 'neoliberal' logic of marriage in Namibia, focusing on the heterosexual couple. Recent comparative work suggests that these trends will continue and deepen in the future. Juliette Crespin-Boucaud has shown that in many African countries inter-ethnic marriages are on the rise (Crespin-Boucaud 2020). She speculates that changes in gender relations and an increased agency of educated, urban women have opened the marriage market beyond ethnicity. Similarly, Rachel Spronk's work on young middle-class professionals in Nairobi demonstrates the relevance of social class and the irrelevance of ethnicity for partner choice (Spronk 2012). All of this indicates that the institution of marriage is moving from kin and regional alliance towards consolidation and performance of social class, a dynamic attentive ethnographers have forecasted decades ago (Gulbrandsen 1986; Solway 1990). Although many kin groups are still multi-class entities with ties cutting across status and class, married and unmarried Namibians are socially moving apart from each other, futuring less together and more on their own.

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The Future of Female Genital Cutting: An Evolution of its Medicalization

Tammary Esho

1   Introduction

Some time back I was part of a conversation sparked by reports of an increase in the medicalization of female genital cutting (FGC)[1] in Kenya. Countries at the forefront of this practice include Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan and Kenya (Shell-Duncan et al. 2016). The rise in its medicalization seems to be based on the demand and supply of these services within the practising communities. The demand is driven by educated, wealthy women and families from FGC practising communities in Kenya and abroad, and the supply by healthcare providers (HCPs) attracted by the high prices paid for their specialized services. An increase in the demand for female genital cosmetic surgery (FGCS), or clitoral reconstruction, by specialized surgeons was among the concerns voiced. The purpose of this chapter is to stimulate discussion on the similarities between FGC and FGCS and to demonstrate how support for FGCS may influence efforts to curb FGC.

The conversation was along the following lines. A female friend commented that she had "visited the plastic surgeon's clinic the other day … and guess what! The women walking into the clinic for consultation looked so sophisticated – they seemed like they had just landed from Dubai!" To this a male friend retorted, "You know what, I guess this plastic surgeon makes a ton of money from his services … actually his clients are composed of the *Who's Who* in Kenya and within the region."

FGC is a form of violence involving the partial or total removal of parts of the female external genitalia, or other injury to those parts, for non-medical reasons (WHO 2018). In practising communities, it is generally associated with social norms that define acceptable behaviour and that are governed by a set of known sanctions or a powerful process of internalization. The custom serves to coerce women into upholding norms that perpetuate gender inequalities and that undercut their right to bodily integrity. The practice is upheld by many ethnic communities in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, parts of Latin America

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[1]   In the present-day discourse, FGC is also known as female genital mutilation (FGM), but for reasons of consistency, I have opted to standardize on the more 'neutral' term, FGC.

and throughout the world's diasporic communities. Globally, more than 200 million girls and women live with FGC in 30 countries, mostly in Africa and the Middle East; as many as three million girls are at risk of being cut every year (Gruenbaum 2015; Shell-Duncan et al. 2018). The trends mentioned in the recent UNICEF (2020) report have now been overshadowed by the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, according to the UNFPA (2020), the pandemic has exacerbated the risk to women and girls, with an additional two million FGC cases projected to occur over the next decade that could otherwise have been averted. The pandemic threatens to widen gender inequalities: anecdotal evidence suggests that more girls are being exposed to FGC due to the COVID-19 lockdown measures, including the closure of schools and the loss of livelihoods. This has placed more strain on families, and often forced them into agreeing to a marriage because of the bride-price (Chai 2020). Research is now suggesting that COVID-19 has increased FGC and early forced marriages in some communities in Kenya (Amref 2020a).

Despite decades of campaigns in various parts of the world, FGC remains a global problem and affects many women in diasporic communities. It is a human rights violation that deprives women and girls of their right to health. Despite a slight overall decline in its prevalence, however, population growth exposes ever more young girls to it (UNICEF 2016). Various multipronged approaches have sometimes worked (Shell-Duncan et al. 2016) and successful interventions have been found to trigger change from within communities. For example, a community-led initiative by the Maasai of Kajiado County, Kenya, has brought about a 24.2 per cent decline in its prevalence over the past ten years (Amref 2020b).

In this chapter, I express my increasing concern that the evolving trend towards medicalizing FGC will undermine the campaign to end the practice. This is because its medicalization seems to introduce a false assurance that if medical specialists perform the operation, there are likely to be fewer complications, and thus fewer grounds for objecting to the practice.

There are several reasons for the growing medicalization of FGC (Doucet et al. 2017). First, it is an unintended consequence of the campaign to end FGC using the public health risk as a strategy – the practising communities merely respond by medicalizing the procedure to reduce the health risks to their daughters. Second, many HCPs within the practising communities have the same social values, so thus act in the spirit of 'helping' the girls who will be subjected to the practice anyway. Cultural obligations are invoked to overlook their professional commitment to 'do no harm'. HCPs often claim to feel torn between such values and upholding their medical code of ethics. Third, in line with the conversation at the start of this chapter, the more specialized

medical surgeons are taking over the procedures previous performed by lower tiers of HCPs. Among the reasons cited are the associated economic benefits: some Kenyan private clinics charge as much as US$ 4000 for these specialist services, which of course only the wealthier members of society can afford.

2   Therapeutic versus Non-Therapeutic Female Genital Modifications: Convergence of FGC and Female Genital Cosmetic Surgeries

In some FGC practising countries, HCPs (mostly nurses and midwives in Sudan, medical doctors in Egypt, and a combination of various health professionals in Kenya) are taking over from the traditional cutters (UNFPA–UNICEF 2017). There is, however, resentment. On the one hand, these HCPs are not trained to perform FGC, while on the other it contravenes their medical oath to 'do no harm'. As a result, the gaps created by this double criticism end up being filled by trained plastic surgeons performing female genital cosmetic surgery (FGCS) and claiming medical grounds for the procedure. These specialists also provide corrective procedures. Though intended to repair the damage caused by FGC, I argue that this practice may result in its perpetuation: girls and women may decide to comply with social norms and undergo the cut with a view to getting the FGC 'corrected' in later life, with those who can afford it perhaps opting for clitoral reconstructive surgery after FGC. Personal communication with these clients suggests that they see it as a corrective procedure of a personal nature after having ensured community acceptance. In some instances, these inter-locutors confided, this 'correction' took place in secret, behind their husband's or family's back.

It is clear that this evolution may slow the process of abandoning FGC. Yet, the hypothesis that the rising trend of corrective surgeries after FGC correlates with an increasing prevalence of the latter, needs to be further researched. Another hypothesis in need of further empirical scrutiny is that the incidence of (medicalized) FGC is increasing under the guise of FGCS, as clients and HCPs exploit the gaps in the legal framework that gives provision for medical reasons that may necessitate FGCS.

These issues remain a matter of concern. The emergence of these new practices points to shortcomings in existing legal policies and frameworks; by permitting certain forms of genital modifications it derails the progress achieved by the campaigns to end FGC and by the prohibitions enshrined in law. For instance, in Kenya's case the 2011 Prohibition of FGC Act and other legal frameworks define FGC as all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs, or any harmful procedure to the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. These

include (a) clitoridectomy, which is the partial or total removal of the clitoris or the prepuce; (b) excision, which is the partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora; (c) infibulation, which is the narrowing of the vaginal orifice with the creation of a covering seal by cutting and juxtaposing the labia minora or the labia majora, with or without excision of the clitoris (National Council for Law Reporting 2011). These definitions could, arguably, also apply to procedures such as clitoro-labiaplasty. However, the act states that a sexual reassignment procedure or a medical procedure that has genuine therapeutic purpose for the patient (and, hence, according to the WHO, guarantees her physical, mental and social well-being) falls outside its scope (Grad 2002).

