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Un périodique semestriel de Conseil pour le Développement de la Recherche
en Sciences Sociales en Afrique (CODESRIA)
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EDITORIAL

Invitation: Contribution to Special Issue on COVID-19 in Africa

A lot has been written on the COVID-19 pandemic, which, undoubtedly has changed most of our lives in significant ways. It poses enormous challenge, the size and complexity of which is evident in the numbers: millions of lives have been lost as documented in the profoundly remarkable Johns Hopkins University data and trillions of dollars as the IMF, World Bank and other global finance agencies remind us, added to the mountain of global debt. While it is the case that the quality of information about the pandemic varies greatly, the key issues remain and it is imperative that these must be made widely understood as the challenges transcend geography. The 'scramble' for effective solutions has seen a number of vaccination programs as well as safety measures which point to an end to the pandemic, but as vaccine hesitancy across communities worldwide, be it ideological, political or religion-fuelled, persists and variants manifest and spread across the world, the dawn of herd immunity envisioned by scientists and politicians appears somewhat remote. Evidently, more still has to be done to re-orientate the wider population. In particular, research in the social and economic sciences. And in this regard, we at the African Sociological Review would like to seize the opportunity to throw open an invitation for a thorough-going sociology of the pandemic in Africa. We invite scholars on Africa to send to us abstracts of their research or reflection on the pandemic for possible consideration in a planned special issue of the journal on the pandemic in Africa.

As is widely acknowledged, the COVID-19 epidemic has spread rather more slowly and less intensively in rural areas in Africa and the rural areas of Asia and Latin America. As it is, less attention seems to be paid to these realities. To be sure, the dominant thinking has been that it is only a matter of time before dramatic epidemics occur in Africa. Well, this thinking, disseminated globally by international public health networks, is underpinned by predictive mathematical models based largely on data from the epidemics of the Global North. Fergusson and his team at the University of London Imperial College, whose research programme is to develop the statistical and mathematical tools necessary for such increasingly sophisticated models to be rigorously tested and validated against epidemiological, molecular and experimental data, are most celebrated on this. However, observation elsewhere would seem quite different although not necessarily less consequential as it appears.

As a matter of fact, the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic manifest in peculiar ways in each context. In the early stages of the epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, the virus first affected the urban elites with international connections. Nigeria and South Africa are prime examples. It then slowly found its way to other sections of the society. The control measure of lockdown, though partial in many cases in the continent, has collateral effects

mostly felt by the urban poor, especially those earning their daily living in the informal urban economy. Again, Nigeria and South Africa present us with striking evidence. And as a matter of fact, governments in Africa barely have the budgetary space to grant the sort of generous benefit packages that are the order of the day in the industrialised North to counter the socioeconomic consequences; and, international agencies now seem thinly spread, as the pandemic has been concurrent in countries that bankroll these agencies with the UK government taking the drastic step of cutting its annual international aid budget.

COVID-19 continues to play out differently in different contexts and many variables combine to result in what unfolds and the diverse ways it affects communities. As it is, it reaches the different geographical areas of a country at different moments and with different intensities. To a degree, there seems to be what can be characterised as a local COVID-19 epidemic shaped by local perceptions and the resultant reactions in the different sections of the society, affecting different communities in variable ways and generating fear, stress and anxiety. Widely acknowledged factors driving the epidemic include climate, population structure, social practices, pre-existing immunity and of course, the North-South global economic divide triggering varied responses.

We need research papers that focus on all the above. As a starter, we publish here Jacquineau Azetsop and Ghislean Abega's paper, 'COVID-19 Crise de Souveraineté et Persistance de la Colonialité Politico-économique en Afrique Noire.' They argue that "the covid-19 crisis has a revealing and "de-colonial" effect. It reveals on the one hand the fragility of African economies in the face of exogenous shocks and the limits of neoliberal policies incapable of providing effective solutions to global challenges and on the other hand, the affirmation of the unrecognized effectiveness of endogenous knowledge and the resurgence of pan-Africanist and sovereigntist discourses". We hope the paper will raise questions to be engaged and, related, in some ways to that, is Gertjan van Stam's paper, 'Community, Person, Conglomerate, and Individual', on the concept of community, especially given that communities are affected by COVID-19 differently generating different responses as we noted above. Such responses are both individual and household actions which people and families take when disease threatens and sickness occurs, and collectively organised strategies which are voluntary or mandated measures deployed by organised communities and public authorities in response to an epidemic. We saw this during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. So, what are the responses in the different communities in different African countries? This is one of many questions requiring sociological explication. We welcome your abstracts.

Olajide Oloyede

Editor-in-Chief

African Sociological Review

ÉDITORIAL

Invitation : Contribution au numéro spécial sur la COVID-19 en Afrique

Beaucoup de choses ont été écrites sur la pandémie de COVID-19, qui a, sans aucun doute changé la plupart de nos vies de manière significative. Cela pose un énorme défi, dont l'ampleur et la complexité sont évidentes dans les chiffres : des millions de vies ont été perdues, comme le montrent les données profondément remarquables de l'Université Johns Hopkins et des milliers de milliards de dollars comme nous le rappellent le FMI, la Banque mondiale et d'autres agences financières mondiales, ajouter à cela la montagne de la dette mondiale. Bien qu'il soit vrai que la qualité des informations sur la pandémie varie considérablement, les problèmes clés demeurent et il est impératif qu'ils soient largement compris car les défis transcendent la géographie. La « ruée » vers des solutions efficaces a vu un certain nombre de programmes de vaccination ainsi que des mesures de sécurité qui indiquent la fin de la pandémie, mais comme l'hésitation vaccinale dans les communautés du monde entier, qu'elle soit idéologique, politique ou religieuse, persiste et des variantes se manifestent, et répandue à travers le monde, l'aube de l'immunité collective envisagée par les scientifiques et les politiciens semble quelque peu lointaine. De toute évidence, il reste encore beaucoup à faire pour réorienter l'ensemble de la population, et ce, en particulier, la recherche en sciences sociales et économiques. Et, à cet égard, nous, à la Revue Sociologique Africaine, voudrions saisir l'occasion pour lancer une invitation à une sociologie approfondie de la pandémie en Afrique. Nous invitons les universitaires sur l'Afrique à nous envoyer des résumés de leurs recherches ou réflexions sur la pandémie pour une éventuelle prise en compte dans un numéro spécial prévu de la revue sur la pandémie en Afrique.

Comme il est largement reconnu, l'épidémie de COVID-19 s'est propagée plutôt plus lentement et de manière moins intensive dans les zones rurales d'Afrique et les zones rurales d'Asie et d'Amérique latine. En l'état actuel des choses, moins d'attention semble être accordée à ces réalités. Certes, la pensée dominante a été que ce n'est qu'une question de temps avant que des épidémies dramatiques ne se produisent en Afrique. Eh bien, cette réflexion, diffusée à l'échelle mondiale par le *World Health Organization* de santé publique, est étayée par des modèles mathématiques prédictifs basés en grande partie sur les données des épidémies du globe Nord. Fergusson et son équipe de l'Imperial College de l'Université de Londres, dont le programme de recherche consiste à développer les outils statistiques et mathématiques nécessaires pour que ces modèles de plus en plus sophistiqués soient rigoureusement testés et validés par rapport aux données épidémiologiques, moléculaires et expérimentales, sont les plus célèbres à ce sujet. Cependant, ailleurs, l'observation semblerait tout à fait différente mais pas nécessairement moins conséquente qu'il n'y paraît.

En fait, les effets de l'épidémie de COVID-19 se manifestent de manière particulière dans chaque contexte. Aux premiers stades de l'épidémie en Afrique subsaharienne, le virus a d'abord touché les élites urbaines ayant des relations internationales. Le Nigeria et l'Afrique du Sud en sont de parfaits exemples. Il a ensuite lentement trouvé son chemin vers d'autres sections de la société. La mesure de contrôle du confinement, bien que partielle dans de nombreux cas sur le continent, a des effets collatéraux principalement ressentis par les pauvres des villes, en particulier ceux qui gagnent leur vie quotidienne dans l'économie urbaine informelle. Encore une fois, le Nigeria et l'Afrique du Sud nous présentent des preuves frappantes. Et, en fait, les gouvernements en Afrique ont à peine l'espace budgétaire pour accorder le genre de paquets d'avantages généreux qui sont à l'ordre du jour dans le Nord industrialisé pour contrer les conséquences socio-économiques ; et, les agences internationales semblent désormais peu répandues, car la pandémie a été concomitante dans les pays qui financent ces agences, le gouvernement britannique prenant la mesure drastique de réduire son budget annuel d'aide internationale.

COVID-19 continue de se dérouler différemment dans différents contextes et de nombreuses variables se combinent pour donner lieu à ce qui se déroule, et, de diverses manières, dont il affecte les communautés. En l'état actuel des choses, il atteint les différentes zones géographiques d'un pays à des moments différents et avec des intensités différentes. Dans une certaine mesure, il semble y avoir ce qui peut être caractérisé comme une épidémie locale de COVID-19 façonnée par les perceptions locales et les réactions qui en résultent dans les différentes sections de la société, affectant différentes communautés de manière variable et générant peur, stress et anxiété. Les facteurs largement reconnus à l'origine de l'épidémie comprennent le climat, la structure de la population, les pratiques sociales, l'immunité préexistante et, bien sûr, la fracture économique mondiale Nord-Sud déclenchant des réponses variées.

Nous avons besoin de documents de recherche qui se concentrent sur tout ce qui précède. Pour commencer, nous publions ici l'article de Jacqueline Azetsop et Ghislean Abega, 'COVID-19 Crise de Souveraineté et Persistance de la Colonialité Politico-économique en Afrique Noire', effet «colonial». Cet article révèle d'une part la fragilité des économies africaines face aux chocs exogènes et les limites des politiques néolibérales incapables d'apporter des réponses efficaces aux défis mondiaux et d'autre part, l'affirmation de l'efficacité méconnue des savoirs endogènes et la résurgence des discours panafricaniste et souverainiste ». Nous espérons que l'article soulèvera des questions pour s'engager et, lié, d'une certaine manière, à l'article de Gertjan van Stam, « Communauté, personne, conglomérat et individu », sur le concept de communauté, d'autant plus que les communautés sont affectées par COVID-19 générant différemment des réponses différentes comme nous l'avons noté ci-dessus. Ces réponses sont à la fois des actions individuelles et familiales que les personnes et les familles prennent lorsque la maladie menace et survient, et des stratégies organisées collectivement qui sont des mesures

volontaires ou obligatoires déployées par les communautés organisées et les autorités publiques en réponse à une épidémie. Nous l'avons vu lors de l'épidémie d'Ebola en Afrique de l'Ouest. Alors, quelles sont les réponses des différentes communautés dans les différents pays africains ? C'est l'une de nombreuses questions qui nécessitent une explication sociologique. Nous accueillons vos résumés.

Olajide Oloyede

Éditeur en chef

Revue Sociologique Africaine

Covid-19, Pathogénicité des Logiques Nécropolitiques et Persistance de la Colonialité Économique en Afrique Sub-Saharienne

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Résumé

Plus d'un an après l'apparition de la covid-19, l'Afrique est le continent le moins affecté par cette crise pour plusieurs raisons parmi lesquelles l'efficacité de sa pharmacopée et son système de santé formé au gré de l'expérience à la gestion des épidémies de tout genre. La pandémie actuelle est moins une crise sanitaire qu'une crise économique et financière qui laisse entrevoir la colonialité politico-économique sous laquelle ploie le continent africain. La crise de la covid-19 a un effet révélateur et décolonial. Elle révèle d'une part la fragilité des économies africaines face aux chocs exogènes et les limites des politiques néolibérales incapables de fournir des solutions adéquates devant des problèmes sociaux d'envergure mondiale et d'autre part, l'affirmation de l'efficacité non-reconnue des savoirs endogènes et la résurgence des discours panafricanistes et souverainistes. Pour les pays africains, cette crise pourrait servir de ressort pour se réinventer afin d'envisager leur émancipation politico-économique à partir des forces endogènes et de la mutualisation, au niveau régional et continental, de ces mêmes forces. La valorisation des ressources locales, longtemps négligées et méprisées, est une condition importante pour ré-initier la reconquête de la souveraineté politico-économique et symbolique des pays africains.

Mots clés : COVID-19, Economie Africaine, Savoirs endogènes, Décolonisation, Souveraineté symbolique

Abstract

More than a year after the appearance of covid-19, Africa is the continent least affected by this crisis for many reasons including the effectiveness of its pharmacopoeia and its health system trained, by experience, to manage epidemics of all kinds. The current pandemic is less a health crisis than an economic and financial crisis that reveals the politico-economic coloniality

under which the African continent is bending. The covid-19 crisis has a revealing and “de-colonial” effect. It reveals on the one hand the fragility of African economies in the face of exogenous shocks and the limits of neoliberal policies incapable of providing effective solutions to global challenges and on the other hand, the affirmation of the unrecognized effectiveness of endogenous knowledge and the resurgence of pan-Africanist and sovereigntist discourses. For African countries, this crisis could serve as a springboard to reinvent themselves and reclaim their politico-economic emancipation based on endogenous forces and the pooling, at regional and continental level, of these same forces. The development of local resources, long neglected and despised, is an important condition for re-initiating the re-conquest of the political-economic and symbolic sovereignty of African countries.

Key words: COVID-19, African Economy, Endogenous knowledge, Decolonisation, Symbolic sovereignty

“epidemics are moments of truth [...] they invent nothing but it uncovers” (Fassin 2007, 32).

Introduction

La pandémie actuelle de coronavirus dans les pays développés est plus qu’une crise médicale, car elle laisse entrevoir une crise politique et idéologique. Cette crise est profondément enracinée dans l’attitude néolibérale de négation de l’importance de la santé publique et du bien public, ainsi que du refus d’allouer des fonds aux institutions sociales qui devraient en prendre soin. Devant la faillite non-récusable de la raison néolibérale (Chomsky 2020), la fragilité économique des pays africains face aux chocs exogènes (à l’instar de la pandémie actuelle) et les conséquences désastreuses de la pandémie à Covid-19 dans les pays développés, les réactions qui peuplent çà et là l’espace psychosocial et symbolique africain mettent en évidence un autre mode de penser et le retour des discours émancipatoires et souverainistes. Jamais dans l’histoire récente de l’humanité ne sont apparues, avec une acuité aussi prononcée, les limites des pays industrialisés. La pandémie et la fragilité, non seulement, des systèmes de santé, mais aussi des économies, ont montré que le modèle néolibéral de gestion de la société suivant les logiques du business a échoué. En effet, les pays ultracapitalistes ont montré leur incapacité à affronter une crise sanitaire d’envergure globale en termes de business (Chomsky 2020). Dans le même sillage, plusieurs intellectuels de renommée internationale se sont levés pour souligner que la pandémie à covid-19 aurait initié, d’une manière ou d’une autre, le processus qui conduirait à la fin du néolibéralisme (Stiglitz 2019; Saad-Filho 2020; Chomsky 2020). Après quatre décennies de néolibéralisme, la pandémie a frappé des États épuisés par la dictature du marché. À cause de la recherche de rentabilité à court terme, le néolibéralisme a favorisé la désindustrialisation par la

mondialisation de la production et construit des structures financières fragiles. Cette désintégration de l'économie mondiale a rendu les économies néolibérales les plus riches incapables de produire suffisamment de masques faciaux et d'équipements de protection individuelle pour leur personnel de santé. Ces insuffisances n'ont pas seulement été causées par l'incapacité à produire due à l'évolution des technologies ou à la politique commerciale de la Chine, mais aussi par des politiques économiques délibérément choisies (Saad-Filho 2020). L'érosion des services publics et des systèmes de protection sociale provoquée par des décennies d'attaques néolibérales a rendu les sociétés plus vulnérables à un tel virus, car les moyens nécessaires pour faire preuve de solidarité et de soins fonctionnent mal, sont sous-financés ou n'existent tout simplement pas (Salgado 2020). L'on a l'impression qu'un modèle de société construit autour des principes néolibéraux est en crise. De nouvelles alternatives et une nouvelle géographie de l'intervention sanitaire à l'échelle globale se met en place. Des pays comme Taiwan et la Corée du Sud ont réussi admirablement à contenir la première vague de la pandémie (Kern 2020); le Vietnam a envoyé, par l'entremise de ses ambassades respectives, plus de 550 000 masques à cinq pays de l'Union Européenne à savoir : la France, l'Allemagne, l'Italie, l'Espagne et la Grande-Bretagne (Reuters 2020); Cuba a apporté de l'aide médicale à une quarantaine de pays dont certains de l'Europe (Greave 2020) et les pays africains ont recouru aux solutions endogènes pour affronter la pandémie à Covid-19. Cette pandémie met au défi l'ensemble des forces sociales, gestionnaires au quotidien de la santé et d'autres domaines de la vie sociale, avec lesquelles les pouvoirs publics doivent collaborer pour inventer une Afrique nouvelle, partant des logiques endogènes. Les discours autour de la solution malgache et celle de l'Archevêque de Douala montrent très bien la nécessité, au niveau continental, d'une mutualisation des forces et des ressources endogènes.