This definition therefore leaves out similar procedures (such as FGCS) that are (claimed to be) conducted for medical reasons. At the same time though it is imperative to highlight the similarity regarding adult women's demands for FGC and FGCS: are both responding to cultural notions of what are considered 'normal' and 'desirable' external female genital organs? A recent guide for general practitioners performing FGCS claims that no concomitant rise in the incidence of congenital or acquired disease conditions warrant this surgery. Rather, it appears that the rising demand is a response to changing cultural norms (Australian Society for Plastic Surgeons 2015). The guide posits that this surgery is increasingly being sought by women who want to feel 'normal' or look 'desirable' (Bramwell et al. 2007). As a result, general practitioners are increasingly receiving requests from patients seeking surgery due to concerns about the appearance of their genitalia (Liao and Creighton 2011).

The UN calls for a zero-tolerance approach and condemns all forms of genital cutting as harmful and degrading to women; it infringes on their rights to health and physical integrity (UNFPA 2014). However, the zero-tolerance approach only applies to traditional and customary forms of genital cutting, not to cosmetic alterations of the female external genitalia (O'Neill et al. 2020). Considering the amount of genital tissue removed in both FGC and FGCS, the two procedures are essentially the same. Anatomically, there is little to distinguish FGC from many of the FGCS procedures such as clitoro-labiaplasty (Ostrzenski 2012). What does differ is why, how, where and by whom it is done: while FGC is known to take place in unsterile environments, FGCS takes place in a clinical setting whereby sterility is ensured.

3   The Argument for Female Autonomy and Freedom of Choice

Argument over what are 'normal' or 'desirable' female genitalia unearth those on woman's autonomy and freedom of choice. HCPs assume that a patient

asking for FGCS is exploiting her freedom of choice, and will claim health reasons as medical justification. The emphasis on female autonomy over whether or not to opt for FGCS, however, promotes individualism and pushes up the demand for medicalized FGC. This is demonstrated by the following two cases from Kenya.

3.1   *The Court Case*

In 2017, a medical doctor filed a case with the Kenya High Court against the Prohibition of FGC Act 2011 (National Council for Law Reporting 2011). She called for the following (the details of this court case may not be discussed exhaustively as it is ongoing):

– that Prohibition of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2011 be abolished;
– that the Anti-FGC Board (a board that oversees anti-FGC work in Kenya) be disbanded;
– that women above the age of 18 years have the right to choose and consent to female circumcision;
– that the procedure be medicalized so that adult women may be allowed to have it in a 'safe' way;
– she also argues that female circumcision is a cultural right and that it does not have any negative health or sexual repercussions for women.

In essence, the petitioner seeks to promote women's rights and freedoms as enshrined in the constitution. According to her, at stake is the right to culture and, more specifically, a woman's right to make her own choice whether or not to undergo FGC. As a matter of public importance – the fight against female genital mutilation occupies a large part of Kenya's national discourse – this case gives us a glimpse into what the future of FGC will look like when the argument around woman's autonomy and freedom of choice is used as a benchmark to advocate for FGC in the guise of FGCS (see Bhalla 2018). Obviously, these are weighty issues, especially because they affect the rights of girls and women who carry the heaviest health burden. The determination of this petition will set a precedent on the balance between cultural practices, rights and individual freedoms (National Council for Law Reporting 2017) that, however, may jeopardize the progress made over the last decades, a steady decline of FGC in many communities.

3.2   *The Cutting of Adult Women among the Kipsigis Community*

A second case is situated among the Kalenjin, Kipsigis ethnic group in Mauche, Nakuru County. Here a growing number of adult women, mostly educated and married with children, 'choose' to undergo FGC. Data from this community show that this trend emerged after the post-election violence of 2007/8 and

the subsequent civil strife between the Kalenjin and their neighbouring political rivals (Esho et al. 2017).

The Kalenjin embraced and benefited from the 'education of the girl child initiative' introduced in the 1980s by Daniel Arap Moi, the second president of Kenya, who himself hailed from this community. The social norm among the Kalenjin was to cut girls during their teenage years, but because of this initiative many of them averted FGC while pursuing their education, as evidenced by its reduced prevalence in the community (KNBS 2015).

In December 2013, it was reported in the news that several adult women had been admitted to the then Nakuru Provincial General Hospital with complications following botched FGC procedures (Macharia 2013) carried out by a traditional cutter. Though the women claimed that they 'chose' to undergo FGC, our data show that their husbands and mothers-in-law had put pressure on them to agree to it so that their husbands could join the ranks of the community leaders. This report introduces a convoluted scenario that begs the question of whether these women really wanted FGC, or whether they were complying with the social expectation that community leaders should be married to 'real' women?

4   Conclusion

We all know that FGC is perpetuated by social norms and that traditional practices are not static, but informed, reimagined and subsequently reinvented to fulfil social requirements and adapt to emerging extrinsic or intrinsic factors. Interestingly, culture is dynamic and influenced by socio-ecological, historical and structural contingencies that interact with individual and other contextual factors to produce associated meanings and cultural values (Burke et al. 2009).

In this chapter, I have argued that the more FGCS is medically allowed, the more medicalized FGC will take place. It is clear that FGCS and FGC are converging procedures, which complicates the fight against FGC. We can approach this issue in various ways. First, by strengthening the legal and policy frameworks, so that no grey areas remain for the practitioners of both FGC and FGCS to exploit. It is unfair to consider FGC a form of violence – which it is – while a very similar 'genuine therapeutic' procedure is not. This will ensure that there is no vilification of one practice over the other since they are very like one another. In addition, the call to ban FGC as a non-therapeutic *practice* while permitting FGCS as a therapeutic *procedure*, perpetuates the references to FGC as 'barbaric' (Sheldon and Wilkinson 1998), hence complicating efforts to eradicate it.

Second, focusing on the programmatic aspects of ending FGC, it is crucial to engage HCPs to champion the prevention of both FGC and FGCS. It is also important to have clear-cut guidance on corrective surgeries associated with FGC complications. In essence, it is in the light of such contextual complexities regarding FGC and FGCS that a focus on tackling social norms alone may not suffice to change behaviour. Instead, interventions require multipronged approaches that target a broader range of factors and that consider historical, political, legal structures and processes as intersecting axes for bodily practices (Burke et al. 2009; Cislaghi and Heise 2019; Esho et al. 2013).

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Imagination on the Past and Memory for the Future: Re-Establishment of the Lifeworld through Rituals Among the Gǀui/Gǁana

Akira Takada and Yuriko Sugiyama

1   Introduction

Whether living in cosmopolitan cities or on the outskirts of the Kalahari Desert, the global connections between people and things continue to multiply and intensify. However, globalization does not necessarily mean that people's lifeworlds have become standardized. Rather, it is becoming increasingly important to understand the differences between our lived experiences and to explore how people with diverse historical and cultural backgrounds can coexist. As Geschiere and Meyer (1998) indicate, globalization often highlights the tension between the 'global flow' of people, goods and images and a 'cultural closure' of identity. This is particularly true when a society confronts new, uncertain circumstances. The purpose of this chapter is to reconsider how members of a society facing rapid institutional and environmental changes can reorganize their lifeworld.

Since the late 1990s, the Gǀui/Gǁana, two closely related neighbouring groups of San, have faced enormous challenges caused by the implementation of a relocation policy aimed to accelerate the integration of the Gǀui/Gǁana, a tiny minority in Botswana, into the imagined nation-state, which largely sets the socio-cultural system of the Tswana majority as the de facto standard. Rapid institutional and environmental changes forced the Gǀui/Gǁana to reorganize social relationships that had been based on their kinship network and subsistence activities, which mainly relied on foraging wild plants and animals (Takada 2017). The two rituals analysed here – *chebama* for anomalous childbirth, and well-attended Christian-style funerals – were adopted and spread under these circumstances.

2   The *Chebama* Ritual

In 1961, the Bechuanaland Protectorate established the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), which encroaches on the vast living area of the Gǀui/Gǁana. Dr George Silberbauer, an anthropologist appointed as a 'Bushmen survey

officer', recommended the boundary to allow the Glui/Gllana to maintain their traditional pattern of subsistence (Silberbauer 1965: 132–8). Since the 1970s, however, the Botswana government's modernization and resettlement policies have greatly affected the Glui/Gllana and, in 1997, the government relocated most of them to a settlement outside the game reserve. Soon, a ritual known as *chebama*, which is thought to treat the effects of anomalous childbirth, became widely practised in the new settlement, which local people call Kx'oensakene (literally 'looking for a life').

Chebama refers to both the ritual itself and the symptoms or effects of an anomalous childbirth. The symptoms of *chebama* are similar to those of an affliction called *thibamo*, which became prevalent among the Tswana in the 1930s and 1940s (Livingston 2005). Livingston (2005) argued that *thibamo* emerged as a term to describe a constellation of symptoms, such as a breech birth, a persistent bloody cough and acute malnutrition in the baby and/or parents. The symptoms increased when sexual restrictions in the context of migrant labour were relaxed. Concepts relevant to biomedicine (such as disease transmission through human fluids) combined with those of Tswana medicine led to *thibamo* being associated with tuberculosis (TB).

According to our interviewees, the therapist who performed most of the *chebama* rituals in Kx'oensakene between 1997 and 2000, had learnt them from relatives who had close relationships with the neighbouring Kgalagadi people, so the *chebama* ritual might well have emerged from knowledge and skills associated with *thibamo*. Imamura (2010: 172) confirmed that "many of the rituals that the Glui/Gllana perform are influenced by the Kgalagadi people." However, it should be noted that the ritualistic aspects of *thibamo* are poorly documented. Also, although the traditional Tswana birth attendants are still familiar with the symptoms of *thibamo* and the customary medicines used to treat them, they perform few *thibamo* rituals. So, even if both afflictions (and treatments) share similarities, it is difficult to pinpoint their exact relationship.

The Glui/Gllana perform the *chebama* ritual following the diagnosis of an anomalous childbirth, which they believe can cause chest disease in the parents and/or child after birth (Imamura 2010: 178–9). As in reports of *thibamo* among the Tswana (Anderson and Staugård 1986), the Glui/Gllana say that if a baby is born facing the ground, it might mean it has *chebama*, which is curious because Glui/Gllana women usually deliver their babies in a squatting position at home. In addition, people sometimes gave an *ex post* diagnosis of *chebama* to children born at the clinic, where few witnesses see the actual birth. People around the baby (for example, the family and neighbours) also debated whether the parents had lived an inappropriate life, such as engaging in extramarital sexual intercourse. So, although Tswana customary expressions

of breech birth are also prevalent among the Gǀui/Gǁana people, they actually diagnose *chebama* by considering other factors as well. These will be discussed below.

One *chebama* ritual proceeded as follows (interviews and field observations). After a diagnosis of *chebama*, the parents asked the therapist to perform the necessary treatment (in the local expression, 'do *chebama*' or 'do *chebama* treatment'). The therapist collected several medicinal plants, including *nǂ̃́ú kõĩ* (*Heliotropium ciliatum*), *!áríbè* (*Otoputera burchellii*), *gǀárì ǐí* (*Hermbstaedtia linearis*), and *g!òó ǀòà* (*Cassia biensis*), and visited the family's hut with his wife/assistant. Inside the hut, the assistant made small incisions in the mother's thighs and belly with a razor blade to collect a few drops of blood. She also collected the baby's urine and made similar small incisions in the father's legs and belly to collect his blood. She then made a hole, approximately knee height, in the back wall of the hut in which the mother and baby resided. The therapist mixed the blood and urine with tinned beans – used as a substitute for *nǂàn̄-ǂé* (*Bauhinia petersiana* Bolle sub sp. *serpae*) – and the ashes of medicinal plants. From outside the hut, the father placed his legs through the hole the assistant had made; and from inside the hut the mother did the same so that her legs came into contact with his, and the medicine was rubbed into the incisions on their thighs and belly. The father then removed his legs from the hole and entered the hut. Subsequently, the father, mother, and their kin consumed the medicine. The baby would regularly be given similar medicine, made only of tinned beans and the ashes of medicinal plants, until able to sit unassisted (Takada 2017).

As we understand it, the *chebama* ritual contains several body metaphors. The hut and hole represent the womb and vulva respectively. The father symbolizes the penis, while the mother and baby together represent the foetus. Furthermore, placement of the father's legs in the hole signifies sexual intercourse (people believe that the semen supplies nutrition to the foetus). Consumption of the medicine is analogous to providing purified semen or nutrition to the foetus and beginning to sit unaided is analogous to the separation of the unity of mother and child and the 'social birth' of the infant as a separate individual.

Imamura (2010) argued that Gǀui/Gǁana rituals reflect their cosmology: all living things are filled with, and linked by, fluids (the blood, urine, sweat, and semen) that are the source of energy. If inappropriate social relationships contaminate these fluids, they need to be purified through ritual action. The importance of an appropriate flow of human fluids (one that keeps them moving smoothly) is also emphasized among other groups of San (Low 2008).

A number of demographic and socioeconomic factors influenced the frequency of *chebama* practices, with individuals who seemed well-adapted to the

settled life tending to receive them more frequently. For example, families of children born with *chebama* tended to have more goats, donkeys, horses, and bigger huts with fences, all of which are indicative of a settled life. Families of children born without *chebama*, by contrast, tended to have more hunting dogs and smaller huts without fences, thus suggesting a foraging lifestyle. Moreover, the *chebama* was practised more frequently in the densely populated parts of the settlement (Takada 2017).

These findings suggest that *chebama* is associated with how Gǀui/Gǁana people imagine inappropriate social relationships – for example, extramarital sex spreads STDs, and the disproportionate appropriation of valuable resources is an affront to their egalitarian ethics. Hence, the prevalence of *chebama* should be understood not as a sign of increasing instances of anomalous childbirth but as a marker of broader discord, of blocked flows in the Gǀui/Gǁana people's social relationships in the face of drastic institutional and environmental changes in the form of government-led residential plot allocations, the promotion of livestock herding, and a decline in hunting and gathering activities.

3   Emergence of 'Funeral Culture'

The spread of *chebama* characterized the beginning of the Gǀui/Gǁana life cycle (childbirth) in Kx'oensakene. Relocation, sedentarization, and the Kalahari drought also affected the end of the Gǀui/Gǁana life cycle. Traditionally, death had been acknowledged by a simple burial (Tanaka 1980). If the family had insufficient time to dig a grave, they buried the corpse in the burrow of a large animal (for example an aardvark). In all cases, the bereaved used a wooden plate or digging stick to mark the gravesite. They also placed acacia tree branches on the grave to discourage carnivores from digging up and eating the corpse. Within a few weeks of the burial, the group would break down the camp and moved to a different location.