En Afrique, l'impact de la pandémie à Covid-19 est plus ressenti au niveau de l'économie que de la santé. Alors qu'elle représente « moins de 3 % des cas officiels de Covid-19 dans le monde, l'Afrique subit durement les incidences de la crise mondiale avec des millions de femmes et d'hommes basculant dans l'extrême pauvreté et le sous-emploi. Elle connaît sa plus sévère récession depuis un quart de siècle, avec un recul de -3,3 % du PIB par rapport à l'année précédente » (Zé Belinga 2020). L'Afrique est fortement affectée par les conséquences économiques de la crise sanitaire en cours; des conséquences qui exacerbent la crise de financement dans laquelle elle se trouvait avant la pandémie. Point n'est besoin de rappeler qu'en Europe, la crise sanitaire a entraîné la crise économique alors qu'en Afrique la crise sanitaire occidentale et chinoise exacerbe la crise économique parce que le ralentissement des activités mondiales ont des conséquences économiques dans les pays africaines. En effet, les coûts des matières premières se sont grandement effondrés, ce qui s'est répercuté sur l'économie des pays producteurs de pétrole exacerbant ainsi une situation pré-pandémique déjà critique.

Comme un choc exogène qui montre la fragilité des économies africaines, la crise de la covid-19 a profondément affecté le bien-être des populations sur le continent. Parmi

ses conséquences, on note : la réduction des importations de produits; la diminution de la consommation des produits pétroliers en raison des interdictions de voyager réduisant la demande; les restrictions de voyage et les fermetures de ports ont entraîné une baisse de la demande en minerais; la réduction du tourisme et ses conséquences sur les pays tels que le Kenya, la Tanzanie, l'Afrique du Sud ou encore l'Éthiopie; le transfert du budget des autres secteurs vers les secteurs de la santé; et le retrait des investisseurs (Shahir et Aijaz 2020). Pour faire face à cette situation de crise, les pays africains devront donc concevoir des outils économiques et financiers adaptés à leur situation, tout en évitant le réflexe de reproduction et de mimétisme propre à la gouvernance néocoloniale. Par conséquent, affronter la colonialité économique, qui détermine les échanges Nord-Sud et désole la vie des peuples africains, devient un impératif.

La colonialité économique se réfère à la dépendance économique des pays africains à l'égard des pays industrialisés. Ce lien de prédation contribue à la vulnérabilité économique des états africains face aux chocs exogènes résultant des crises auxquelles sont confrontés les pays industrialisés. Le concept de colonialité économique met en évidence « la dominance de la spécialisation historiquement coloniale dans l'exportation de matières premières, faisant de la géographie économique continentale un prolongement spatial *de facto* des économies industrialisées, un sous-espace taillé pour les besoins des industries étrangères » (Zé Belinga 2020). En fait, « La grande vulnérabilité aux chocs exogènes, illustrée cette fois-ci par les effets de la pandémie de la Covid-19, et les limites d'une croissance extractive forcent à revenir sur la question nodale de l'industrialisation dans le contexte contemporain » (Zé Belinga 2020). Pour affronter la colonialité économique, il faudrait adopter une nouvelle posture intellectuelle et existentielle permettant aux pays de sortir du confinement économique dans lequel ils se trouvent par une remise en cause des raisons et pratiques qui exposent les économies africaines à l'extraction. La crise sanitaire actuelle est ainsi un moment innovateur qui oblige les peuples africains à repenser leur mode d'exister afin de se repositionner diversement dans le monde contemporain. Pour comprendre la quête de sens et les affirmations idéologiques et émancipatoires, non moins dénonciatrices, empreintes de panafricanisme qui sous-tendent la recherche de solutions locales à la pandémie en cours, il faudrait absolument les mettre en lien avec la colonialité de l'aide au développement évoquée inutilement et idéologiquement en ce temps de crise par le président français Emmanuel Macron (Macron 2020), les discours afro-pressimistes et misérabilistes, souvent empreints d'un racisme subtil sur l'Afrique et la recherche d'une souveraineté prisonnière des logiques dictatoriales locales.

Nous soutenons que la crise sanitaire actuelle révèle une autre crise, une véritable pathologie de l'infériorisation et du manque de souveraineté des États africains. La sortie du confinement politico-économique et symbolique dans lequel s'est enfermé et a été enfermé le continent africain depuis son entrée forcée dans la sphère capitaliste par le biais de l'impérialisme occidental est la condition de possibilité de son émergence.

Nous optons pour une approche endogène comme réorientation épistémologique et stratégique pour une gestion saine de la crise actuelle et une réponse à la crise de la souveraineté politique dans un continent en pleine mutation où les modèles néocoloniaux et néolibéraux ont montré leurs limites. À partir de la perception concrète des effets de la pandémie à Covid-19 dans les pays africains et dans le monde entier, et en faisant recours à un principe comparatif et historiographique, nous nous appuyons sur les liens politico-économiques qui existent entre les pays africains et le monde occidental pour nous émanciper de toute lecture dé-historisante et atemporelle de la position singulière du continent africain dans un monde torturé par un micro-organisme intracellulaire, la covid-19, et la domination néolibérale.

Une pathologie de l'irrespect et l'infériorisation du continent noir

L'anthropologue et médecin français Didier Fassin, affirmait à propos de la pandémie du VIH et Sida en Afrique du Sud, qu'une épidémie est un moment de vérité (Fassin 2007, 32), et nous ajoutons un moment de crise. Elle est un moment d'épreuves parce qu'elle inflige aux corps des souffrances et met en crise les certitudes, soulevant ainsi, pour certains, des questions de théodicée auxquelles la biomédecine ne peut répondre (Dossou 2016, 155-162). Elle est un moment de vérité parce qu'elle révèle les tares de la société et les inégalités sociales qui favorisent l'exposition au virus et l'accès à la cure. L'échec du modèle néolibéral apparaît avec une force inégalable; un modèle qui choisit la finance au lieu de la santé et d'autres biens sociaux dont l'instrumentalité est importante pour la vie humaine. La situation actuelle nous rappelle l'austérité des plans d'ajustement structurel, un étrange concentré de solutions et mesures drastiques auxquelles ont été soumis des pays africains, latino-américains et asiatiques vers la fin du 20^e siècle. L'échec des programmes d'ajustement structurel en Afrique a clairement montré que le modèle néolibéral peine à s'affirmer dans un continent où la culture reconnaît le primat de l'être sur l'avoir et donc la valeur de la personne humaine sur les biens matériels. Un tel échec serait une preuve patente de l'immiscibilité du monde symbolique qui sous-tend la raison néolibérale avec l'univers de sens négro-africain. Bien que sous des formes variées et pour d'autres motifs, la pandémie donne l'occasion aux pays occidentaux d'en faire l'expérience aujourd'hui. Le monde se trouve devant l'échec d'un modèle de société essentiellement fondé sur la finance et non sur le progrès humain. _

Comme moment de vérité, la pandémie actuelle a remis en question l'avenir du néolibéralisme, tout comme la pandémie de VIH dans les pays pauvres sous ajustement structurel avait mis en doute la pertinence de la raison néolibérale qui sous-tendait ces plans (Rowden 2009, 4). Avec la crise de la Covid-19, le monde a assisté au retour surprenant du capitalisme d'État parce que les logiques du marché n'ont

proposé aucune solution. L'expansion du binôme production-consommation étendue à l'échelle mondiale est motivée par la recherche du profit maximal, de la rentabilité et de l'extraction de plus en plus intensive des ressources naturelles. L'expansion du marché ne tient guère compte des conséquences écologiques.

Les économistes ont rapidement dépeint et analysé la crise de la Covid-19 comme un choc externe à l'économie mondiale. Cependant, les causes de la pandémie à Covid-19 ne sont pas étrangères à la mondialisation de la chaîne alimentaire qui a favorisé une transformation radicale et rapide des systèmes d'échanges. L'expansion de l'agriculture a favorisé la déforestation endommageant ainsi les mécanismes naturels de protection; ce qui a permis le développement d'agents pathogènes nocifs (comme Covid-19) et leur rapprochement des zones habités. Ces agents sont désormais étroitement présents dans les centres urbains densément peuplés du monde entier. Le néolibéralisme a entraîné la mondialisation et dérégulé les chaînes d'approvisionnement mondiales, et maintenant la mondialisation a permis la production et la propagation rapide d'une pandémie qui menace le système socio-économique qui l'a engendrée. La crise de la Covid-19 ne peut donc pas être considérée comme un simple choc exogène au style néolibéral de production, mais elle est plutôt l'expression normale des crises endémiques attendues (Bonfert 2020).

Comme moment de vérité, la pandémie à Covid-19 met en crise des affirmations curieuses sur la situation de l'Afrique et interroge les biais raciaux et les préjugés sociaux qui président à la formulation des propositions dont la fiabilité est fortement problématique. En arrière-fond de certaines de ces affirmations, se cache un double refus : d'une part le refus d'assumer l'échec d'un système économique et d'un modèle de société désormais désuet et d'autre part le refus d'apprendre d'un continent habitué à affronter de grandes crises sanitaires.

En affirmant qu'une épidémie est un moment de vérité, Didier Fassin montrait que la propagation du VIH en Afrique du Sud avait des effets révélateurs qui rendaient compte d'une vérité sociale profonde. Pour lui, cette épidémie du VIH n'était rien d'autre qu'une incorporation d'une histoire sociale blessée par la ségrégation raciale sustentée par la politique de l'apartheid (Fassin 2003). Loin de vouloir mettre en évidence les déterminants sociaux de la pandémie actuelle, nous voulons plutôt souligner sa dimension révélatrice. Perçue à partir de l'histoire coloniale et du bricolage institutionnel postcolonial, la pandémie à Covid-19 dévoile une véritable pathologie de l'irrespect et de l'infériorisation de tout un continent perçu comme le lieu de concentration du mal-être et une réserve de minerais pour l'industrie occidentale. Pour l'Afrique, la crise de la Covid-19 laisse entrevoir plus une crise de respect et de souveraineté politico-économique qu'une lutte contre un virus. Cependant, point n'est besoin de se lamenter, mais il sied plutôt d'oser un dé-confinement intellectuel et idéologique pour produire et se réinventer.

Alors que l'Europe et l'Amérique du Nord font face à une deuxième et troisième vagues de la pandémie, avec des taux de contagion très élevés menant à la saturation

de leurs systèmes hospitaliers, de nombreux pays africains s'en sortent relativement bien. L'expérience de l'Afrique dans la gestion des épidémies et des maladies infectieuses pourrait justifier la résilience face à la pandémie actuelle (WHO 2021). Cet exceptionnalisme continue d'étonner le monde entier et remet en question les propos misérabilistes et parfois condescendants qui ont dominé l'opinion internationale sur le sort que réservait la pandémie au continent africain. La construction de l'altérité nègre par l'Occident donne à penser dans un contexte où la globalisation de la communication et des moyens de transport a permis une ouverture plus grande entre les différentes régions du monde. L'expérience du continent dans la gestion des épidémies et la jeunesse de sa population semblent y apporter des explications. Seulement, si des vies restent, majoritairement épargnées en Afrique, la situation économique des pays du continent n'est pas réjouissante. En plus du choc exogène que représente la pandémie pour les économies africaines et des effets de la domination de l'économie mondiale par le modèle néolibéral, dans le cas des pays de la zone franc CFA, la colonialité économique et monétaire qui détermine le modèle de développement et l'extraversion économique des pays francophones laisse entrevoir des économies prisonnières de la France et des politiciens qui gèrent la chose publique. En Afrique australe, la Zambie, par exemple, est confrontée à une crise aiguë. En effet, « la Zambie est durement affectée par les conséquences économiques de la crise sanitaire internationale de la Covid-19. Dans un contexte économique déjà fragile, les perspectives de redressement à court terme sont difficiles à entrevoir alors que le pays doit faire face à des enjeux de plus long terme pour poursuivre son développement » (Puloc'h 2020).

Éloge des savoirs endogènes

L'Archevêque métropolitain de Douala, reconnu dans cette ville comme thérapeute, a mis sur pied deux solutions contre la Covid-19 dont l'une préventive et l'autre curative. Le Cameroun n'est pas l'unique pays du continent d'où ont émergé des solutions endogènes reconnues ou non par l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS). En l'absence d'une réponse africaine, des solutions endogènes moins médiatisées par la presse occidentale et par les organisations internationales ont été mises sur pied dans quelques pays du continent. Valentin Agon, chercheur à l'université d'Abomey-Calavi travaille sur Apivirine, un antiviral et antirétroviral (Banouto 2020). À l'Université de Lomé au Togo, des chercheurs de la Faculté des Sciences ont mis sur pied des immunostimulateurs à base de plantes pour aider l'organisme humain à lutter contre la Covid-19 (Ayi 2020). Une autre solution à base de la plante antimalariale, artemisia, a été développée au laboratoire de professeur Albert Rakoto Ratsimamanga à Antananarivo sous le nom de Covid Organics (Bellissens 2020). Le Sénégal a orienté sa recherche sur le développement de tests Covid-19 à moindre coût (Negede 2020). Le Rwanda,

quant à lui, a misé sur la technologie en déployant des robots dits humanoïdes destinés à prendre la température et le rythme cardiaque des patients pour limiter les contacts humains entre le personnel soignant et les malades (Negede 2020).

Au début de la pandémie en mars 2020, les experts en santé publique annonçaient l'hécatombe en Afrique (Dudouet 2020). Sans doute, le manque d'infrastructures hospitalières adaptées à la gestion des crises sanitaires d'envergure justifiait de telles prédictions. Ces prévisions viennent rappeler à quelles représentations le continent africain est associé dans les imaginaires d'ailleurs. Que le regard externe sur le continent africain soit positif ou négatif, il n'est aucun doute que la gestion de cette crise incombe en premier aux Africains eux-mêmes. Il leur revient donc d'assumer leurs responsabilités, tout en évitant la dépendance inutile. L'exploration des solutions endogènes et des ressources thérapeutiques dont disposent les pays africains, là où elles existent, n'est pas à négliger, comme nous l'enseignent la découverte de l'Archevêque de Douala, la solution malgache et bien d'autres solutions thérapeutiques mises sur pied çà et là en Afrique. En effet, la course au vaccin et le soutien que des initiatives allant dans ce sens reçoivent des gouvernements occidentaux montrent bien que la santé est un espace où l'économie fait injonction pour imposer le diktat du capitalisme triomphant à ceux qui restent à la traîne. Au-delà de sa valeur thérapeutique, valoriser les solutions endogènes et affirmer la particularité de sa rationalité est à la fois un acte politique et de souveraineté.

Résurgence des revendications panafricanistes et mutualisation des forces

Il n'est aucun doute que le panafricanisme économique et symbolique ait fortement marqué les discours produits autour des solutions à la crise sanitaire en cours. Car, c'est en mettant sur pied un faisceau d'activités menées suivant un principe endogène porté par le souci de décolonialité, à partir des réseaux régionaux et continentaux, que le continent africain pourrait s'émanciper des diktats politico-économiques des anciennes puissances coloniales et s'affranchir des cartels économiques qui régissent le monde. Il en ressort donc que l'Afrique doit cesser d'être une simple productrice de matières premières permettant de financer les économies des pays industrialisés. Il faut sortir du grand modèle colonial qui confine l'Afrique à un ensemble d'entités productrices des matières premières pour autrui. Il faudrait aller au-delà de ce modèle pour accueillir la proposition historique de l'Union Africaine, la Zone de Libre-échange Continentale Africaine (ZLECAF), pouvant favoriser une circulation intra-africaine (Union Africaine 2018).