Contemporary Gǀui/Gǁana funerals in Kx'oensakene largely resemble the Christian-style functions adopted by the Tswana (Amanze 2002). Interviews and observations show that there were six churches in Kx'oensakene in 2016, but that church attendance is low: only about 50 of approximately 1500 residents actually belong to a church and most of them are economically affluent. However, this small group of members plays a leading role in funerals, in which many people, not just members of the church, participate.

When a person dies in Kx'oensakene, the administrative office transports the corpse to a mortuary in a nearby town. The next day, the bereaved gather at the hut where the funeral will take place. A vigil, locally known as a 'memorial

service', is held on a weekday evening, led by a few core members of the church. The deceased's relatives and friends attend the service to share endearing memories and sing popular hymns.

The day before the funeral, the deceased's relatives and friends gather in the graveyard to discuss where to locate the grave. Since kinship considerations and the spacing of the plots between the deceased have to be taken into account, the configuration of tombs in the graveyard needs to reflect these social relationships.

Funerals usually start on Friday evening and last until noon on Saturday, and people belonging to different churches also often participate in them. The bereaved bring the coffin to the hut. The prices of coffins vary from free to 9000 pula (approximately $780). The relatives and friends of the deceased express their condolences and spend the entire night singing popular hymns around a fire and then, at dawn, the coffin's window is opened to enable the mourners to view the deceased's face (Sugiyama 2017).

Afterwards, everybody proceeds to the graveyard on the outskirts of the residential area. As of 2016, about half the graveyard had been filled with approximately 250 graves. As with the coffins, several different types of tombs are available for purchase in town at different prices, from where the bereaved transport them to the graveyard in Kx'oensakene. Hence, as Golomski (2018) pointed out about funerals in Swaziland, the coffins and tombs are testaments to "how the deceased was well cared for in life" (Golomski 2018: 129) by the bereaved. With increased resources available to the bereaved, this 'funeral culture' made up of the new funereal forms and practices that emerged alongside other drastic social changes such as the prevalence of HIV/AIDS (Golomski 2018), has become increasingly popular in Kx'oensakene.

After the interment, the funeral participants return to the hut and the bereaved are introduced to the guests. Porridge and meat are served and, when they have finished their meal, the participants leave the hut one by one. After the funeral, the deceased's close family members often move to a new residential plot within Kx'oensakene. They reported various reasons for moving, such as to live with relatives who could help them in their daily lives; to cultivate an agricultural field in a different place; or, for widows, to avoid sexual temptations from neighbouring men (Sugiyama 2017). The change of residential plot is a signal to the survivors and people around them to reconfigure their social relationships.

Gǀui/Gǁana funerals are usually much less formal than the Tswana ones that inspire them. Long before the funeral the Tswana discuss the roles of the participants in minute detail. For example, who will read the condolences, describe their kinship relationships with the deceased, or narrate the history of care

that the deceased received? The Gǀui/Gǁana casually choose a few relatives or friends available at the time of the funeral to express their condolences. Family members hand copy the texts of a Tswana funeral, but replace the names and titles (for example the kinship relationships) with those who will give the condolences. However, because they often reuse titles already written in the programme, the actual relationships with the deceased do not necessarily match. People are largely indifferent to the formality and correctness of the relationships described in the programme. In addition, if a person listed in the programme does not appear at the funeral, another will fill in for them.

Tswana people believe that "burial defines the location of a person's permanent home (*legae*), distinct from all other places where he or she has lived" (Klaits 2010: 70). Given that Tswana people usually change their residential village several times in their lives, choosing a graveyard in a particular village means deciding on the deceased's permanent home in the afterlife. The Gǀui/Gǁana, by contrast, more pragmatically choose the burial site that best reflects the context of the deceased's actual social relationships from the places available in the graveyard in Kx'oensakene. These differences suggest that, although the Gǀui/Gǁana adopted the Christian-style funeral of the Tswana, they modified it, arousing their own "artful creation of understandings of virtue and the good" (Werbner 2016: 82). By developing their own funeral culture, the Gǀui/Gǁana attempt to reconstruct the social meaning of each death.

4   Re-Establishing the Lifeworld through Rituals

As mentioned, the Gǀui/Gǁana assume that all living things are linked by fluids that provide a source of energy. From this perspective, an individual's body is not a closed system. Rather, it is sustained by a sense of the "mutuality of being" among relatives who "participate intrinsically in each other's existence" (Sahlins 2013: iv). Accordingly, rituals are applied across these interdependent social bodies. People in intimate relationships (for example, baby and parents, deceased and bereaved, and their kin) use rituals to mend relationships in crisis. Moreover, as we interpret it, the human body and its fluids is analogous to the entire settlement along with the flow of people/things within it. In this context, rituals are autogenerative (Devisch 1993: 39) phenomena. They are analogical metaphors that operate as situated corporeal devices rather than semantically independent textual ones. Thus, they are capable of restoring the positional value of those residents considered to have blocked or disconnected the normative flow of people/things that engender the life force.

Thus, the diagnosis of *chebama* does not necessarily require an anomalous childbirth. Rather, it results from the blocked relationships between the

people around the baby. People tend to attribute the inappropriate behaviour of those who appear to be well-adapted to a settled life as the cause of *chebama* symptoms. By engaging in the *chebama* ritual, they seek to remedy moral dysfunction pertaining to bodily and social relationships. Likewise, economically affluent people adopt Christian-style funerals before the practice gradually extends to the wider community in Kx'oensakene. In this process, funerals provide them with opportunities to reconfigure their social relationships.

Moreover, in the actual course of interactions, the Gǀui/Gǁana flexibly modify these rituals in association with their own cosmology. For example, although customary expressions of anomalous childbirth are largely shared among the Gǀui/Gǁana, Kgalagadi, and Tswana people, the use of human fluids, like blood and urine, is a distinctive feature of Gǀui/Gǁana rituals (Imamura 2010). The Kgalagadi and Tswana, by contrast, do not usually use human fluids to cure diseases because they associate them with witchcraft, which is legally prohibited and considered dangerous (Amanze 2002). While contemporary Tswana cosmology is inseparable from Christianity (Klaits 2010), the Gǀui/Gǁana church members mostly use the churches in Kx'oensakene as meeting places. Most Gǀui/Gǁana residents do not believe in an afterlife, so attendance at a funeral was motivated largely by what Werbner (2018: 319) called "moral feelings of inclusive relatedness" rather than religious belief.

The pattern of such modifications is associated with their distinctive experiences of past and future. Takada (2007) argued that while the Gǀui/Gǁana engaged in hunting, they carefully examined the traces of animals (for example, spoor, faeces, and hair) left in the environment and employed their various senses (for example, sight, hearing, smell, and touch) and rich imagination to re-enact the events that had occurred there. Moreover, their vast hunting experiences were elaborated as cultural frames of reference (for example, the habitat and habitus of particular species of animals), which were effectively evoked while tracking prey sneaking around in the environment. Subsequently, they perceived what the future should be in the temporal horizon of the landscape and tried to deploy their expectations in the course of tracking. Nuanced gestural and verbal communication among the participants in hunting activities enhances these experiences of past and future and establishes their intersubjective lived time.