Paradoxalement, une lecture critique de la relation qui existe entre les pays africains et les métropoles d'hier invite à l'adoption d'une autre posture épistémologique, une véritable attitude de subversion intellectuelle par laquelle se dévoile la colonialité économique qui justifie la condescendance implicite ou explicite des États anciennement

coloniaux à l'égard des pays africains. L'adoption d'une telle posture critique montrera en fait que l'Afrique est la plus grande subvention d'aide au monde capitaliste. Cette relation expliquerait, au moins en partie, le retard économique des pays africains, car « le sous-développement des pays du sud, de l'Afrique en particulier, doit être compris comme la conséquence logique du déploiement du capitalisme à l'échelle mondiale » (Demba 2015, 42). Une lecture lucide de la colonialité économique révèle assez clairement que l'Afrique aide l'Europe et non le contraire. Durant la période 1980-2014, les pays de la zone franc ont effectué des paiements nets de revenus de l'ordre de 103 000 milliards de francs CFA (soit 212 milliards de dollars), soit 3029 milliards de FCFA par an (soit 6,2 milliards de dollars par an). Pour se figurer à quel point ces chiffres sont scandaleux, il faut mettre en relief le fait que l'Inde a transféré exactement le même montant durant la période indiquée. Or, le PIB de l'Inde pèse onze fois plus que celui de toute la zone franc. Des pays comme la Guinée équatoriale et le Congo qui sont des nains économiques ont effectué sur la même période des paiements nets de revenus supérieurs à un pays comme la Corée du Sud, soit 35 milliards de dollars en moins (Kako 2016, 170).

Les principes qui sous-tendent la rationalité néocoloniale visent non seulement à masquer la vérité sur l'histoire économique entre l'ancien maître et le sujet d'hier, mais aussi à la maintenir par des mécanismes subtils de prédation qui nourrissent l'ancienne métropole. La logique de l'aide permet justement de masquer l'incorporation de cette relation biaisée par des peuples innocents et réifiés en proposant perversement une clé de lecture autre. Hier, à l'époque de la traite négrière, l'Afrique noire a fait une subvention en termes d'êtres humains. Aujourd'hui, personne ne peut dire quelle est la quantité d'uranium, d'or, de diamant et de cobalt qui sort d'Afrique vers occident et la Chine. Quand on met ensemble, les flux financiers illicites, l'évasion fiscale, la gestion prédatrice des ressources naturelles et stratégiques, parler d'aide est un non-sens. Le cas particulier des pays de la zone franc montre la nécessité de « passer de la décolonisation économique latérale et passive à une décolonisation verticale et active, laquelle suppose le refus d'être une néocolonie ainsi que la volonté de déterminer soi-même son agenda et d'avoir la mainmise sur ses institutions économiques » (Kako 2016, 171). C'est davantage l'économie en régime de prédation qui est problématique, plus que la dette. L'Afrique devrait arrêter cette subvention indue parce qu'elle ralentit le progrès économique des pays du continent et inflige des coûts en termes de désordres écologiques que le monde n'apprécie que maintenant. On voit bien que la Covid-19 a une dimension décoloniale et révélatrice de par les questions et attitudes qu'elle suscite en Afrique et de par la mise à nu des limites de la pensée néolibérale et nécropolitique. Pour des questions sanitaires qui touchent à la vie humaine, l'économie néolibérale peine à trouver des réponses dans des pays dotés d'un arsenal médical de haut niveau. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que les pays avancés peinent à juguler cette crise.

Face à la pandémie à Covid-19 qui est à la fois une épreuve de dignité (Jaffré, Hane et Kane 2020) et cache une crise de souveraineté, l'Afrique doit se réinventer afin d'affirmer sa liberté intellectuelle et sa capacité à innover sans lesquelles la souveraineté politique qui, de iure, lui est due sera un leurre. Alors que la plupart d'entre eux disposent des ressources matérielles et humaines pour bâtir une prospérité économique, l'état dans lequel se trouvent les pays africains est simplement inacceptable. Pour s'en sortir, l'Afrique a besoin de fédérer ses énergies pour avancer. Une certaine forme de panafricanisme, sous-tendue par le renforcement des synergies régionales, devrait retrouver sa place partout en Afrique, ce qui permettrait de trouver une alternative crédible à la dépendance économique et politique de ses États. Or, la pandémie du coronavirus montre tristement l'insuffisance de la réponse africaine (Mamba et Victoria 2020).

L'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS) joue un rôle important dans la coordination de la lutte contre les épidémies. Pour ce qui est de la lutte contre le covid-19, l'OMS coordonne des actions de recherche, d'innovation, de surveillance et d'intervention sur le sol africain (WHO 2021). Cette organisation onusienne soutient aussi bien techniquement, matériellement que financièrement les 47 États membres de la zone Afrique. Entre autres actions menées par l'OMS, nous pouvons citer le lancement de 2 processus mondiaux d'assurance qualité externe, avec 227 laboratoires participants des 47 pays de l'OMS Afrique ; la mise sur pied de plus de 790 laboratoires capables de pratiquer des tests de dépistage covid-19 ; un réseau de laboratoires de séquençage du génome du coronavirus, responsable de la covid-19 (ce réseau comprend 03 laboratoires spécialisés en Afrique du Sud et au Nigeria et 09 laboratoires régionaux couvrant les besoins de tous les États membres de la région africaine) ; des formations à distance et en présentiel sur les soins cliniques pour les patients atteints de la covid-19 au profit de 12 000 médecins et 44 000 infirmiers dans les 47 pays ; l'augmentation du nombre d'usine de production d'oxygène de 68 à 101 et du nombre de concentrateurs d'oxygène de 2600 à 5100 dans la région ; la mise sur pied d'un groupe de travail africain (AFTCOR) multipartite sur la préparation et la livraison du vaccin contre la covid-19, chargé de coordonner les initiatives régionales dans ce domaine (WHO 2021). Seulement, une action menée sous l'égide de l'OMS contre la covid-19 ne peut que privilégier les outils de la médecine conventionnelle au détriment de ceux de la médecine traditionnelle, qui, pourtant joue un rôle important dans la lutte contre cette pandémie, mais dont l'efficacité semble être méconnue à cause du manque de synergie entre pays du continent sur la question. Plus que jamais, le continent Africain est placé devant la nécessité d'une gestion concertée et intégrée des domaines relatifs à la santé publique, à la recherche fondamentale dans toutes les disciplines scientifiques et aux politiques sociales. Les changements structurels qu'impose la crise de la Covid-19 présentent une fenêtre d'opportunités qui force le continent africain à se réinventer, à développer une identité commune et à devenir plus actif pour cesser de tendre la main à autrui. Il est temps de bousculer les lignes préétablies et déplacer les bornes néocoloniales pour repenser la coopération Nord-Sud et créer des blocs régionaux plus solides.

Pour s'émanciper il faudrait sortir des logiques nécropolitiques

La génération d'Africains formée à l'école de la reproduction des paradigmes coloniaux n'a pas posé les bases de l'émancipation politique et intellectuelle de leurs pays respectifs, trahissant ainsi le vœu des pères des indépendances au profit d'une souveraineté de façade. Des gouvernements et des chefs d'État se sont succédés dans de nombreux pays africains, et malgré l'appel à une démocratisation réelle par le peuple, ils continuent de promouvoir un programme qui privilégie la mort à la vie, les intérêts étrangers à l'entrepreneuriat local, le capital aux besoins humains, l'avidité à la compassion, l'exploitation oppressive des masses à la justice sociale, la paix à la violence.

Près de la moitié de la population africaine vit en dessous du seuil de pauvreté avec un revenu inférieur à 1,25 dollar par jour. Par manque de revenus ou sans l'assistance des services publics, cette population n'est pas capable de satisfaire ses besoins en nourriture, eau potable, services d'hygiène, logements, assistance sanitaire, instruction de base, transport, l'énergie électrique et connexion internet (Sachs 2015). Cette situation résulte de l'égoïsme des gouvernants dont le seul but est de se maintenir au pouvoir le plus longtemps possible. Les allures dictatoriales de certains gouvernants freinent l'avancée du processus démocratique. Il en résulte des conflits sociopolitiques voire aux armées qui détruisent tout lien social autre que celui de l'inimitié (Mbembé 2018, 60).

Dans les logiques du gouvernement par la terreur ont plus pour fin de réprimer et de discipliner que de tuer soit en masse, soit à petites doses. Ici, la guerre n'oppose plus nécessairement des armées à d'autres ou des États souverains à d'autres. Les acteurs de la guerre sont nombreux : des États proprement constitués, des formations armées agissant ou non derrière le masque de l'État, des armées sans État mais contrôlant des territoires bien distincts, des États sans armées, des corporations ou compagnies concessionnaires chargées de l'extraction de ressources naturelles mais qui en outre se sont arrogés le droit de guerre (Mbembé 2018). Terreur et atrocités sont justifiées par la volonté d'éradiquer la corruption dont seraient coupables les tyrannies existantes. Plus de 60 ans après les indépendances, ces gouvernants n'ont toujours pas doté leurs États de structures sanitaires capables de répondre aux besoins de leurs populations. On constate non seulement le manque criard de structures de santé mais aussi d'équipements, parfois de matériels de premières nécessités pour les soins. Plutôt que de donner la vie et de la sauver, certaines de ces structures sont de véritables mouiroirs où l'on côtoie la mort au quotidien. À ce manque d'équipements, on pourrait associer le manque de professionnels de santé. Ne disposant pas de moyens pour financer leurs études en médecine, certains jeunes sont obligés de renoncer à cette vocation. Au même moment, d'autres sont admis dans ces écoles de formation par le truchement de leurs familiers parce que bénéficiant des privilèges de l'appareil politique en place. De pareilles inégalités promeuvent la médiocrité au détriment de la méritocratie. Rien d'étonnant que des jeunes frustrés par

ce genre de pratiques optent, désespérément, pour la traversée du désert du Sahara et de la méditerranée, à la recherche de meilleures conditions de vie. D'où les grands flux migratoires de l'Afrique vers l'Europe et d'autres cieux avec ce que cela implique en termes de fuite de cerveaux d'Afrique. Le continent se voit ainsi vidé de sa force de travail au profit d'autres continents. Ceux qui ne réussissent pas à s'en aller continuent de subir les affres de leurs gouvernants qui les exposent, chaque jour, à la mort.

L'État postcolonial est géré « par des acteurs qui peuvent tout se permettre dans la mesure où ils appartiennent à un système hégémonique qui choisit ses alliés afin de leur attribuer une place privilégiée dans le réseau de distribution où se partagent les dépouilles de l'État » (Ela 1998, 246). S'il est vrai que les systèmes politiques actuels n'ont pas été créés par les Africains, il est tout aussi vrai que les leaders postcoloniaux en ont tiré profit pour asseoir leur domination sur leurs peuples respectifs. L'indépendance politique était censée inaugurer une ère de liberté et de prospérité pour des peuples longtemps courbés et meurtris. Elle a été plutôt répétitrice d'un cycle de barbarie, de guerres et de conflits entretenus et voulus par un système politique de bricolage et de banalité (Mbembé 2000, 78). Aussi a-t-elle inspiré un imaginaire dévastateur et dégradant. Ainsi, « L'éché de l'État à s'imposer définitivement (ainsi qu'il le prétendait d'ailleurs) comme vecteur d'accumulation est devenu manifeste... Le discours qui avait pris au sérieux l'imaginaire du 'développement'—duquel les dominants postcoloniaux entendaient tirer une partie de leur légitimité—a été obligé de se réarticuler » (Mbembé 1990). C'est dans ce cadre marqué par un esprit de servitude volontaire que l'OMS mène ses activités sur le continent africain. Selon la Charte des Nations Unies, cet organisme a pour mission de conseiller les gouvernants dans leurs efforts de protection et de promotion de la santé des populations dont ils ont la charge. Pour comprendre les politiques de santé en Afrique, il sied de les analyser à partir des logiques intra-nationales qui déterminent la gestion de la chose publique. Cependant, l'on ne saurait se limiter à une lecture intra-nationale car les relations entre États dans le contexte global actuel s'organisent autour des logiques d'échanges et de domination propres à la raison néocoloniale et néolibérale. Sans forcer un quelconque lien, on serait en passe d'affirmer que les logiques intra-nationales sont soumises, elles aussi, à la dictature des forces néolibérales et néocoloniales. C'est dans ce contexte que l'OMS joue son rôle auprès des pays africains. Il n'est donc pas surprenant, que plus de soixante ans après les indépendances, l'Afrique demeure le continent où les indicateurs de santé en termes d'accès aux soins sont les moins bons. Les inégalités de départ subsistent parce que les problèmes de fond n'ont jamais été traités.

Parmi ces problèmes, on note le manque de consensus pouvant garantir la stabilité des États, le faible développement de la recherche et l'incapacité des pays africains à affronter les problèmes de leurs populations respectives. Comment expliquer que plus de soixante ans après les indépendances des pays africains, certains hauts dignitaires continuent à être évacués dans les pays européens, nord-américains ou asiatiques pour des soins médicaux à cause de la faiblesse des plateaux techniques des hôpitaux publics et

du manque de professionnels de santé? Tout en entretenant les logiques de dépendance, cette pratique est simplement inacceptable étant donné que la même opportunité n'est pas offerte à tous les citoyens. Pour soigner une seule personne, les États africains dépensent des sommes faramineuses qui auraient pu être utilisées pour améliorer les plateaux techniques des hôpitaux publics. Tout se passe comme si les dirigeants africains gagnent à maintenir leurs pays respectifs dans un état de dépendance perpétuel.

La dépendance des pays africains à l'égard des autres est mise en évidence en ce temps de pandémie. Une analyse critique des systèmes de santé et de gestion des crises sanitaires montre que tout au long de la période postcoloniale, les dirigeants africains se sont contentés de la coopération bilatérale et multilatérale et de la couverture internationale, par le canal de l'OMS, pour soigner leurs populations respectives au détriment de la médecine traditionnelle qui est le reflet de leur identité, embrassant ainsi à bras-le-corps les canons de la médecine occidentale. Cette extraversion symbolique du continent est l'un des plus grands signes de sa fragilité. Regardons la réalité en face, l'aide au développement n'a pas réellement prouvé son efficacité par le passé. Il est peu probable que cette crise y change quoi que ce soit si les États africains ne se décident pas à faire autrement. Les acteurs de l'aide sont coutumiers des « programmes d'urgence », des solutions verticales qui fragilisent souvent le système de santé et d'autres méthodes miracles. Mais, faute de prise en compte et d'implication des parties prenantes et de l'acceptation des logiques endogènes, ces projets échouent, comme en atteste la situation des systèmes sanitaires africains, soutenus ou carrément mis à mal à coups de plans d'ajustement structurel et de plans de développement sanitaire depuis les années 1980 (Mamba et Victoria 2020).

Les vrais enjeux de la pandémie pour l'Afrique

Pour se réinventer, le continent africain devrait absolument reconstruire son « infrastructure psychique » (Mbembé 2016) et assumer les logiques endogènes. En fait, « Ce dont il faut sortir, c'est d'une certaine conscience victimaire, de la quête viscérale de boucs émissaires. Ce qui ne signifie pas une chute dans une sorte d'amnésie historique, mais au contraire une prise de responsabilités, un vif réveil à cette réalité toute simple : notre sort se trouve entre nos mains. Ce qui implique de sortir du glacié colonial et de remettre en question tout ce qui prétend à l'intangibilité, qu'il s'agisse des frontières, de la gérontocratie, du patriarcat ou de la pensée magique » (Mbembé 2016). La médecine traditionnelle fait partie du patrimoine des sociétés africaines. Avant l'arrivée des occidentaux, les populations de ce continent se soignaient à l'aide des substances provenant de la nature (feuilles, racines, écorces, graines...) et des éléments de l'univers symbolique qui est le leur (la divination, l'invocation des êtres surnaturels, les rituels de guérison, le recours aux entités surnaturelles). La marginalisation des savoirs endogènes,

en particulier la médecine traditionnelle, par l'administration coloniale et les églises chrétiennes a permis l'émergence de la médecine occidentale. La diabolisation de la médecine traditionnelle et l'infériorisation des savoirs endogènes ont permis la mise sur pied d'un système de santé bâti autour de la rationalité biomédicale et des logiques capitalistes propres à l'Occident. Formés à l'école des schèmes de pensée occidentaux et préparés à reproduire les logiques d'autrui, les gouvernants postcoloniaux n'ont pas pris le temps de s'approprier cette médecine imposée par l'Occident. Ceux-ci se sont contentés de reproduire les logiques coloniales, maintenant ainsi des liens de dépendance avec les faiseurs de sens de l'État colonial. Cette dépendance s'exprime aujourd'hui sous la forme de coopérations bilatérales avec pour conséquence une reproduction aveugle des solutions et stratégies d'intervention et de prévention utilisées par les autres dans leur contexte. Soixante ans après les indépendances des États dits souverains, le principe de reproduction, une posture symbolique et intellectuelle honteuse et portée par la logique d'extraversion, sous-tend non seulement les processus décisionnels mais aussi le mode de gouverner des pays africains. À quand la fin du mimétisme de l'Occident, une sorte de mentalité de reproduction propre au colonisé inféodé aux solutions proposées par le maître? Cette posture mentale et symbolique n'est nullement celle des jeunes générations d'Africains dont l'univers de sens est loin d'être celui de leurs grands-parents et de leurs parents. Le complexe du colonisé qui génère l'inertie et tétanise toute tentative d'émancipation symbolique des générations qui ont connu la colonisation est loin d'affecter les combats que mènent les jeunes générations d'Africains. Malheureusement, la chose publique est gérée par des gérontocrates ou leurs successeurs qui fonctionnent suivant la logique de reproduction. Dans certains pays africains, les mesures prises pour faire face à la pandémie de coronavirus n'ont pas échappé à ce principe. La reproduction est un autre nom de l'inertie-dépendance ou l'expression du soumis qui s'en tient à tout ce qui sort de la bouche de son maître.