Such experiences of Gǀui/Gǁana lived time are also reflected in their practices of the *chebama* rituals and funerals. For example, while determining if a baby has been born with *chebama*, the people around the infant try to perceive whether events or actions in the parents' past might have resulted in the baby's illness. Then, by symbolically re-enacting the baby's birth, the parents, baby, and their close relatives collaboratively attempt to regain the normal flow of their vital fluids as meaningful social endowments, which re-establishes the

orderliness of their lives. At funerals, relatives and friends recount stories from the life of the deceased, even mimicking the latter's speech and mannerisms as they dramatize each anecdote and reconsider the deceased's social relationships. Consequently, the configuration of tombs is a representation of the social relationships among the deceased. Moreover, after the funeral, the bereaved often change their place of residence to reconfigure the appropriate social distances and relationships among the remaining individuals.

The collaborative nature of these rituals strengthened their function as tools for conviviality (Illich 1973; Nyamnjoh 2015) that enabled them to unblock the flow of their vital fluids, and hence of social relationships. Illich (1973) envisioned a convivial society that would expand the range of human abilities, management, and initiative, in contrast to societies that alienate humans through modernization. Developing Illich's argument, Nyamnjoh (2015: 263) claimed that conviviality is nurtured by "recognition and provision for the fact or reality of being incomplete". That is to say, things, words, deeds, and beings are always incomplete, not because of inherent deficiencies but because of inherent potential. Moreover, "one's well-being is affected by particular places and by the persons with whom one associates there" (Klaits 2010: 119). Modernization and resettlement policies disturbed the normal flow of people/things among the Gǀui/Gǁana. Nevertheless, rituals worked as tools for conviviality that facilitated "negotiation between the incompleteness of the past and the present in the interest of a non-linear future" (Nyamnjoh 2015: 15). They thereby constituted the 'architectonic', which is the method for rebuilding "the feelings and meanings that a given space may evoke" (Fernandez 1982: 408) to re-establish their lifeworld, which is rooted in their interdependent self, in the settlement named 'looking for a life' (Kx'oensakene).

Acknowledgements

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Visitations

Martha Ndakalako

I keep coming here to you, and I don't know why. I have long-since stopped caring about the 'how', though.

∴

When I pass through the open corrugated metal-and-wood gate, I hear the sounds of women in exuberant conversation. But you are alone in the yard, as you always are when I arrive. I make my way over and sit, elbows-on-knees, on the bricks lining the planted section. Closing my eyes, I turn my face up and let the sun darken me with its welcome heat. I listen as you sing in time to the rhythms of your labours and follow the now-familiar strains of your voice around the garden. As I hum along – sporadically, tunelessly – I wish you could hear me. But it's enough that I am here, at home, and can rest for the moment.

It is much colder where I am from.

•••

Zora had had to learn to accept some things when she moved here, and when she did, she was happier. A taxi-driver was going to fill his vehicle with passengers before leaving the mall, so she learned to wait. And when a friend said they'd be there 'now-now' it still meant they would get there when they got there. It was the coming that was important. This was her mother's country – hers, too, a long time ago. She had travelled her life in a large, unexpected circle. This life was her Aunt Kleo's dream, not hers. Still, she had come to love this hamlet on the outskirts of Ongwediva's sprawl. Living with other women, raising children, working at the clinic.

Sometimes it became difficult for her, having lived so long with her solitude, choosing when she would allow visitors, deciding when she would accompany others. Here, it frequently felt like these choices were made for her, and on especially busy days, it became too much. On these days when, along with the sing-song sounds of children's lessons, the varied voices of women from outside would fill the compound as they congregated in the shady olupale, sipping tea, Zora would excuse herself and go and work in the garden. It had

begun as a coping mechanism and had turned into a hobby. But they let her have this space – the garden and chickens had become *her* garden and *her* chickens. They accepted her. They indulged her small rudenesses, tut-tutting at corrupting American influences, and continued their meetings without her. She would return to them when she was ready.

The weekly afternoon gatherings were popular in their neighbourhood. They were Cousin Lina's idea: an hour when the women discussed the works of their literary 'foremothers' – they went on for much longer than an hour! They frequently returned to old favourites: Meme Neshani's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and Meme Martha's 'The Solitaires'. The women shared their day-to-day, raised the past, debated the future and loudly, laughingly enjoyed their afternoons together.

Theirs was not the only house of women. And while women-run homes were nothing new, these had become a movement across the country. Women had grown tired of their sisters' and daughters' continued murders and abuses, their bloodshed testifying to women's unfreedom; their ghosts haunting the Namibian cityscapes. They had committed themselves to living free, living together, living unafraid, educating and raising feminist boys and girls in the hopes that one day such an education would be unnecessary. The afternoons of tea were called the Solitaire Hour.

It was the days after her long shift at the clinic that Zora really felt her age, and on such days when she returned to a house full of the sounds of the Solitaire Hour, she would feel … unsettled. Longing for solitude, she would go out into the garden. The late afternoon was hot, but garden-work always unwound her.

Today, she moved slowly, watering and pruning, taking time to admire the growing desert roses she had planted. She raked away the chicken droppings and footprints and formed the sand into easy geometric patterns. She hummed and sang, finding her rhythm, losing herself in ritual.

The Ancestor visited on days like these, when Zora had retreated deeply into the peaceful mundanity of her garden chores. She could have been coming for years, because Zora had only begun to sense her gradually. At first, it had been like an instinct; like a quiet reverberation that tickled at her eardrums. This had grown into what Zora could only think of as a located, vibrating displacement of the air. It was difficult to look at. And although still uncomfortable, Zora found it easier to incline her ear. It was some time before she could discern in this acoustical aura a presence reverberating just beyond sight. Eventually, Zora had been able to detect a shuffling of sand that seemed to follow her as she moved around the compound's garden, the sound growing ever more distinct. Afraid, Zora would retreat into the house, and later, when she had

calmed herself, would cautiously return to the yard and stare senselessly at the footmarks tracing the brick border and disturbing the patterned sand.

When time passed, and nothing untoward happened, Zora decided – half-joking to herself – that if this was a spirit, hers was a benevolent haunting. The aural dissonance only sporadically pulled at her awareness anyway. But the effect grew and gradually, she came to expect it. It had become … familiar.

She finally mentioned it to Lina, embarrassed to even say anything. She was a medical doctor and a pragmatist, after all. Lina had shrugged and said, "greet them. Maybe an ancestor is visiting."

As Zora moved slowly through her gardening, she became aware of the accompanying rustle of movement – the shifting of sand-beneath-feet, the soft humming – quietly reverberating at the edges of her hearing and vision, drawing her mind out of the rhythms of ritual and into her present. As her heart pounded, Zora made a decision, and without letting herself worry about consequences, Zora spoke the words quickly, respectfully, the Oshiwambo clumsy on her tongue: "Wauhala po, Omukwamhunghu." And then, in case her English was more coherent for the ancestors, Zora repeated herself in the language. Hello, Ancestor.

<div align="center">• • •</div>

We miss each other, Ndahafa and I, as we do on particularly busy days, but that's okay. I am looking forward to some alone-time tonight. I let myself into Ndahafa's apartment and head to the bedroom to check on Zora, whom Ndahafa put to bed before leaving. I kiss her sweaty four-year-old forehead – she always sweats so much in her sleep! – and head to the kitchen to put the kettle on. It is late and I have homework. I also need sleep, if I'm going to make it through my shifts tomorrow, but I am too restless to do any focused intellectual work. Or sleep, for that matter. I check the time-difference and it's too late to call home; they will be leaving for work. I sigh, feeling … adrift.