La médecine traditionnelle africaine a tout et ne demande qu'à être développée d'un point de vue scientifique. L'innovation thérapeutique reconnue à Monseigneur Kléda, l'Archevêque métropolitain de Douala, et sa posture humanitaire portée par la charité chrétienne invitent à prendre au sérieux les savoirs endogènes et à réinventer l'État afin de panser les blessures infligées au corps social par les structures injustes qui empêchent aux populations africaines d'avoir accès aux soins de qualité. Sur le plan symbolique et idéologique, l'action entreprise par l'Archevêque de Douala invite tout le continent noir à se positionner clairement, se positionner autrement, au sortir de cette crise sanitaire mondiale pour prôner justement l'adoption d'une nouvelle configuration de son système de santé et pour accorder aux logiques d'en bas la place qui leur revient. Il faudrait tenir compte aussi bien de la médecine moderne que de la médecine traditionnelle africaine, afin qu'en assumant les propositions venues d'ailleurs, que l'Afrique offre au monde le fruit de son génie propre. Ce qui permettrait une véritable restructuration du système de santé. Ainsi, les populations africaines pourront accéder aux soins de qualité à base des

produits locaux et étrangers afin de sortir de la précarité symbolique et sanitaire. C'est à partir de cette posture hybride que l'Afrique sera crédible et respectée.

Ce qui est mis en jeu dans cette crise pour le continent africain, ce n'est pas que la découverte d'un médicament ou d'un vaccin, mais plus profondément une invitation à une reprise de soi et un appel à s'émanciper pour protéger sa dignité. Il ne suffit donc pas de juguler une autre crise de santé publique et faire face à ses conséquences économiques, mais beaucoup plus d'adopter une attitude proactive permettant d'affronter toute crise qui viendrait bousculer, comme le fait la pandémie de Covid-19, l'ordre du monde et interroger les fondements de l'être-ensemble. Il faudrait donc repenser la santé comme un bien public essentiel et percevoir la crise actuelle comme une opportunité afin d'interroger les politiques publiques pour mieux protéger les populations. Plus que jamais, les gouvernements africains sont placés devant la nécessité d'une gestion concertée et intégrée des domaines relatifs à la santé publique, à la recherche fondamentale dans toutes les disciplines scientifiques et aux politiques sociales.

La recherche d'une vraie souveraineté politique et intellectuelle

Tout en lui reconnaissant son apport considérable dans l'évolution du monde, notamment la science dans son stade de développement actuel (Weber 2017, 49), il faut avouer les limites de l'Europe : « faudra-t-il reconnaître que l'Europe, qui a tant donné au monde et qui a tant pris en retour, et souvent par la force et par la ruse, n'est plus le centre de gravité de celui-ci. Il ne s'agit plus d'aller chercher là-bas les solutions aux questions qu'ici nous pose. Elle n'est plus la pharmacie du monde » (Mbembé 2018, 202-203). Ce constat pourrait être une opportunité pour le continent africain de s'émanciper du paradigme néocolonial.

En effet, les prédictions de l'OMS, annonçant le chaos de l'Afrique avec la crise de la covid-19 n'ont pas tenu la promesse des fleurs. Au contraire, le continent africain, un an après la survenue de la pandémie affiche le nombre le moins important de morts liés à la crise. Au mois de février 2021, l'Afrique compte plus de 3 millions de cas ; 79 000 décès, soit 3,5% du total mondial (WHO 2021). Cette performance peut être justifiée par la jeunesse de la population dont l'âge médian estimé à 18,7 ans est un atout dans la lutte contre la maladie. À côté de la jeunesse, l'expérience de l'Afrique dans la gestion des maladies ou pathologies telles que le paludisme, la tuberculose, le VIH, la méningite, la poliomyélite ou encore Ébola peut expliquer le ralentissement de la propagation de la maladie et la diminution du risque de décès (Wayak-Pambè et al. 2020). La pharmacopée traditionnelle, comme nous l'avons déjà souligné plus haut, a joué un rôle important dans cette performance. En faisant ainsi recours aux savoirs endogènes, l'Afrique est en train de bien tirer son épingle du jeu. Mieux encore, la crise planétaire en cours a mis en évidence la forte résilience d'un continent sur lequel des

regards de condescendance étaient jetés. N'est-ce pas là une opportunité à saisir par les Africains pour changer définitivement les discours pessimistes que les autres ont toujours tenus à leur endroit ? Ce combat est mené par certains intellectuels africains, au rang desquels Jean Marc Ela. Pour le sociologue camerounais, il faut procéder à un réajustement de paradigmes, à une restructuration du champ des savoirs et à une révision des concepts, de grilles, de méthodes d'analyse et de systèmes de référence, bref à une remise en cause des discours traditionnels sur l'Afrique (Ela 1998, 13). La matérialisation d'un tel changement de paradigmes se ferait par la multiplication des lieux de partage d'expériences et de création et transmission des savoirs dans les unités d'enseignement et de recherche des institutions universitaires ou à travers les activités des instituts d'études africaines. Une initiative pareille mettrait l'accent sur des études de l'Afrique par les Africains (Ela 1994, 86-94). Point n'est besoin d'insister sur la nécessité d'adapter les programmes d'enseignement et de formation aux besoins réels des populations à partir de l'acquisition des savoirs préexistants et des nouvelles connaissances. En plus, « l'enseignement technique doit être un support pour former les techniciens, en rapport avec les préoccupations de développement à l'échelle locale » (Amadou 2016, 204-205). Un tel pragmatisme permettrait d'affronter les défis de l'urbanisation et de démocratie en vue du développement du continent. En plus, une industrialisation à petite échelle serait bénéfique aux pays africains. Par industrialisation à petite échelle, nous entendons des réseaux de coopération et l'articulation de l'économique et du social, du caractère local du développement et du rôle des facteurs institutionnels, de la diversité des voies de développement, du rejet de la production de masse au profit d'une spécialisation souple, du rôle de la variable spatiale ou territoriale dans les processus de développement, du problème de la force du travail et de sa place au sein du processus de production (Amadou 2016, 201). Une telle stratégie permettrait des échanges entre divers secteurs d'activités. Ces interactions seraient porteuses d'un développement intégral durable.

La démocratie comme précondition du développement, ne devrait pas se limiter à la sphère politique, c'est-à-dire à la tenue des élections et au multipartisme, mais elle devrait intégrer la bonne gouvernance dans l'espace de vie que sont les territoires où se mobilisent les acteurs locaux du développement (Amadou 2016, 203-204). À côté de ces défis d'urbanisation et de démocratie à relever se trouve le défi de la monnaie auquel l'Afrique doit faire face. Compte tenu de la servitude dans laquelle le CFA maintient certains États africains, il serait important qu'ils s'affranchissent des mécanismes de ladite monnaie au profit d'une monnaie commune africaine, garant du développement économique du continent. En plus de cette monnaie, pourraient être créées celles nationales et des banques centrales au service des peuples et non des marchés financiers (Kako 2016, 218-224). Ce qui permettrait : « de s'émanciper de la dépendance envers les stratégies des multinationales et envers les critères d'investissement et de financement dictés par les marchés financiers » (Kako 2016, 228).

Les Africains sont appelés à prendre leur destin en main en refusant le diktat extérieur sous ses formes idéologiques, politiques et économiques. En réalité, l'Afrique regorge d'un potentiel tant humain que matériel pouvant lui permettre de se frayer un passage vers sa souveraineté. Cet énorme potentiel de créativité et de ressources est capable de renverser la vapeur. Il incombe aux Africains de recourir à leur intelligence et de faire bloc dans la lutte pour la promotion de leur continent. Une telle initiative exige que soient repensés les liens d'avec les puissances coloniales dont la présence des serviteurs locaux, encore appelés « Marionnettistes de l'Occident » (Djéréké 2020, 33-37) ou « faux frères » (Djéréké 2020, 21) et des multinationales dans le continent noir profite plus aux puissances étrangères qu'aux Africains : « Il revient aux peuples africains, et uniquement à eux, de faire disparaître la Françafrique dont les trois piliers sont le franc CFA, les bases militaires françaises et les accords de coopération qui bénéficient plus à la France qu'aux pays africains » (Djéréké 2020, 21). La création des institutions communautaires africaines véritablement indépendantes des organisations onusiennes (OMS, UNICEF, UNESCO, HCR...) comme le préconisait Mohammad Kadhafi serait une voie de libération pour un continent pris dans l'étau d'une coopération multilatérale parfois avilissante. Car, en vérité : « si les Africains veulent se mettre debout et marcher, il leur faudra tôt ou tard regarder ailleurs qu'en Europe. Celle-ci n'est sans doute pas un monde qui s'effondre. Mais lasse, elle représente désormais le monde de la vie déclinante et des couchers de soleil empourprés. Ici, l'esprit s'est affadi, rongé par les formes extrêmes du pessimisme, du nihilisme et de la frivolité » (Mbembé 2013, 243). Seulement, cette indépendance devrait se faire sans fermeture sur soi, car à l'ère de la globalisation, il serait peu recommandable de faire route-seul, mais plutôt de cheminer avec les autres, tout en apportant du soi. C'est ce que prône Achille Mbembé pour qui « la démocratisation de l'Afrique est d'abord une question africaine, certes. Elle passe, bien sûr, par la constitution de forces sociales capables de la faire naître, de la porter et de la défendre. Mais elle est également une affaire internationale » (Mbembé 2013, 28). Il est donc peut-être venu pour l'Afrique, le temps de promouvoir les savoirs endogènes, encadrer son « intelligentsia » et encourager les initiatives endogènes, en évitant de se fermer au reste du monde, plutôt à s'ouvrir à celui-ci, tout en gardant sa marque. La lutte pour l'indépendance politique et économique devra être le point d'ancrage de cette posture épistémologique.

Œuvrer pour l'acquisition d'une vraie souveraineté économique

Le fondamentalisme du marché libre a érodé les droits des travailleurs et la sécurité économique, déclenché une course à la déréglementation vers le bas et une concurrence fiscale ruineuse et permis l'émergence de nouveaux monopoles mondiaux massifs. Avec la crise de covid-19, l'économie mondiale est en crise (Strauss-Kahn 2020). Celle de l'Afrique n'est pas épargnée. En effet, les mesures d'endiguement prises par les gouvernements

africains dans la lutte contre la pandémie ont eu des effets immédiats sur leurs économies (UNESCO 2020). Deux sortes d'arguments permettent d'expliquer ces effets. D'une part, il y a des arguments basés sur les chocs internationaux. Et d'autre part, on trouve des arguments fondés sur les chocs nationaux (Zebaze et al. 2020). Les chocs internationaux ont pour conséquences la chute de coût du pétrole et des matières premières ainsi que la réduction des entrées dues aux flux touristiques et aux investissements directs étrangers (Zebaze et al. 2020). Les chocs nationaux, quant à eux, ont pour conséquence la faible participation au marché du travail, une faible productivité, la réduction des revenus des ménages et le report ou l'annulation de certains investissements (Zebaze et al. 2020). Ces chocs vont entraîner la chute de la croissance économique et le recul du produit intérieur brut (PIB) (Seibt 2021). Cet état des choses révèle non seulement l'impact de la covid-19 sur les économies africaines, mais aussi leurs faiblesses.

Loin d'être monolithique, la réalité africaine est plurielle à plusieurs points de vue. Cette pluralité ne nous empêche pas de reconnaître que les économies des pays de ce continent dépendent essentiellement de l'exportation de leurs matières premières et de leurs minerais (Dabalén et Paci 2020). Cette dépendance à l'égard du marché international, qui a sagement été construite au fil du temps, constitue un frein pour le continent dans sa marche vers le développement. Trois événements ont profondément affecté les conditions matérielles de production de la vie et de la culture en Afrique subsaharienne. En premier lieu, le durcissement de la contrainte monétaire et ses effets de revivification des imaginaires du lointain et des pratiques historiques de la longue distance. En deuxième lieu, la concomitance de la démocratie, de l'informatisation de l'économie et des structures étatiques. En troisième lieu, la diffraction de la société et de l'état de guerre. Dans leur simultanéité, ces événements constituent le cadre d'émergence d'imaginaires du politique qui accordent une place prépondérante aux luttes pour ou contre le pouvoir, affrontements belliqueux ayant pour finalité la triple prise sur les ressources, sur les corps et en définitive sur la vie (Mbembé 2013, 173-174).

En réalité, la faiblesse de l'économie africaine est liée aux activités d'extraction, de prédation et de ponction que les puissances coloniales y mènent. Ces activités maintiennent certains pays du continent sous une domination qui réduit la marge de manœuvre de leurs gouvernements face aux difficultés telle que la pandémie en cours. Au moment où les gouvernements des pays développés se permettent d'avancer des liquidités et d'exonérer les firmes et les particuliers des obligations fiscales ou de les reporter, ceux des pays africains au sud du Sahara, ployant sous le poids de la dette publique et des déficits budgétaires sont restreints dans leurs marges de manœuvre (Elliot 2020). La sortie de crise requiert une grande capacité d'inventivité. Des solutions dont les limites sont bien connues telles que les politiques d'austérité, les mesures fondées sur le reshoring (Defraigne 2020).¹

1 The terme renvoie au rapatriement des activités de production délocalisées ou sous-traitées à l'étranger ou encore aux logiques protectionnistes sont à rejeter au profit de celles dont la finalité est de valoriser et de développer des forces et solutions endogènes.

Le recours aux politiques d'austérité (avec l'inflation qui nécessite le contrôle par l'État de la monnaie nationale; monnaie dont ne disposent pas tous les États) ne saurait être recommandé ici, car ces politiques pourraient causer des troubles sociopolitiques, la baisse de la recherche et la fuite des cerveaux ; conséquences qui plongeraient davantage les économies des pays africains (Defraigne 2020). Il faudrait ajouter que ces politiques, par le passé n'ont pas aidé les économies africaines à sortir du gouffre. Au contraire elles les y ont maintenues, quand elles ne les ont pas enfoncées davantage. Loin de sortir l'Afrique de la crise économique, les politiques d'austérité aggravent les conditions de pauvreté de ses pays et les enfoncent dans un scénario où « la sortie de crise » est toujours renvoyée aux calendes grecques (Ela 1998, 14). Les programmes d'Ajustement Structurel des années 1980 et 1990 n'ont pas permis de modifier, en faveur des pays africains, la structure de la spécialisation internationale de leurs économies. Ils ont largement contribué à la mise en place de nouvelles configurations de l'économie qui ne suffisent plus à décrire et à expliquer ni les vieux schémas structuralistes « centre-périphérie », ni les théories de la dépendance, encore moins celles de la marginalisation (Mbembé 2013, 180).

Si le recours aux politiques d'austérité est peu recommandable aux économies africaines comme possible voie de sortie de crise de la covid-19, le recours au protectionnisme et au reshoring ne l'est pas non plus. Recourir aux politiques de protectionnisme et de reshoring dans lesquelles il y aurait une grande intervention de l'État en matière de politique commerciale et industrielle, avec une forte option pour des discriminations positives en faveur des firmes nationales dans l'attribution des marchés publics serait également peu recommandable parce que ces politiques n'ont pas fait leurs preuves depuis 1945 dans les pays développés et depuis les années 1970 dans les pays émergents (Defraigne 2020).

Face aux limites de ces politiques, l'Afrique ne devrait-elle pas chercher des solutions de la crise à partir du contexte qui lui est propre, comme le recommandait Jean Marc Ela ? Pour le sociologue, il faut refuser de penser l'avenir de l'Afrique à partir du passé des autres dont les modèles de développement à prétentions universalistes ont créé des conditions d'entretien d'une économie et d'une culture de la pauvreté dans le continent africain. Il sied donc de réfléchir sur une nouvelle manière d'articuler les rapports entre l'économie, la société et les cultures. Plutôt que d'intérioriser l'esprit occidental, l'Afrique est appelée à redécouvrir les chemins d'inventivité en explorant le champ des possibles qui lui est propre (Ela 1998, 73-74). Cette démarche serait plus efficace si l'Afrique, tout en s'ouvrant au reste du monde, concevait son développement à partir de la réalité qui lui est propre. C'est d'ailleurs ce que propose l'une des organisations onusiennes. En fait, « au niveau régional, l'UNESCO encourage le partage d'expériences, celui des meilleures pratiques et la promotion des approches endogènes de développement » (UNESCO 2020). Cette proposition pourrait alors déboucher sur une régionalisation de la production comme le font déjà l'Union Européenne, l'Amérique du Nord, l'Amérique

du Centre et l'Asie Orientale (Defraigne 2020). Ainsi, l'opportunité est donnée aux économies africaines de revoir leurs politiques de production et de consommation. Il conviendrait alors de promouvoir la production et la consommation locale en réduisant les exportations (Fakaba 2020). L'exemple de l'Égypte pourrait bien être un stimulant pour les autres économies du continent. Car, « On y apprend, ainsi, que l'Égypte est l'une des économies du continent qui a le mieux résisté malgré l'effondrement du tourisme. Le pays se paie même le luxe d'être l'un des rares à avoir enregistré une croissance positive en 2020 (+3,5 %), grâce à la solidité de son marché intérieur et à la réponse forte des autorités sur le plan budgétaire et monétaire » (Seibt 2021).

Conclusion

De même qu'au lendemain de la deuxième guerre mondiale le constat de la fragilité des métropoles avait suscité le désir d'émancipation des peuples africains du joug colonial, de même la crise sanitaire actuelle pourrait pousser les États africains à poser les jalons de la reconquête de leur dignité et de leur souveraineté. En arrière-fond de la crise que vit le monde actuellement, l'on peut percevoir l'émergence de l'inventivité africaine voilée par des siècles de brimades et d'inertie durant lesquels tout un continent s'est contenté de recevoir et de se recevoir d'autrui. L'effet révélateur de la crise actuelle ne met pas qu'à nu les tares d'un système mondial oppressif mais aussi la capacité d'un continent à se mobiliser pour se prendre en charge sans nécessairement avoir besoin de la caution d'autrui.

Révlant les limites du paradigme néocolonial, porté par le capitalisme, la crise de la covid-19 se présente comme une opportunité à saisir par les pays africains pour s'émanciper du diktat politico-économique de l'Occident. En effet, au moment où l'Europe et l'Amérique du Nord peinent à maîtriser la covid-19, l'Afrique, malgré la circulation de divers variants du virus dans ses territoires, démontre sa forte capacité résiliente face à la maladie. Cette résilience est le tribut de sa longue et grande expérience des épidémies dont la lutte a, majoritairement, été soutenue par les forces endogènes. Ces dernières ont fait leurs preuves dans le passé et la pandémie actuelle leur permet de prouver une fois de plus leur efficacité. À partir de ce moment, y a-t-il vraiment encore lieu, pour l'Afrique, de tout attendre de l'Occident? La réponse est non! L'Afrique regorge d'un potentiel humain et matériel dont le bon usage lui garantirait des lendemains meilleurs. Il conviendrait donc que le continent africain procède à un réajustement de paradigme, à une restructuration des savoirs et à une révision des concepts, grilles, méthodes d'analyse et des systèmes de référence pour entrer en dialogue avec les autres continents et leur proposer sa contribution. Cette remise en cause de l'Afrique lui permettrait de mieux affronter des crises, à l'instar de celle de la covid-19 dont l'impact se fait plus ressentir sur les économies de ses pays que sur

l'état de santé de ses habitants. L'extraversion économique des pays africains au profit des pays industrialisés justifie, en partie, les raisons pour lesquelles la pandémie de la covid-19 a de graves conséquences économiques sur le continent africain. Faudrait-il le rappeler, ces économies d'extraction, de prédation et de ponction véhiculent dans le quotidien la violence sous sa forme visible et invisible. La pandémie à covid-19 est donc une opportunité que l'Afrique devrait saisir pour mettre fin à ces violences qu'elle subit au travers des solutions et des actions politiques et économiques conçues ailleurs et à elle imposées. La crise de la covid-19 pourrait être perçue comme un réveil pour les Africains qui, jusqu'ici, adoptaient une position attentiste face à autrui. Ce réveil pousserait alors le continent africain à se positionner comme acteur actif. Tourner le dos aux politiques d'austérité et de protectionnisme ainsi qu'au reshoring au profit de la conjugaison des savoirs, des forces et des productions endogènes au niveau régional constituerait déjà un pas de plus dans la marche du continent africain vers sa souveraineté économique; celle-ci passe, à n'en point douter, par l'autonomie politico-monnaire et la bonne gouvernance.

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Individuals, Conglomerates, Persons, and Communities

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Abstract

Literature seems to regard a community as a grouping of individuals united for a common purpose. In this paper, I augment the discrete constituents – the social units ‘individual’ and ‘group or community’ – to form a matrix with four categories in an attempt to better explain pluralistic realities witnessed in Africa. I show how individuals (which I define as human beings seen separately from their social connections) group together to form ‘conglomerates’ (grouping of individuals to achieve a common goal), while ‘communities’ consist of ‘persons’ (human beings in constant reflexivity to their social connections), not individuals. In building the argument, I categorise the social units, elaborate on categories and affiliated concepts from two main perspectives (non-Western and Western), and provide multi-focal nuances. The paper contributes a conceptual framing with the hope to move the discourse on how humans group as social beings, and how these groups can be called and recognised in practice.

Key words: Community, Conglomerates, Individualism, Normative epistemology, African customs

Résumé

La littérature semble considérer une communauté comme un regroupement d’individus unis dans un but commun. Dans cet article, j’augmente les constituants distincts – les unités sociales « individuel » et « groupe ou communauté » – pour former une matrice avec quatre catégories dans le but de mieux expliquer les réalités pluralistes observées en Afrique. Je montre comment les individus (que je définis comme des êtres humains vus séparément de leurs liens sociaux) se regroupent pour former des « conglomerats » (regroupement d’individus pour atteindre un objectif commun), tandis que les « communautés » consistent en des « personnes » (des êtres humains en constante réflexivité à leurs liens sociaux), et non des individus. En construisant l’argument, je catégorise les unités sociales, élabore des catégories et des concepts affiliés à partir de deux perspectives principales (non-occidentales et occidentales) et fournit des nuances multifocales. L’article apporte un cadrage conceptuel dans l’espoir de déplacer le discours sur la façon dont les humains se regroupent en tant qu’êtres sociaux, et comment ces groupes peuvent être appelés et reconnus dans la pratique.

Mots clés : Communauté, Conglomerats, Individualisme, Épistémologie normative, coutumes africaines

Introduction

Libraries are full of studies and musings categorising human beings and their behaviour. The categorisation of social units – the discrete constituents that make up a society or larger group – is a contentious and complex issue and the subject of much study in sociology and anthropology. The latter augments the conversation by proposing categories gleaned from the examination of patterns of behaviour, near and far.

Categories frame arguments as they normalise the world. They provide the bedrock for scientific discourse. A Eurocentric science has used these categories as a lens through which to focus its universalising gaze on the planet. It does so by delivering word formulations that articulate a Eurocentric view of the world, which are adopted and repeated by seats of power. These categories facilitate the politics that keep Eurocentric validation in place (Mawere, van Reisen, & van Stam, 2019). Unfortunately, these categories are set with little, if any, contribution from the non-West, reducing their ability to describe reality and, therefore, utility.

The complexity of the categorisation of social units is exacerbated in today's globalising and urbanising world. Identities are culturally positioned, complex, and contradictory (Appiah, 2018). Kwasi Wiredu (1996, p. 1) points out:

We live in times marked by a certain [...] anomaly [...] in a cultural flux characterised by a confused interplay between an indigenous cultural heritage and foreign cultural legacy of a colonial origin. Implicated at the deepest reaches of this cultural amalgam is the superimposition of Western conceptions of the good upon African thought and conduct.

In many writings, I recognise two social units – two main categories – being positioned: the 'individual' and the 'community', one being the singular human being and the other those human beings together. An example of this can be found in the following passage by Dismas Masolo (2002, p. 22):

Individual and community were related in a constant mutual dependency: the specific behaviour of individuals in various contexts gave the community its cultural boundaries and identity just as much as the normative standards of the community regulated the practices of individuals and groups within it.

Anthropologic assessments of cultures show the West as individualistic and so-called traditional societies, such as sub-Saharan Africa, as collectivistic (Metz, 2015). Notwithstanding the complications arising from the Eurocentricity of the concepts

used (e.g., the words ‘Western’, ‘modern’, and ‘traditional’ all come with a geopolitical history), it is clear that the narrative distinguishes two distinct social entities: the single human being, or the ‘individual’, and a collective of human beings, the ‘community’. The content and meaning of the words *group* and *community* seem to overlap, for example, like in group-of-experts and community-of-practice.

Ryszard Kapuściński, together with many others, considers *modernity* to map onto Western thought and urban life globally. At the same time, ‘traditionality’ – coined here as the pursuit of so-called ‘traditional’ lifestyles – is said to be the focus of those in rural areas, who uphold and transmit traditional customs and cultural beliefs. Kapuściński (2008) posits that these distinctions should be dissolved, because, among other things, the movement of rural populations weakens cultural ties and fuels hybridity, making interactions changeable and dynamic.

The distinction and interaction between the units *individual* and *community* (the crowd/the masses) is a dominant framing – and research outputs are framed in both categories. For instance, the headline of Jolanda Jetten *et al.*’s study on the power of group norms in Asia states in its title that “We’re all individuals” (Jetten, Postmes, & McAuliffe, 2002). Reading such literature, and these kinds of reports, while embedded in African communities, is somewhat unsettling – something seems to be amiss.

The dichotomous notion of ‘individualism’ and ‘communitarianism’ is also confusing. Communitarians and communities appear to be related, but to what do individuals relate to? If communities are built through the bringing together of individuals, where are communitarians in this narrative? Are communitarians to be understood as individuals who strive to be together? From my lived experience in culturally different societies in the South and the North, and in these societies, in the rural and urban geographical and social spaces, this makes no sense (van Stam, 2011, 2017a, 2021). In my experience, proto-individuals seem to have difficulty recognising the value of – and values in – communities. In hindsight, the efforts of individuals to work together in or with communities resemble a boulevard of broken dreams. Along the way are trouble, bad moods, despair and even depression, and individuals have been seen to draw back, sometimes with contempt and arrogance (Malinowski, 1935). However, the notion that a community is the aggregation of individuals appears current in both considerate academic writings and stereotyping pulp, both from the South and the North.

Although what an individual is may be clear to a Western-trained person, what a *community is* remains shrouded in mystery. Some argue that the so-called modern, Western society has forgotten what community life means, as modernity has shredded communal values. But if a group of individuals together form a community, then does it follow that the individuals experience communal life? Apparently not.

In this paper, I attempt to solve the problem by reviewing the categories in two contexts: the private/secluded and the public/social. This review yields the existence of two additional categories: the *person* (positioned in the private) and the *conglomerate*

(positioned in the public). The addition of these two categories, I propose, explains more clearly what a community entails. It sheds light on how to view the lamented 'lost knowledge' on what a community is and revisits and discontinues the direct link between individuals and communities. But first, before this is done, in the next section I explain the method used.

Method

With the pregnant question 'what *is* a community?', I set my enquiry along a dynamic and integrative epistemological route (Bigirimana, 2017), and scrutiny of the literature from non-Western and Western philosophers, sages, academics and practitioners. This text emerged from the integration of my long-term and differentiated experiences, embodied understandings, value judgements, and actions while residing in rural and urban areas in sub-Saharan Africa, augmented by observations during a multitude of professional and personal visits to Europe and North America. Based on 20 years of uninterrupted focus on such a life, I tried to harmonise my observations, experiences and learnings using the method of living research (van Stam, 2019) developed from Michael Burawoy's extended case method (Burawoy, 2009).

For years, while studying and in intellectual discussions, I have wrestled with the hegemonic view of a community as being the grouping of individuals. Often, after reading and conversations, I would default to the hegemonic understanding and be frustrated by the discordance between such an understanding and what I experienced every day. Unlearning established theory and categories is very difficult. To do so, I relied on reflective science (Burawoy, 2009; van Stam, 2019), critical thinking and exploration to uncover a fresh understanding of the what a community is and how it is constituted. This paper is the outcome of that struggle.

Wrestling local theory out from under the Eurocentric categorisations that permeate it is an act of decolonisation (Hlabangane, 2018) and a move towards epistemic sovereignty (Buskens & van Reisen, 2016). Decolonisation is an intellectual and moral imperative in a globalising world (van Stam, 2017c). In other words, aiding inclusive, multifaceted understandings and the emancipation of polyvocality (the consideration of many voices), diversity and multiple perspectives is an intellectual and moral duty. In the dynamic and integral epistemology current in the South, understanding provides fuel for judgement and action (Bigirimana, 2017).

Defining community and other social units

Here I come to the main subject of this paper: what is community? To answer this question, first we need to examine some of its generally stated constituent parts. In this

section, I look at what is understood as an ‘individual’, as well as introducing two new categories – ‘conglomerate’ and ‘person’ – in the hope that this new framework will give rise to a fuller, more nuanced, understanding of community.

The individual

The Dutch theologian Gert-Jan Roest paints a picture of a Western society entering an ‘Age of Authenticity’ (Roest, 2016). Western practice, Roest argues, self-consciously regards the individual as the primary agent of change and control. In this realm, people interact with and bounce off each other like billiard balls. The pursuits of the individual, he writes, are: striving for human power and agency, freedom and fulfilment in self-sufficiency, self-reliance, autonomy through self-cultivation, and immanent prosperity and security.

Although the understanding of what it means to be human is different in both imagined epistemic realms (West and non-West), both agree on the possible existence of individuals. A common denominator is the focus on individuals as being separate and unique. The individual is a single entity, significant to him/herself, striving to be recognised as such. This brings me to the following definition of individual: *An individual is a human being independent of social groups or relationships.*

Of course, being an individual is a theoretical concept, as each person is intrinsically connected, having emerged into the realm of the living through a woman’s womb. In this definition, the proto-individual is a human being that views him/herself (and others view him/her) independently from his/her relationships – a specific (and solitary)-self in a world consisting of many other distinct (and solitary)-selves. This understanding of individualism aligns with assessments of how Western culture and so-called modernity “calls for the limiting of oneself in one’s private, egotistical ‘me’, with a tightly isolated circle where one can satisfy one’s own urges and consumer whims” (Kapuściński, 2008, p. 72).

This individualism was pivotal in the work of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. From ethical reasoning, he highlighted the individual’s docility and indifference to ‘the other’ (Levinas, 1961). Many herald individualism as one of the benefits of modernism and among the values of Western culture. Much has been written about its features, both in philosophy, e.g., Kant, Foucault, and others, as well as in popular literature.

The conglomerate

In the search to depict the grouping of individuals, I stumbled on the word ‘conglomerate’. And that sounded just right! A conglomerate, the dictionary tells me, is a thing consisting of several different and distinct parts or items that are grouped together. In the social field, the grouping together of individuals seems to be mostly (measurable) outcome related. Thus, the definition: *A conglomerate is a grouping of individuals to achieve a common goal.*

This definition even fits with the common understanding of conglomerates, being a group of business entities. Conglomerates are mostly formed by individuals who cooperate to participate in economic activities. Conglomerates establish themselves in the political context of power, aligning with, or pushing the boundaries of, established legal frameworks. Conglomerates are guided strategically to bring about 'a purpose'. This positioning involves negotiation and possible struggle against 'significant others' to guard or extend shared *interests*. Conglomerates exist to bring about change or safeguard the interests of their members, to accumulate resource with which to undertake *actions* or to withstand external pressures.

It is here where institutes are formed. Institutes are social units that exist whether or not the persons that perform in them are present. They are the representation of conglomerates. Conglomerates, one could say, are primarily focused on bringing individuals together to *do*, to achieving goals. In contemporary jargon, this involves the articulation of, and agreement with, the conglomerate's written vision, mission, and objectives, and strategic reasoning (an action plan) on how to reach that goal, taking into account competing interests and regulations.

The person

There is little denial of the fact that human beings are embroiled socially. They emerged from a mother, relate to, and often grow up in, diverse social settings from which they derive language. One of the concepts related to this is family. The science of the embedding of human beings in the social context is complicated and vast. Some think that the context imposes identity, others argue that identity is self-made. Molefi Asante (2017) argues that children start as individuals, unaware of their environment, unattached to social bonds, and through interactions in the community become whole persons.