So after I curl up in Ndahafa's bed with my cellphone, I pull up Facebook, and scroll through my favourite storytellers, but none of them eases my restlessness. And right then, I decide to join their ranks, to tell my own story. I can't though, spin into fiction the tales of what is really going on in today's Namibian locales, as they do. My stories will have to be different. I will weave again the past, my past, conjure up its spirits and have them speak in fiction. My tiny coastal town. I want to remember, so I close my eyes to summon the cold windy beach and for a moment, I'm there, with my as-yet unnamed protagonist, sitting on the chilly beach, watching the relentless waves break. I feel the Atlantic coast's sunbaked sands beneath my bare feet and quickly wriggle my toes past the heated layer to the cool, moist earth beneath.

And this, when I am lost in memory, is when I come to you. I am captured, listening to the long-remembered sound of the surf and awaiting the spectre of long-forgotten and yet familiar apparitions to inspire me ... I am disoriented.

I rub my eyes, willing the weariness away, and when I open them, I am suddenly beneath a sun so hot that I feel dizzy. The sand's heat stings my naked feet. Shading my eyes, I quickly look around and find that behind me is a wide, lush Eembe tree shading a high, corrugated iron gate ... this is familiar. I stumble towards the tree, and as I step into its shade, the temperature change is a stark, palpable relief. I know this place, that compound. This tree!

How am I here?

Shoeless, and with no options, I enter the compound.

The gate is ajar, and when I slip through, the nostalgia is so sharp I gasp. The long driveway, the sprawling structure, the olupale, and the garden of desert roses disappearing around the side of the house – my mother's house.

But how?

The patio's cool shade beckons and through the semi-opening I hear people inside, and so once I feel the sharp tears loosen their hold on my throat, I announce myself: "Meumbo!" No response. I walk to the entrance, and peering inside at the women lounging on the old sectional and chairs, sipping their tea, I say "kokoo," rapping my knuckles against the door jamb. The conversation hushes for an instant, but then continues. I stand uncertainly at the door before deciding to enter. I pick my way past the women into the main house, down the hall, hoping for my mother's presence in her bedroom in the back.

Her furniture is gone. And it is as I stand here – perplexed and struggling to find the meaning in this – that I hear you for the first time.

I go to the open window, hoping that the singing I hear is my mother's, but knowing that it is not. This voice is unfamiliar. But as I watch the old woman working in the garden, I realize I know her. The recollection comes slowly, and when it does, I am surprised that it is you, Meme Nangula. I had met you twice before, when you came to visit Zora and Ndahafa. I will meet you a few more times over the years, before you pass on. But why are you here now, working with slow familiarity in my mother's garden?

This will be the only time I ever enter the house. I will come to accept that this is not my mother's house, not anymore. And I understand that I come here for you.

The bedroom door behind me slams shut, abruptly and loudly. I startle, spinning in that direction, to find that I am in Ndahafa's kitchen, and Zora is looking up at me. "Hi Aunty," she says in her sing-song, too-loud four-year-old voice. "Hi Zora," I answer, realizing that it is morning. The disturbing, loud banging continues, and I finally recognize it. I peek through the kitchen blinds that give me a view of the apartments across the parking lot.

The usual team of men in dark clothing, terse acronym stretched across the backs of their uniforms. I close the blinds, turn back to the little girl still watching me, and hope the people in the apartment are not home.

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It is the end of one of those fall days that I have come to love, when the air is so crisp that the bright, brittle leaves whip by on a liquid breeze you can almost see. I am leaving the sprawling campus, and as I scroll through my texts I find Ndahafa's message, begging me to come up to her floor in post-surgery recovery for a few minutes before beginning my shift in the hospital flower shop downstairs. Ndahafa's night classes had paid off. She has been a nurse for years now; I am still a student. But at least the flower shop pays well.

The message is about Zora, as usual. These messages had become more frequent after Zora turned thirteen, old enough that I didn't need to watch her anymore. And then I did not see either of them nearly as much, so regularly, I find myself meeting Ndahafa in the break room on the sixteenth floor and WhatsApping Zora.

But tonight, we miss each other. Ndahafa works through her break and decides instead to stop by my apartment on her way home later that night.

I am immersed in a Facebook narrative of my own weaving, when my front door opens, and I almost drop the laptop perched on my knees. I had long since joined the Namibian storytellers. It was a way for me to bring home here, and to take myself there. I had not forgotten the magic of that cold beach, that first time I visited you; I have frequently written about ghostly encounters, but I can never bring myself to write about you.

Ndahafa closes the front door, and I sit up. I hadn't even heard her key in the lock.

"So what happened?" I ask as Ndahafa sets her purse down.

"That child of yours!" Ndahafa begins, waking her agitation. Zora is always my child when she misbehaves. "Do you know what she said to me? I told her I think we should move back home, and she refused. Just refused!"

Ndahafa's anxious energy annoys and then tires me. She forgets how easily she can talk of leaving when I can't. I watch her march circles around my tiny living room, recounting the argument she'd had with her headstrong daughter, and for a moment, I see you. Ndahafa is a younger version of you – just as tall and soft-eyed, except for her smooth dark skin.

I am not listening to Ndahafa anymore, drawn in recollection to you; and then I find myself at the gate, the ebullient voices of women drifting towards me. It is immediately too hot for my heavy sweater, so I take it off as I make my

way around the house, eager for the quiet sounds of you at work. Finding you, I perch on a brick and, warmed by the sun, I let my mind drift, stirring only to shift closer to you as you move the length of the garden.

Gradually I become aware that I am not hearing you anymore and I open my eyes. You are across the courtyard, standing in strange posture. Bodily you are facing me, but your head is turned away.

You mumble something I don't catch, and then hastily add: "Hello, Ancestor."

I'm so surprised that I fall off the brick border and land bottom-first in an undignified heap in the sand. You have never spoken to me before. Never even registered my presence.

You gasp and step back, startled, and I stumble to my feet, composing myself and brushing sand from my pyjama shorts.

Unsure what to say, I allow the ritual of greeting to take me. "Hello, Meme Nangula," I reply, feeling the awkwardness of the greeting, but following your lead. To cover my discomfort I add, "You can see me." It is all I can think of to say.

You are quiet and I start to think you won't reply, but then you do.

"Well, sort of. I can hear you. It's strange."

I am not sure what to make of this, and at my silence you add, "But I have had time to get used to you, Ancestor."

I am surprised again. I had become accustomed to coming here, comfortably invisible so that it never occurred to me that you were growing aware of me. That you could.

Wondering at your use of "ancestor", I decide it must be because of your sight, otherwise you would recognize me; so, I introduce myself.

"Meme Nangula," I say formally, as someone my age would address an elder. "You may not remember me, but we've met before. I'm a friend of your daughter, Ndahafa."

I expect you to ask for my name, but instead you turn your head to me quickly and then away, awkwardly inclining your ear. "Nangula was my grandmother, Ancestor," you say. "I am Zora. You say you … *know* my mother?"

"Kleo, are you even listening? You need to talk to your child."

I am disoriented. You are Zora? You! This old woman here with me! My mind struggles to assimilate this information, to make sense of it, but now I am on the couch, and Ndahafa is glaring down at me.

All these years. I had been wrong. I thought I was with you, when all the while I was visiting Zora.

For a moment I struggle to remember what Ndahafa is upset about. It seems so long ago, but it comes to me.