Western settings regard people as mature when they can make their own individual decisions and stand up for their own choices. In contrast, non-Western contexts often declare adulthood after initiation. Initiation indicates that the human being understands what it means to be 'in union' with society and the more extensive social system – what one's part and position is within it. After initiation, depending on those understandings, one's rights can be exercised and duties performed, all set in moral behaviour according to the espoused group values. The person continually evaluates and adjusts his or her conduct to the known or assumed expectations of those he or she relates with. In this way, the person shifts the focus of their conduct from self to the network, contributing to the development and upkeep of shared values. These considerations bring me to the following definition: *A person is a human being that belongs as part of a social network (of relationships).*

The community

Communities exist in many forms and manners. As pointed out above, in the West a community is understood as a collection of human beings existing in a structural aggregation of the individuals that are part of it (cf. Giddens, 1986). Examples are a community-of-practice, like a football club, based on the need to work together to achieve a common goal: winning a game. With the introduction of the conglomerate, this view of the community is disempowered.

Community, in *ubuntu* (communal love) (Mawere & van Stam, 2016) is the condition in which one finds people both identifying with and exhibiting solidarity towards one another (Metz, 2011, p. 236), where one encounters close and sympathetic social relations within a group (Mokgoro, 1998, p. 3). Ubuntu is like the Latin American concept of *buen vivir* (the good life) (Gudynas, 2011). In both, consciousness and society merge. Community members develop shared beliefs and norms of behaviour. Often, a conversation is carefully scripted and handled, with all searching for consensus, an equilibrium, in a rhythm. As such, communities harbour persons: those who inhabit the enduring entity 'community', engaged in and with the unity of beliefs and behaviours the community embodies, persons who belong. In this manner, communities are both permanent social entities and flexible ever-changing contexts.

In short, communities involve belonging and the embodiment of values and beliefs, are ethically grounded, and exist in a confined area in which justice can be sought. From this, I deduce the definition of a community to be: *A community is a gathering of persons who subscribe to shared set of values.*

Of course, critics abound. Communities, some say, are stifling self-employment and can allow despotic control. Others criticise the absence of communities as the pinnacle of vanity. An overarching view, however, is the understanding that communities have to do with commonalities, which, I suggest, can be understood in moral terms. Communities are groupings of those who belong, orient around 'being', with 'doing' being framed and monitored by the values and moral precepts current in the community. Communities are a dialogically constituted gathering – a constantly morphing product of conversations and interactions between people.

Mapping the proposed categories

Perspectives matter; perspectives depend on context, experiences, nature and nurture. As categorisation can help to designate appearances, it is essential to acknowledge that categories are not prescriptive, nor do they exist in a 'pure form'. Although one can recognise shared characteristics, as explored in the previous section, people are interdependent. At the same time, identities are nurtured and constructed in response to

existence and (potential) interactions with other human beings and non-human beings.

This section sets out the results of a transdisciplinary exercise to map the concepts associated with the four distinct categories defined above. Through such a mapping, I try to show the utility of the categories in practice. Its content is harvested from my personal interactions with people and repeated observations of communities and conglomerates over long periods of time, living in sub-Saharan Africa and traveling the world.

Matrix of categories

In Table 1, I map the categories of single human beings and groupings of human beings according to the dichotomy of private and public life.

Table 1. Overview of categories of single and groups of human beings

Orientation	One	Many
<i>Private (independent)</i>	Individual	Conglomerate
<i>Public (civic)</i>	Person	Community

Apart from the four categories presented in Table 1, there is a wide variety in how human beings view themselves, whether alone or in various forms of social groupings. When so framed by the researcher, studies seem to recognise the various categorisations provided. Consecutive literature shows how people identify with some of them, but not with others.

Undoubtedly, there are many ‘in-between’ stages and crossovers between the four categories presented. For instance, conglomerates can be ethically guided (e.g., environmental rights movements) and communities can be a political force (e.g., when logging takes place in so-called tribal lands). When regarding ‘measurable outputs’, individuals and persons can appear to be alike. The difference, however, lies in the embedding and nature of the interaction in context. There are distinct differences in the focus on power/control of conglomerates and the authority/legitimacy of communities. The same is valid when assessing aspects influencing the social cohesion of the groupings, and both conglomerates and communities can enable or inhibit cultural issues, explicit value statements, and ideologies or rituals that influence the behaviour of their members. Their existence gives rise to both ‘in groups’ and ‘out groups’. A multitude of leadership structures exist in both categories. And, of course, one can be a member of various entities, including conglomerates (e.g., economic production units) and communities (e.g., geographical, spiritual, ethnic, and national).

Notwithstanding the above, given the original research question – ‘what is a community?’ – and because of the incompatibility of the dominant thinking: that individuals are seen to aggregate in communities, I posit that the four categories have a

rational appeal. The consecutiveness of individuals grouping in the form of communities is ill-informed. The frequent use of the word 'communal' in the setting of individualism is current but does not fit with the word community. Here, I argue that the word conglomerate more accurately covers that subject matter.

Concepts associated with categories

Although the categories do not exist in their uniform, singular and essential form, I expand on concepts embedded in the four types and, thus, how the categories are recognised in practice. These notions are identified by looking at the categories from two generic perspectives: a Western one and a non-Western one. Both of these positions exist theoretically, with a variety of nuanced forms of self-awareness and stereotyped otherings (contained in ideological framed orientalism and Occidentalism). In this subsection, I align with Thaddeus Metz, who argues that the term 'African' is an example of a geographical label that refers to (Metz, 2015, p. 1176):

... features that are salient in a locale, at least over a substantial amount of time. [Geographical labels] pick out properties that have for a long while been recurrent in a place in a way they have tended not to be elsewhere. They denote fairly long-standing characteristics in a region that differentiate it from many other regions.

Although 'the West' and 'the South' are imaginary labels depicting unclear geographies, I adhere to Metz's view on the use of geographically linked names. When I use the label 'Western', I seek to refer to the realities that many Europeans, Americans and others, those who regard themselves as part of 'the West', might recognise as features that are salient in their locales over a substantial amount of time.

In diffusionist anthropology, Eurocentric perspectives are widely recognised as being a dominant intellectual approach to the world. However, this is a coercive reality underpinning global matrices of power (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). For over five centuries, Europeans strove to rule and dominate the world. In contemporary times, coloniality only recognises the validation and valorisation of what is considered 'knowledge' when done by a Western-trained, preferably European-based, universalistic academy (Grosfoguel, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2016). Super-colonial tendencies continue to demand description in Western terminology, to be understood from a Western position, using Western language and wordings (van Stam, 2017b). Normative epistemology harbours ideologies and metaphors and reifies borders when discussing particular differences in dichotomous narratives. In this thinking, the mind and heart are separated, as is 'being' from 'doing'.

In Table 2, I provide an overview of the categories and affiliated concepts, aligned

with designated appearances. This list offers a starting point for further investigation of the four nomenclatures. In this overview, I endeavour to link the four categories with a whole range of designations that appear in philosophy, sociology, ethnography and other disciplines.

Table 2. Overview of related concepts, viewed from a normative perspective

	Individual	Conglomerate	Person	Community
Action	Propose	Identify	Request	Adhere
Articulation	State	Display	Orate	Synthesise
Constitution	Ego	Group of individuals	Connected-self	Group of persons
Difficulty	Selfish	Partisan	Conservative	Sectarian
Drive	Accumulation	Control	Vocation	Preservation
Existence	Alone	Establishment	Together	Commons
Focus	Power	Accumulation	Authority	Harmony
Honour	Acknowledgment	Ranking	Integrity	Relevance
Information	Knowledge	Empirics	Knowing	Consequences
Institution	Job	System	Tenure	Communiversity
Orientation	Competition	Strategic	Contribution	Convention
Output	Accomplishments	Contracts	Supporters	Consensus
Position	Homo economicus	Social contract	Homo situs	Embodied habitus
Purpose	To excel	To obtain	To know	To be together
Recognition	Skills	Reputation	Wisdom	Grace
Resource	Ability	Capital	Stewardship	Endowment
Success	Winning	Agreements	Consultations	Fellowship
Mechanism	Doing	Text	Being	Conversation
Truth	Utility	Constructed	Revealed	Disclosed

Since the nominal withdrawal of colonial powers led to a plethora of sovereign countries, non-Western views have had the chance to become more pronounced and heard. From a recognition of the significance of non-Western philosophies and their derivatives, also through post-colonial studies, and from exercises in the shedding of coloniality (e.g., ‘Rhodes must fall’, see Nyamnjoh, 2016), a demand has emerged for the recognition of

non-Western views. Non-Western views are best assessed in decolonial settings. Here, ambitious and dynamic processes are set in actively developed value epistemes. Insights into journeys of life are framed by accumulative insights. They emerge from experience and flow from a constant reiteration of the present, given a changing history.

Unhelpfully, much work on the description of communities in Africa, South America and Asia is framed in, and constitutive of, the politics of the former colonial systems. Views of community were – and still are – a target for the colonial matrices of power. Especially in indirect rule, the Western perception of ‘traditional communities’ has been used as a means of control (Mamdani, 2012). In the setting of this paper, colonial powers have tried to coerce communities to act as conglomerates, in the hope they could assert competing forces and create rivalry – a strategy of divide, conquer and rule. Through the colonial lens, a Eurocentric and colonial social anthropology provided the ‘scientific confirmation’.

In many settings, perception leads to understanding – involving all humans and non-humans in the vicinity – to be able to judge (in line with the values) and, subsequently, take action. In this work, I glean common, non-Western values from the concepts of *ubuntu* and *buen vivir*. What is known as *the Big Five* (van Stam, 2017a) – developed to guide interaction, research and development in the South – provides the framework for my transdisciplinary analysis.

Table 3. Overview of related concepts, viewed from a dynamic and integrative perspective

	Individual	Conglomerate	Person	Community
Affect	Reserved	Pronounced	Inclusive	Habituated
Discuss	Assertive	Juridical	Authoritative	Comprehensive
Share	Autonomous	Structured	Customary	Cooperative
Align	Defiant	Legal	Respectful	Inclusive
Flow	Distinctive	Uniform	Situated	Variable

Discussion

Tables 2 and 3 can fuel many discussions on the social categories presented in this paper, from the (possibly conflicting) viewpoints set in various disciplines. However, such a discussion goes beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the tables indicate the potential for a fruitful debate on the implications of the proposed categories. In this section I take up some of the issues involved with the contexts and social movement between the proposed categories.

Cultures and worldviews

Cultural work and feminist theory show that one's view of reality depends on one's context and, I argue, one's outlook. This, of course, depends on a person's position, worldview, and culture. For instance, the frame in which individuals operate – individualism – embeds specific outlooks and values linked to time and place. Individuals in conglomerates use planning in time and space, while persons in community contain time and space spontaneous in order to share it with those who happen to drop by (cf., Bidwell et al., 2013; Brumen, 2019). In addition to experience and observations, texts and scriptures are important for individuals and conglomerates to develop a solipsistic cognisance, while persons and communities focus more on conversation and orality to augment their intersubjective insights (cf., van Stam, 2013).

Cross-cultural work involves moving across philosophies. In turn, theories are set in worldviews and their metaphysical narratives. A diffusionist ethnographic view argues that distinct features exist and cross-pollinate. This involves reconciling the effects of observable attributes like people's appearances, the multitude of languages in use, and differences in religious concepts and beliefs. In academia, it appears that most works remain in a Eurocentric bubble or normative epistemologies. Even Kapuściński seems to struggle with cultural concepts outside of 'talking to European individuals.' His writings address the reader as an individual, providing narratives like movies are offered in a cinema: extraneous, outside oneself. He concludes: "The Stranger, the Other in his Third World incarnation (and so the most numerous individual on our planet), is still treated as the object of research, but has not yet become our partner, jointly responsible for the planet on which we live" (Kapuściński, 2008, pp. 60–61). Such a partnership needs sensitive and inclusive dialogue, sensitive to the various ways of approaching theory and knowledge.

Individual and conglomerate, versus person and community

The category 'community', as defined in this paper, does not align with how many use the word in Western settings. For instance, the definition does not conform with the use of the word by ethicist Józef Tischner, who described a community as facilitating individuality by providing awareness of oneself. He summarised it as follows "I know that I am, because I know another is" (Kapuściński, 2008, p. 68; citing Tischner, 2006, p. 219). Tischner's description fits better with the category conglomerate, as defined in this paper.

Community, as shown in this paper, fits in with narratives like those of Desmond Tutu. He explains, "It is not 'I think therefore I am'. It says rather: 'I am human because I belong'. I participate, I share" (Tutu, 1999, p. 34). In such an understanding of community,

one cannot be at peace without forgiveness, because the wellbeing of others (benefactors or offenders) is directly connected to one's own welfare.

Energy needed to cross categories

Social movement between the four categories takes energy. For individuals to convene, there is a need to interact with other human beings. Kapuściński (2008) explored this act of labour in his book *The Other*. He refers to Emmanuel Levinas, who came with individual-sensitive arguments that the individual is not able to 'know himself' without the reflection, looking into the mirror, of the other.

The move from communities to conglomerates could be assessed using classical works like Ferdinand Tönnies' (1887) work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. This work has been cited to position transitions from so-called traditional, affectual societies to a so-called rational, calculating and modern society (Waters, 2015). Tönnies, Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Kapuściński, and Levinas, among others, posit their theories within specific or generic Eurocentric framings, often from European experiences, and for a Eurocentric audience. Eurocentric framings of what is 'natural' and superior (as Tönnies saw it) have a long and questionable history of normalising and dominating the academic assessment of experiences and the constitution of (colonial) powers outside of Europe (Mamdani, 2012; Mawere & Nhemachena, 2016).

There is little work describing the move from person to individual. However, this move can be recognised, for instance, in the history of universities, where tenured academics (persons) moved towards being ranked and measured production units (individuals) in a competitive 'knowledge market'. The move from conglomerates to communities is claimed, but, in view of the above, appears challenging to realise.

In all of this, the theme of 'conversation' is central. Human beings use the facility of communication, whether by oral, textual, or other means, to establish and sustain conversations. It is through dialogue that one can travel from the state of 'being alone' to the state of 'being together'. Western philosophies about conversation seem to focus solely on how individuals converse. An expansive library of books is available on individuals who seek to transmit their experience, and how it could help others to manage and 'make the most' out of similar experiences. Methods abound for how 'to work together' (in conglomerates). It appears that the dialectic practice of persons grouping in communities has been relegated to history books or to the vast realm of oral communication.

Universalism or polyvocality

Reaching for the other – as a ‘partner’ – is a call for relationship. In conglomerates, which are set in universalism, personhood exists by virtue of being connected. Here, ‘the other’ acts like a mirror in which the individual sees (or discovers) him/herself. In the polyvocality of communities, on the other hand, relationships provide for transparent windows, through which the person gains insight into the world.

Conclusion

Starting from discomfort with the use of the word community describing an aggregation of individuals, I have provided an argument for recognising four categories as being in play: individuals and individuals congregating in conglomerates and persons and persons congregating in communities. This categorisation provides a more nuanced view of social entities and groupings, shedding light on our understanding of what a community is, derived from a dynamic and integrated meaning-making.

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Ethnicity as an Independent variable in African Politics. Lessons learned from the 2017 Kenya Presidential Elections.

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Abstract

The aim of this study² is to examine African voter behavior and the implications of ethnicity in African politics learning lessons from the Kenyan presidential elections of 2017. Other factors structuring voting behavior are explored including income, education, religion and social status. The study was conducted from May 13th to May 18th 2017, i.e., three months before election day. The population surveyed consisted of registered voters in the 49 counties of Kenya. Registration was determined by self-report. The sample frame was a cell telephone sample using a random digit dialing design. The sample was designed to be representative of the country of Kenya. As expected, the results showed that ethnicity is a strong predictor of voter behavior. However, variables like education, income, and age have an impact in mitigating the power of ethnicity. The more people get educated and wealthy the less they vote along ethnic lines. The younger voters are the less they side with their ethnic folks.

Key words: *Ethnicity, ethnic conflicts, voter behavior, Kenya elections, identity.*

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner le comportement des électeurs africains et les implications de l'ethnicité dans la politique africaine en tirant les leçons des élections présidentielles kenyanes de 2017. D'autres facteurs structurant le comportement électoral sont explorés, notamment le revenu, l'éducation, la religion et le statut social. L'étude a été menée du 13 au 18 mai 2017, soit trois mois avant le jour du scrutin. La population enquêtée était constituée d'électeurs inscrits dans les 49 comtés du Kenya. L'inscription a été déterminée par auto-évaluation. La base de sondage était un échantillon de téléphones cellulaires utilisant un plan de composition aléatoire. L'échantillon a été conçu pour être représentatif du pays du Kenya. Comme prévu, les résultats

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- 2 Funding for this study was provided by the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JCAM) under the auspices of Hekima College Peace Institute, Nairobi, Kenya. We are very grateful to JCAM President Fr. Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator, SJ, for his financial support and encouragement.

ont montré que l'ethnicité est un puissant prédicteur du comportement des électeurs. Cependant, des variables telles que l'éducation, le revenu et l'âge ont un impact sur l'atténuation du pouvoir de l'ethnicité. Plus les gens sont éduqués et riches, moins ils votent selon des critères ethniques. Plus les électeurs sont jeunes, moins ils se rangent du côté de leurs membres ethniques.