My answer is thoughtless, distracted, but easy; I have said similar words to her before.

"But Ndahafa, what can I say to her? She's not Namibian. She's American. You brought her here when she was three. How can she love a home she doesn't remember?"

But even as I say the words, I regret them. How can I be sure of your future, Zora, when I had been so wrong about mine? How do I even begin to see how you become the woman I have visited all these years?

Ndahafa is downcast at my response.

"I have to go home. My mother needs me," she says, forlorn. "but how can I leave my child to live here without me."

"Your child won't be a child for much longer," I say consolingly. "She'll visit."

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She, and her unnamed Ancestor, sat in companionable silence. Zora would work in the garden until she gradually became aware of her visitor, at which point she would join her, perching on the bricks as close to the apparition as she could stand to be. The silence was easier. It was a disturbing experience, to hear the visiting woman speak. But sometimes, they would talk haltingly of the compound, its women, and the Solitaire Hour. Zora was hesitant to ask her visitor about her "ancestral" world.

But I am burning with questions. About her life. And Ndahafa's. And mine. But I don't ask. Later, when I am alone I will spend hours revisiting our stilted conversations, mentally reconstructing her turned-away face, painstakingly eking what I can out of its expressions, and of what went said and unsaid. I long to discuss the buffeted route that brings us together now, but we never do.

I have grown accustomed to this compound full of women and children – my mother's house. When we aren't talking, I spend my time there staring at her, and if my rudeness bothers her, she doesn't show it. I keep looking for the little girl I used to watch, or the headstrong young Zora I know now. Sometimes I see Ndahafa, a shadow emerging in the similarities of Zora's movements to her mother's; there in the tiny shifts of her body, she is both. And then she is only herself. But the woman I continue to see most clearly in her weathered features is you, Meme Nangula. She could be you.

I have been talking to you so long that I don't know how to stop. So I tell myself you can hear me. You are, after all, Zora's Ancestor. So maybe we both visit her.

She always greets me "Hello, Ancestor," when she finally grows aware of me, and I have long-since stopped trying to correct her. After all, so much is uncertain.

Instead, I reply formally to her greetings, as you would to an elder, the ritual allowing me a semblance of my unasked questions: "Opo uli, Meme?"

"I'm here, Ancestor," she responds. "And you?"

I smile. "Naame opo ndili."

PART 6

Concluding

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Academic Cooperation in the Humanities and Social Sciences: A Post-COVID Future

Andreas Mehler and Francis B. Nyamnjoh

1 Introduction

Academic cooperation within Africa (between African universities and research centres) on the one hand, and outside the continent on the other, needs to be rethought in the light of past and current experiences and in the interest of greater equity in collaborative research and scholarship. The landscapes of such institutions have changed dramatically over time, and are likely to change further with the imperatives of a post-COVID-19 reconfiguration, which will have implications for knowledge production, distribution and consumption.

In this short contribution, while we cannot trace all trajectories back to the end of the colonial era, it is obvious that some research institutions of the early days of independence have survived the last fifty or so years rather well – places like Makerere, Legon or Dakar come to mind. However, many new universities were created in the meantime, some of them backed by private investors. More importantly, old and new institutions work in a different environment today. Arguably, though connections to colonial metropoles and some viable inter-African ones endure, most probably, given the ever-increasing circles of interconnections and interdependences in a globalized world, Africa's global connections will create additional dynamics in the foreseeable future. Although the languages and cultures of former colonizing powers retain their influences, local practices have long challenged the dominance of colonial models of thinking and, more recently, the repercussions of global power shifts (consider the roles of the USA or, especially in the new millennium, China) are being played out.

Here we wish to suggest some avenues along which academic cooperation might lead in the forthcoming decade. Albeit with a strong focus on the social sciences and humanities, we draw on our combined experiences as scholars of Africa who have researched, taught in institutions and participated in various collaborative initiatives (local, regional and international) that we consider instructive for reimagining the future of academic cooperation on knowledge production in, on and around Africa. Our academic conversations date back to the early 1990s in Yaoundé, when we were first introduced to each other through

the auspices of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, as scholars with a common interest in using research to contribute to the mobilization and strengthening of civil society in Cameroon. Today, we find ourselves involved with the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) at the University of Ghana.[1]

2   The Future of Academic Knowledge Production

Ethical, epistemological and material dilemmas are associated with the ongoing imbalance in knowledge production worldwide, and they particularly haunt area studies (Hoffmann and Mehler 2011). Attempts to change this situation, however, have been witnessed on numerous occasions. For instance, a high proportion of panels at the preceding European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) in Edinburgh in 2019 had a 'decolonial' perspective. However, many contributions lacked a strategic perspective or answers to the question of how to overcome the current distorting practices of Northern theory-building, research agendas and publication outlets, while there are already constructive proposals to decolonize the academy at hand (for example Nyamnjoh 2019, 2020). Many obstacles also exist on the continent itself.

The following challenges persist:

– The dominance of non-African writers on African issues in academic journals is striking and could be a major reason why theories and concepts, questions and proposed solutions seem to come predominantly from outside the continent. Underrepresentation is also an issue on the level of editors or academic boards. Many established journals claim to be trying to be more inclusive, but believe that the problem resides elsewhere: also, few African thinkers are in a position to invest in such – mostly pro bono – roles when they are insufficiently paid by their home institutions.

– Moreover, the global asymmetry in knowledge production frequently makes it impossible for African scholars to read what African colleagues have produced since they are unable to access their work directly. The prevailing asymmetry between the sources of knowledge production has a direct bearing on the nature and practice of both the humanities and the social sciences.

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1   MIASA attracts senior and junior fellows to work on the broad theme of sustainable governance. German partners are the universities of Freiburg and Frankfurt, the German Historical Institute in Paris and the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg. See https://www.ug.edu.gh/mias-africa/.

– Material investment in Africa's research environment is altogether minimal. Research is rarely among the priorities of African governments or private investors. This has led to a continuation or exacerbation of an outside dependence on extra-continental initiatives. While those are frequently benevolent, the risk of perpetuating relations of dominance is obvious.
– While it is fully understandable that many African thinkers want to invest in basic research, it is hardly imaginable that African governments, or other actors, will provide more material input without at least a promise of alternative solutions to pressing societal issues. The gap between academia, policy circles and broader society is not necessarily narrower in Africa than elsewhere in the world.
– Bridging the divide between the widely diverging intellectual traditions that have their origins in anglophone, francophone and other linguistic backgrounds is necessary, but not easy to achieve.
– Closing the gap between a growing cohort of aspiring younger African scholars and the small elite of a global African intelligentsia frequently residing outside the continent is another challenge.
– Female African researchers regularly encounter structural obstacles to their academic advancement. They are usually underrepresented in academic leadership positions, have additional work-life balance challenges when fulfilling 'traditional' female roles and often do not get the same visibility as male colleagues. Being African and being female are intersecting features producing multiple forms of exclusion.

A new challenge has appeared just recently – the COVID-19 pandemic, which has already affected academic cooperation within and between continents. As in any other global crisis of the twenty-first century – take the upsurge of terrorism and counter-terrorism in the context of 9/11, or the global financial crisis from 2007 onwards – we witness a compression of time and space. As the virus expands quickly, so too do competing exercises of sense-making, frantic searches for solutions, or strategies of containment. The public attention may have been elsewhere, but effects are tangible for any form of encounter between scholars. Academic conferences were called off; institutes for advanced studies had to postpone fellowships. As a stop-gap measure, academics have joined the bandwagon of digital alternatives that have usually served as complements of in-person face-to-face interactions. Once again, hardships and risks are unequally distributed among scholars operating in differently equipped institutions. Whether the virus will have a levelling effect – when similar obstacles to academic hyper-mobility hit all quarters in a similar fashion – is far from clear in general and in the realm of academic cooperation in particular; it more likely sheds light again on the privileges of the North.