Mots clés: *Ethnicité, conflits ethniques, comportement des électeurs, Élections Kenyanes, identité*

Introduction

The issue of ethnicity is not new in African political debate or reality. Post-independence decades of African politics are replete with violence driven as it were, by ethnicity. Ethnic politics is a deadly affair evidenced in the civil wars in many African countries. This view was already anticipated among African nationalists at the dawn of independence. But many thought it would fade away with economic development and socio-political consciousness. Radical nationalist leader Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea could thus say: "In three or four years no one will remember the tribal, ethnic, or religious rivalries which, in the recent past, caused so much damage to our country and its population"³ (Toure 1959: 28). Ethnic groups and communities as social formations were ruled out as obstacles to modern integration and nation-building. Rights to the expression of cultural differences as a sign of political and economic participation were suppressed and banned. At least, this was the goal. After few decades of political experiment this ideology was soon replaced by the acknowledgment that ethnicity in African political dynamics is a reality to be reckoned with. The goal of this article is to assess the impact of this variable on the African voter behavior using as case study of the 2017 Kenyan Presidential Elections⁴. How far does group affiliation influence the expression of public opinion and political choice in an ethnic diverse environment? What are the effects of other sociological factors and markers of identity? I begin with some theoretical considerations on the relationships between ethnicity and politics before assessing the impact of other variables including education, income, economic satisfaction, religion and age.

3 Toure, Sekou. 1959. *Toward Full Reafricanisation*. Paris: Présence Africaine, 28

4 Kenyan Presidential elections were held on 8 August 2017. Incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta was declared the winner with 54.17% of the vote, while his main opponent Raila Odinga finished second with 44.94% of the vote. The opposition complained that the government had rigged the elections and appealed to the Supreme Court. In an unprecedented move the Court ruled that the election had not been "conducted in accordance with the constitution", cancelling the results and ordering fresh elections to be held within 60 days. In early October Odinga withdrew from the election. Uhuru Kenyatta eventually won the subsequent election with 98,3% of the vote.

Ethnicity and Politics

Definitions of ethnicity vary, but they all highlight the centrality of the ethnic group and the role it plays in someone's belief system. It is a subjective belief that one belongs to a group with a common ancestor whether or not objective blood ties can be established⁵. This real or imagined shared ancestry is shaped by a sense of distinctiveness arising from group identity and the deep sense of belonging that it inspires. This feeling shared identity is deepened in view of the difference and the supposedly threat presented by communities that lie beyond its boundary⁶. One of the feature that expresses this sense of belonging is the existence of a common language, which provides an instant basis for mutual recognition. But ethnic identity does not always require a distinctive language. For example, one of the defining feature of Kenyan sociolinguistic landscape is pervasive multilingualism. The large majority of the Kenyan population speaks Swahili in addition to a maternal language.

Another important defining element of ethnicity is collective awareness. The existence of a social entity is grounded on a consciousness widely expressed in kinship terms and historicized as a theory of shared ancestry, a mythology that ends up impersonating reality. This consciousness is often manipulated to serve ideological purposes. The third critical element of ethnicity is boundaries. An ethnic group identifies itself not only by certain specific common features but more crucially by what makes the difference with those beyond the cultural border. Otherness becomes an external negative referential for the self. This difference is framed in terms of who is not⁷. Relations are not necessarily hostile, but stereotypical representations of the other can lead to conflicts especially when groups compete for the same resources. And this is what often happens in societies with scarce resources like in many African countries.

The persistence of ethnoregional politics in Africa can be viewed as response to the failure of the post-colonial state to use public goods to unite and build the nation. Most regimes have squandered the opportunity by hijacking the state and its attendant goods such as jobs, healthcare, infrastructure, education and other resources largely to the benefit of their ethnic groups and therefore, making ethnicity the primary cleavage of political life⁸. Under these circumstances, it becomes difficult to trust anybody who was not from their ethnic group, a scenario that strongly influence African voter behavior. In patron-clientele politics public goods and services are distributed through clientele networks. When public interests are presented as ethnic interests in a society like Kenya where ethnicity has been used as a criterion for resource allocation since independence, voters will support elite politicians whose promise is to secure these goods for the benefit

5 Weber, Max. 1968. "Ethnic Groups," in Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds., *Max Weber: Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. New York: Bedminster, 389-390

6 Barth, Fredrik. 1969. "Introduction" in Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Boston: Little, Brown, 15.

7 Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 76

8 Miguel, E. (2004). Tribe or nation? *World Politics* 56: 327-362, 328.

of the ethnic group. It has been argued that Kenyatta and Moi ruled Kenya on the basis of patron clientele networks that were dominated by a capitalist clique of Kikuyu and Kalenjin favoring certain regions and people at the expense of others⁹.

When confronted with a choice, voters do not act in isolation, because they have distinctly embedded political characteristics anchored on their statuses in the social structure. Voter cast their ballots in response to social environmental stimuli that could guarantee peace and security. The main reference groups in society are our families, friends, neighbourhoods, civil societies, churches, ethnic leaders, the media or state bureaucrats. Majority of voters' partisan decisions at the polls are influenced by the preferences of primary groups they are associated with or their positions in the social structure. For example, it is common for wives to vote for their husbands' preference because of their failure to develop independent perceptions of the political environment¹⁰. Though group affiliation may play an important role, in the final analysis the decision to vote for a candidate takes place at the individual level. Individuals of a given group experience and perform ethnicity in widely different ways. Not all members of a given group vote according to the dictates of ethnic attachment, nor do all individuals give equal importance to ethnic consciousness, in relation to such other social identities as gender, social status, occupation, generation, or residential unit. Each one of these can have its own political importance. In addition to ethnic consciousness this study also tests several other factors, including education, income, religion, income and age.

The research design

Project Execution

Studies have proven that in Kenyan politics ethno-regionalism can rightfully be considered as a surrogate to political party affiliation. But because of lack of civic education and strong primary social bonds – especially in-group identity – Kenyans are more likely to choose candidates who originate from their regions or their home district¹¹. Working on a project based on ethnicity, at the initial step of my research I needed to curve the geography of the ethnic division of Kenya. With this in mind, I visited the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics, Nairobi. During the meeting the director gently declined to provide me with any information about the ethnic composition of the country. He gently explained that ethnicity was banned from public political discourse

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- 9 Adar, K. G. (2000). Assessing democratisation trends in Kenya: A post-mortem of the Moi regime. *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 38(3): 103-130.
 - 10 Andersen, R. and A. Heath (2003). Social identities and political cleavages: The role of political context. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A (Statistics in Society)* 166(3): 301-327; 31
 - 11 Otianto Wafula, J. *Voter Behavior in General Elections in Kenya, 1992 – 2007: Implications for the Development of Liberal Democracy*. PhD Dissertation: Jomo Kenyatta University, September 2014.

since the events that had led to the indictment of incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta by the International Criminal Court¹². He even tried to persuade me to stop the research project, a venture that could be dangerous for my own safety. But that was precisely my challenge.

This hurdle was overcome by matching the map of the Kenyan ethnic groups with the corresponding counties. I did this by superposing the ethnic and county maps of Kenya.

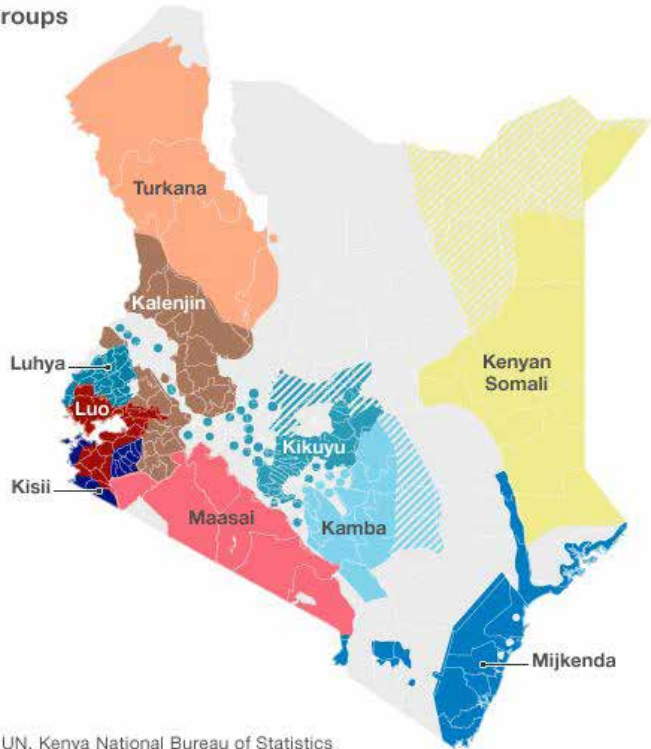


Map. 1

12 The ICC had launched a criminal investigation into the responsibility for the 2007-2008 post violence-election violence in Kenya. The opposition candidate Raila Odinga accused the government of electoral fraud and rejected the results. The ensuing violence – mainly along tribal lines – led to an estimated 1,200 deaths and more than 500,000 internally displaced people. Then Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta and then Education Minister William Ruto were among those indicted by the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber on charges of Crimes against humanity.

Distribution of ethnic groups

Ethnic groups



Source: Kenyan embassy to the UN, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

Map. 2

Counties that were selected to represent an ethnic group were those that are comprised of only that single ethnic group. Counties with diverse ethnic groups were put in the category “others”. To this latter category I also included Kenya Somali since it is difficult to assess their loyalty to the members of Kenyan inborn tribes. Using Kenyan latest population census¹³ and matching ethnic groups to counties we could get with a high level of confidence the following ethnic distribution:

17,15% of respondents came the Kikuyu ethnic group

Counties: Nyeri, Embu, Muranga, Kiambu, Nairobi, Kirinyaga, Taraka Nithi);

13,8% from the Luhya

(**Counties:** Busia, Kakamega);

13 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census Volume IV: Distribution of Population by Socio-Economic Characteristics⁷. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

12,8% from the Kalenjin
(**Counties:** West Pokot, Baringo, Marakwet, Kericho, Bomet, Nandi);

10,47% from the Luo
(**Counties:** Siaya, Kisumu, Homabay);

10% from the Kamba
(**Counties:** Machakos, Kitui, Makuemi);
5,7% from the Kisi
(**Counties:** Migori, Nyamiri, Kisii);

5% from the Mijikenda
(**Counties:** Mombassa, Kwale, Kilifi);

4,29% from the Meru
(**County:** Meru);

2,5% from the Turkana
(**County:** Turkana);

2,1% from the Massai
(**Counties:** Narok, Kajiado);

14% from other regions
(**Counties:** Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, Taita Taveta, Trans Nzoia, Elgeyo, Marsabit, Laikipia, Samburu, Uasin Gishu, Lamu, Tana River, Nyandarua, Nakuru, Bungoma, Vihiga, Mandera).

The population surveyed consisted of registered voters in the 49 counties of Kenya. Registration was determined by self-report. The sample frame was a cell telephone sample using a random digit dialing design. The sample was designed to be representative of the country of Kenya. The project began on 13th May 2017 and concluded it on the 18th day of the same month. It was conducted by a team of 10 interviewers, each handling 30 interviews a day for 5 days¹⁴. A sampling frame of at least 33000 contacts was generated because of an anticipated rejection rate. In the aggregate, the team managed to do 1500 interviews with a 50-50 male-female gender split. In the course of the data collection

14 Interviews were conducted by Foresight Research Ltd, Piedmont Plaza, Ngong Road, Nairobi

exercise, the team of interviewers made out-bound calls to a randomized sample of respondents from all parts of the country and from all ethnicities. Interviewers had a predefined script from which they probed respondents for about 15-20 minutes.

Besides, each of them had calling lists (new ones on each day) which was a list of randomized samples of respondents who were called and probed on their opinion. Working closely as a team of 5 quality assurance and project management persons, the team undertook spot-checks (call listen-ins) of interviews on a rotational basis, to enhance utmost data quality. Beyond the data collection exercise, we undertook a post-coding exercise to translate the worded data into a numerical form. We are quite confident that research protocol was strictly adhered to. It is the file which we earlier sent you. Accompanying the submission of this article are the raw data and the questionnaire, detailing how the question responses were coded, and the regions covered in the poll. Interviews were carried out in English or Swahili.

Sampling

Because of the ethnic complexity of the Kenyan society, we opted to use stratified sampling as the best method for our analysis. This method consists of separating the elements of the working population into mutually exclusive groups called strata. The stratum of our study was ethnicity represented by home-country. Our sampling was weighed according to the ethnic distribution of Kenya. Within each ethnic group we performed a random sampling.

Sample size, level of confidence and margin of error

The level of confidence is the risk of error I was willing to accept for the study. I could typically choose either a 95% level of confidence (5% chance of error) or a 99% level of confidence (1% chance of error). Given time requirements, budget, and the magnitude of the consequences of drawing incorrect conclusions from the sample, I chose a 95% confidence level.

The confidence interval or the margin of error determines the level of sampling accuracy that I wanted to obtain. For any given sample standard deviation, the larger the sample size is, the smaller is the standard error. Conversely, the smaller the sample size is, the larger is the standard error. A margin of error of ± 3 is generally satisfactory. But for my study, I set it at 2.5.

The relationship between the confidence interval, margin of error, and the standard error sample can be expressed by the following equation:

$$\overline{ME_p} = \pm Z_{\alpha} \overline{ME_p} = \pm Z_{\alpha} (\overline{\sigma_p} \overline{\sigma_p}) \quad (1)$$

Where $\overline{ME_p} = \overline{ME_p}$ = margin of error in terms of proportions

$\overline{Z_{\alpha}} \overline{Z_{\alpha}}$ = Z score for various levels of confidence (α)

$\overline{\sigma_p} \overline{\sigma_p}$ = standard error for a distribution of sample proportions

The formula of the true population proportion being:

$$\overline{\sigma_p} \overline{\sigma_p} = \sqrt{(p(1-p))/n} \sqrt{(p(1-p))/n} \quad (2)$$

Substituting it into equation (1) gives the following equation:

$$\overline{ME_p} \overline{ME_p} = \pm \overline{Z_{\alpha}} \overline{Z_{\alpha}} \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}} \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$$

Solving for n yields

$$n = \left(\frac{\overline{Z_{\alpha}} \overline{p(1-p)}}{\overline{ME_p}} \right)^2 \left(\frac{\overline{Z_{\alpha}} \overline{p(1-p)}}{\overline{ME_p}} \right)^2 \quad (3)$$

Since we have opted for a 95% confidence interval, $p = .5$.

We know that when $p = .5$, $\overline{Z_{\alpha}} \overline{Z_{\alpha}} = 1.96$

Equation (3) can be further refined:

$$n = \left(\frac{\overline{Z_{\alpha}(.5)}}{\overline{ME_p}} \right)^2 \left(\frac{\overline{Z_{\alpha}(.5)}}{\overline{ME_p}} \right)^2 \quad (4)$$

because $\sqrt{.5(1-.5)} \sqrt{.5(1-.5)} = .5$

Operationalizing (4) gives the following result:

$$n = \left| \left(\frac{1.96 (.5)}{.025} \right)^2 \right| \left(\frac{1.96 (.5)}{.025} \right)^2 = 1536$$

I decided to round it down to 1500 respondents.