However, if ever the denomination as 'crisis' should have a meaning, it could also bring positive effects. But it is now that we have to act. In fact, we witness that the coincidence of COVID-19 with the Black Lives Matter discussions in spring 2020 has raised consciousness levels about privileges, open or covert exclusion linked to structural racism not least within universities and the academic world more generally. How could the dismal status quo be overcome? By working on different levels – spirit, governance and technology. Let us only sketch some of the elements on those levels:

Spirit: Solidarity or much better Ubuntu, the comfort of being part of a community that is much larger than one's immediate surroundings should help us to form a much more solid basis of cooperation – within academia and beyond. In particular, we should incite instead of limit (reciprocal) curiosity on aspects of social life that look only at first sight unrelated to big global issues. Furthermore, humility, openness and relatedness are more rewarding than sterile competition.

Governance: Within academic institutions, but also within networks we can observe a higher sensitivity towards only partly binding rules – potentially because the opportunities (to get recruited or to attend meetings) are shrinking. Never before was there such attention paid to the composition of academic boards, speakers at panels, or authors within edited volumes. This might be the right moment to set standards that aim at inclusion and complementarity.

Technology: Virtual gatherings, though critically lacking the intimacy of physical encounters and the productive chats in coffee breaks after a panel session, have lowered the bar of participating in academic exchanges. We see more junior and female participants at academic gatherings; old white men do not dare as much as they did in the past to monopolize the debate in teleconferences. However, IT equipment and signal strength is an issue still haunting scholars operating in and from Africa. This is one front that can and should be tackled quickly.

This complex set of issues was never left fully unaddressed, which means that we have a basis for operation: one such example is the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), which was founded in 1973 to provide for and promote greater equality in knowledge production on and around Africa by ensuring more recognition and presentation for knowledge produced by Africans, and especially from African perspectives. It has achieved significant milestones, but much remains to be done. Other institutions have been created with similar mandates, just as universities have embarked on transformative endeavours towards mitigating these challenges.

It is desirable that good ideas are put into a joint strategic framework and speak to each other. This, again is likely to provoke original new thinking and, ideally, innovative research collaborations.

3   Convivial Scholarship

Combining efforts of like-minded institutions will contribute to cumulative change in academic development.

We recommend research collaboration grounded in a recognition of incompleteness as the normal order of things, and which draws on convivial scholarship (Nyamnjoh 2017). Dimensions of incompleteness include relatedness, openness, enrichment, humility and action. Academic cooperation with a framework of incompleteness is predisposed to and predisposes myriad interconnections, embeddedness and inextricable entanglements. It invites openness and reaching out across borders, to explore alternatives, and to build bridges as a mode of inclusionary existence. Recognizing incompleteness opens the door to connectivity and interdependence, active participation, mutual fulfilment and enrichment. It compels us as researchers and scholars of Africa to broaden our perspectives, embrace the unknown and the unknowable, and be open-ended, open-minded and flexible in our identity claims and disclaimers.

We argue that an approach to research collaboration informed by a recognition of incompleteness as the normal order of being would foreground conviviality in a manner that allows for Africans and Europeans (or any other non-Africans) involved in collaborative research to be more open to possible enrichment with creative, cultural, social and intellectual African potentials derailed or caricatured by the orgy of coercive colonial violence and impulse to monopolize humanity and the world's resources.

In our future collaborative research endeavours pertaining to Africa, it would help to bear in mind the following question. If Africa is part of a nimble-footed world where things and people are permanently in circulation even in confinement, how do we provide for collaborative research that does justice to the reality of constant mobility of people and things African, European and otherwise?

A truly convivial scholarship is one that does not seek a priori to define and confine Africans into particular territories or geographies, particular racial and ethnic categories, particular classes, genders, religions or whatever other identity marker. Convivial scholarship confronts and humbles the challenge of over-prescription and over-standardization. It is critical and evidence based; it challenges problematic labels, especially those that seek unduly to oversimplify the social realities of the people and places it seeks to understand and explain. Convivial scholarship recognizes the deep power of collective imagination and the importance of interconnections and nuanced complexities. It is a scholarship that sees the local in the global and the global

in the local by bringing them into informed conversations, conscious of the hierarchies and power relations at play at both the micro and macro levels of being and becoming. It is a critical scholarship of recognition and reconciliation, one that has no permanent friends, enemies or alliances beyond the rigorous and committed quest for knowledge in its complexity and nuance, and using the results of systematic enquiry to challenge inequalities, foster justice and inspire popular visions, versions and aspirations for the good life. Convivial scholarship does not impose what it means to be human, just as it should not prescribe a single version of the good life in a world peopled by infinite possibilities. Rather, it encourages localized conversations of a truly global nature on competing and complementary processes of social cultivation through practice, performance and experience, without pre-empting or foreclosing particular units of analysis in a world in which the messiness of encounters and relationships frowns on binaries, dichotomies and dualisms. With convivial scholarship, there are no final answers, only permanent questions and questioning.

4   Future Forms of Cooperation

One obvious element of a future agenda is to make scholarly voices from the continent audible on a global scale – and not only on issues pertaining to Africa. In the future it will be essential to highlight vanguard knowledge production by African scholars rooted in innovative thinking, that is confronting 'old' with 'new' ideas. Some dominant theories in the social sciences and the humanities have not fully survived their empirical test in Africa, but indeed die hard and have yet to be replaced by more appropriate theories. Where could such new ideas be developed?

Some leading social scientists see the future in the rear-view mirror, pointing to the merits of revisiting the past for inspiration, with an explicit or assumed nostalgia for what intellectual life was in places like Dar es Salaam in the 1960s, that is a place of intense encounter of some of the brightest thinkers from Africa at that time, all inspired by a pan-Africanist perspective of Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). It is highly debatable whether this could be more than a utopia and also whether the all-male composition of the revered group of thinkers is today still an attractive model to be embraced unquestioningly.

But spaces to think freely from daily pressures are as precious as they always were and a number of initiatives stand out. MIASA is one such initiative that aims at highlighting ideas and innovative approaches by some of the brightest intellectuals of the continent. MIASA wants to help its fellows to develop new and grounded approaches by confronting theoretical thinking with practical

needs, without, however, prescribing any directions. There is a growing need for places of intense exchange between African and non-African thinkers, striving for maximal symmetry.

A humble new initiative is the Africa Centre for Transregional Research at Freiburg University.[2] The particular focus of the centre is to attract African scholars interested in reciprocal research, not necessarily in African studies, but phenomena at first sight situated in Europe (for example migration policies of the European Union, industrial food production or the restitution debate raging in the museum world) are explicable only when taking local actor constellations into account, but with clear relations to the African continent, all along the way from needs perceptions up to political repercussions. The call for transregional research implies African scholars doing research in Europe/on Europeans (and hopefully with Europeans). As Dzodzi Tsikata the immediate past president of the executive committee of CODESRIA, director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana and member of MIASA's executive council has put it: this is about "normalising Africans as scientists and knowers who may come from elsewhere".[3]

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Index