Stratified sampling provided the following distribution:

257 Kikuyu (17.1% of the sample),

207 Luhya (13.8%),

190 Kalenjin (12.7%),

158 Luo (10.5%),

150 Kamba (10.0%),

86 Kisi (5.7%),

76 Mijikenda (5.1%),

65 Meru (4.3%),

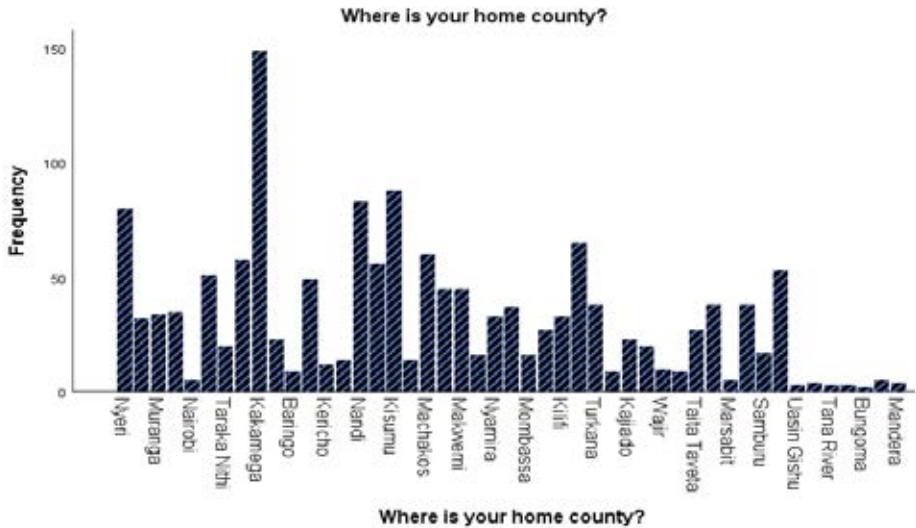
38 Turkana (2.5%),

32 Massai (2.1%),

241 "others" (16.1%).

Ethnicity being banned from public discourse we were at high risk of having the police show up at our door if the inquiry was reported to the local authority. This could happen if we had asked upfront the question "what is your ethnic group?". Those who had not called the police would have been very reluctant to answer. And this would have biased the sample. To circumvent this, our questionnaire started with two questions. The first question was: "where do you live?". The second one was: "where is your home county?". There is nothing suspicious about these questions. This question produced the following distribution:

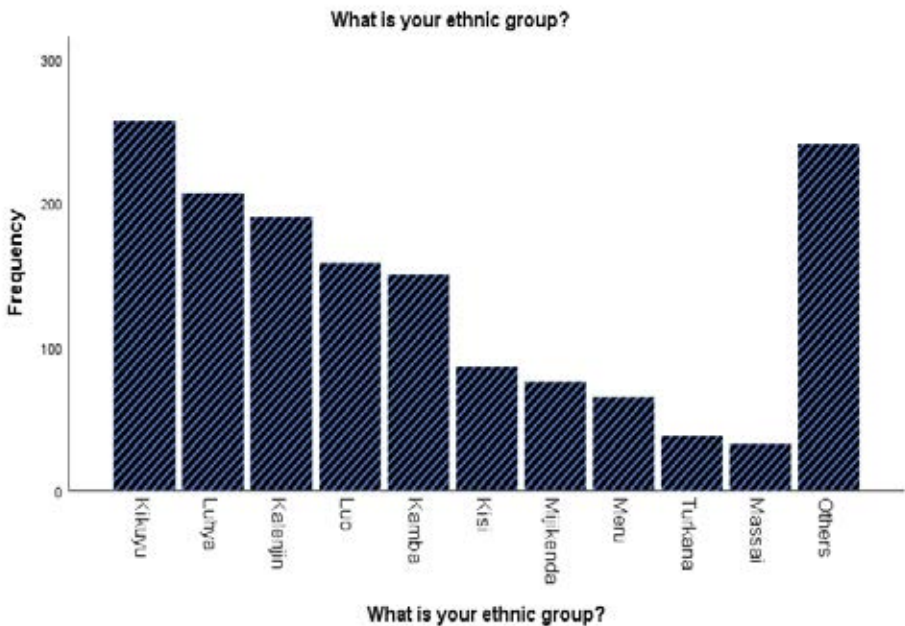
Where is your home county?					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Nyeri	80	5.3	5.3	5.3
	Embu	32	2.1	2.1	7.5
	Muranga	34	2.3	2.3	9.7
	Kiambu	35	2.3	2.3	12.1
	Nairobi	5	.3	.3	12.4
	Kinnyaga	51	3.4	3.4	15.8
	Taraka Nithi	20	1.3	1.3	17.1
	Busia	58	3.9	3.9	21.0
	Kakamega	149	9.9	9.9	30.9
	West Pokot	23	1.5	1.5	32.5
	Baringo	9	.6	.6	33.1
	Marakwet-Elgeyo	49	3.3	3.3	36.3
	Kericho	12	.8	.8	37.1
	Bomet	14	.9	.9	38.1
	Nandi	83	5.5	5.5	43.6
	Siaya	56	3.7	3.7	47.3
	Kisumu	88	5.9	5.9	53.2
	Homabay	14	.9	.9	54.1
	Machakos	60	4.0	4.0	58.1
	Kitui	45	3.0	3.0	61.1
	Makwemi	45	3.0	3.0	64.1
	Migori	16	1.1	1.1	65.2
	Nyamira	33	2.2	2.2	67.4
	Kisii	37	2.5	2.5	69.9
	Mombassa	16	1.1	1.1	70.9
	Kwale	27	1.8	1.8	72.7
	Kilifi	33	2.2	2.2	74.9
	Meru	65	4.3	4.3	79.3
	Turkana	38	2.5	2.5	81.8
	Narok	9	.6	.6	82.4
	Kajiado	23	1.5	1.5	83.9
	Garissa	20	1.3	1.3	85.3
	Wajir	10	.7	.7	85.9
	Isiolo	9	.6	.6	86.5
	Taita Taveta	27	1.8	1.8	88.3
	Trans Nzola	38	2.5	2.5	90.9
	Marsabit	5	.3	.3	91.2
	Laikipia	38	2.5	2.5	93.7
	Samburu	17	1.1	1.1	94.9
	Nakuru	53	3.5	3.5	98.4
	Uasin Gishu	3	.2	.2	98.6
	Lamu	4	.3	.3	98.9
	Tana River	3	.2	.2	99.1
	Nyanarua	3	.2	.2	99.3
	Bungoma	2	.1	.1	99.4
	Vihiga	5	.3	.3	99.7
	Mandera	4	.3	.3	100.0
Total	1500	100.0	100.0		



Matching the ethnic group with the county and unbeknown to the respondent himself we were able to identify the respondent’s ethnic group through his home-county. Depending on the respondent’s answer we were therefore able to collapse different counties into one category representing this ethnic block. So everything that was Nyeri, Embu, Muranga, Kiambu, Nairobi, Kirinyaga, Taraka Nithi was transformed into **Kikuyu**; Busia, Kakamega became **Luhya**; West Pokot, Baringo, Marakwet, Kericho, Bomet, Nandi became **Kalenjin**; Siaya, Kisumu, Homabay became **Luo**; Machakos, Kitui, Makuemi became **Kamba**; Migori, Nyamiri, Kisii became **Kisii**; Mombassa, Kwale, Kilifi became **Mijikenda**; Meru remained **Meru**; Turkana remained **Turkana**; Narok, Kajiado became Massai; Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, Taita Taveta, Trans Nzola, Elgeyo, Marsabit, Laikipia, Samburu, Uasin Gishu, Lamu, Tana River, Nyandarua, Nakuru, Bungoma, Vihiga, Mandera became **Others**. Collapsing these counties into ethnic blocks gave the following distribution:

What is your ethnic group?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Kikuyu	257	17.1	17.1	17.1
	Luhya	207	13.8	13.8	30.9
	Kalenjin	190	12.7	12.7	43.6
	Luo	158	10.5	10.5	54.1
	Kamba	150	10.0	10.0	64.1
	Kisi	86	5.7	5.7	69.9
	Mijikenda	76	5.1	5.1	74.9
	Meru	65	4.3	4.3	79.3
	Turkana	38	2.5	2.5	81.8
	Massai	32	2.1	2.1	83.9
	Others	241	16.1	16.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



The Results

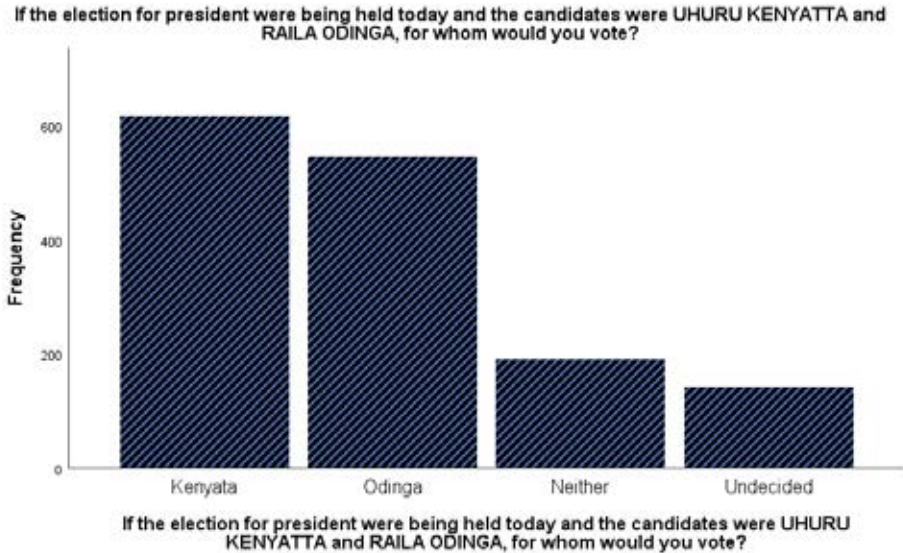
The Presidential Race

The presidential elections basically pitched two opposite sides: The Jubilee Alliance and the National Alliance (NASA). The Jubilee Alliance of President Uhuru Kenyatta (Kikuyu) and his deputy William Ruto (Kalenjin) was allegedly backed by the Kikuyus and the Kalenjins while the opposition National Alliance (NASA) was a union of tribes led by Raila Odinga (a Luo from western Kenya), Moses Wetangula (a Luhya from western Kenya) and Kalonzo Musyoka from the Kamba tribe. To evaluate the strength of the different candidates three months before election day, the following question was asked:

“If the election for president were being held today and the candidates were UHURU KENYATTA and RAILA ODINGA, for whom would you vote?”

If the election for president were being held today and the candidates were UHURU KENYATTA and RAILA ODINGA, for whom would you vote?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kenyata	618	41.2	41.3	41.3
	Odinga	547	36.5	36.5	77.8
	Neither	191	12.7	12.8	90.5
	Undecided	142	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	1498	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.1		
Total		1500	100.0		

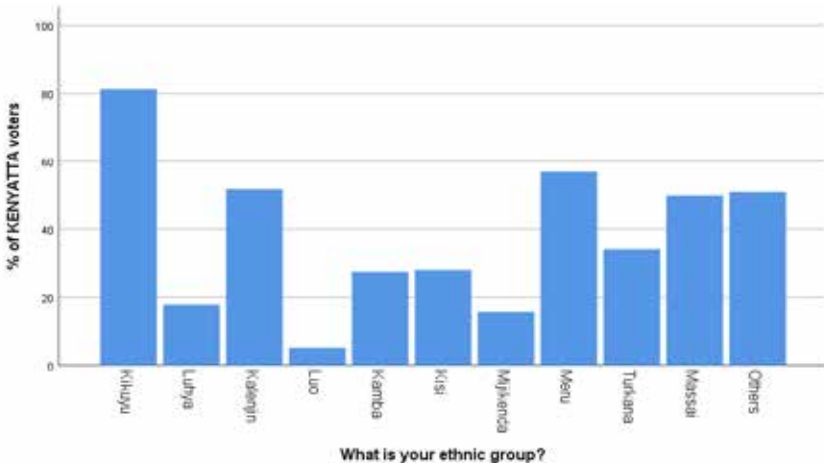


Uhuru Kenyatta came out as leading the race at that time, consistent with the first results proclaimed by the Kenyan Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the organ in charge of supervising the electoral process. He had a 5-point lead (41,3%) over his opponent Raila Odinga (36,5%). Here the undecided represent nearly 10% of the registered voters. They represent the median voter, those who sit squarely in the middle of public opinion or the political spectrum of their community. Their political views are located at equidistant point from both the most-right wing and the most left-wing person of their community. They can swing to the right or the left depending on how moderate the respective candidates are in trying to persuade them. They are generally those who tip the election in favor of one candidate or the other. We have to remember that this poll was taken in May 2017, before the electoral campaign was even kicked off.

Ethnicity and Kenyan voter behavior

Uhuru Kenyatta and the Kikuyu vote

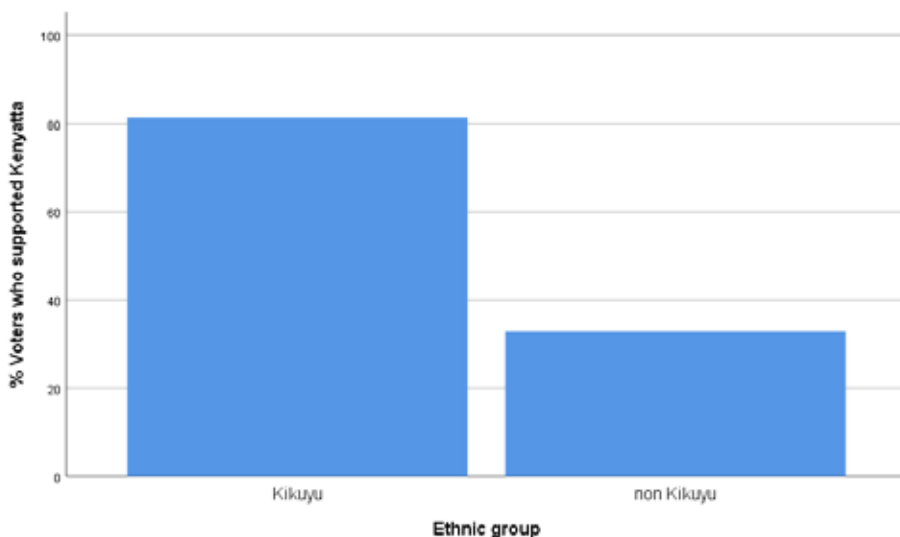
The working hypothesis of the research was that ethnicity is an important predictor of voter behavior. This hypothesis would hold true if the majority of Kikuyu and Luo had voted for their champions, respectively Kenyatta and Odinga. Cross-tabulating the result gives us the following distribution.



As we all know, Kenyatta is a Kikuyu. He has been able to garner 81.3% of the Kikuyu vote against 4.7% for his opponent Odinga. The difference here is 76.6 points.

Voters who supported Kenyatta * Are you a Kikuyu or not? Crosstabulation

		Are you a Kikuyu or not?		Total
		Kikuyu	non Kikuyu	
Voters who supported Kenyatta	KenyattaVoters	Count	209	409
		% within Are you a Kikuyu or not?	81.3%	32.9%
	KenyattaOp	Count	48	834
		% within Are you a Kikuyu or not?	18.7%	67.1%
Total	Count	257	1243	
	% within Are you a Kikuyu or not?	100.0%	100.0%	



Chi-Square Tests

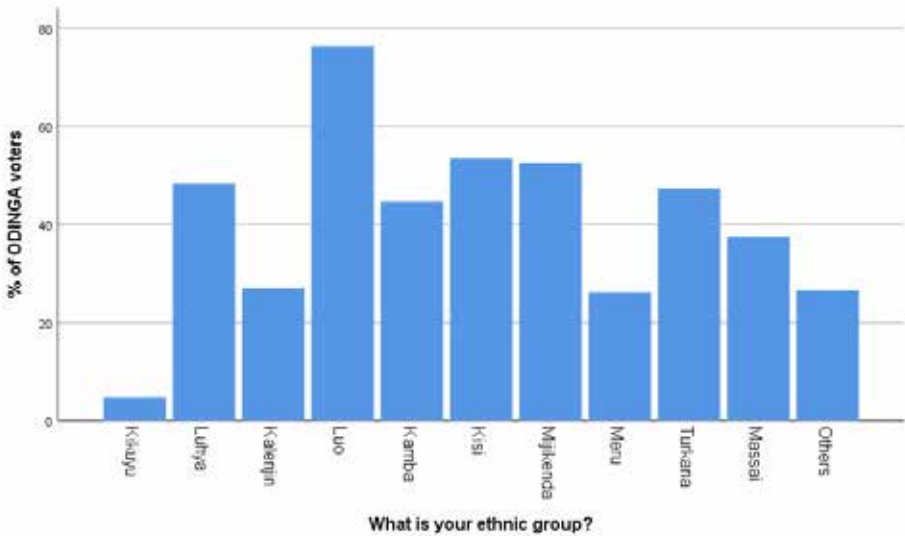
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	206.094 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	204.100	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	210.363	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	205.956	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	1500				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 105.88.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Based on the cross-tabulation analysis, this hypothesis clearly has merit. Among Kikuyu voters, 81,3% voted for Kenyatta, compared with 32,9% of non-Kikuyu, about an 49-point difference. From chi square value $\chi^2 = 206.094$ and p value = 0.000, we can infer that, in the population from which the sample was drawn, Kikuyu are more likely than non-Kikuyu to vote for Kenyatta.

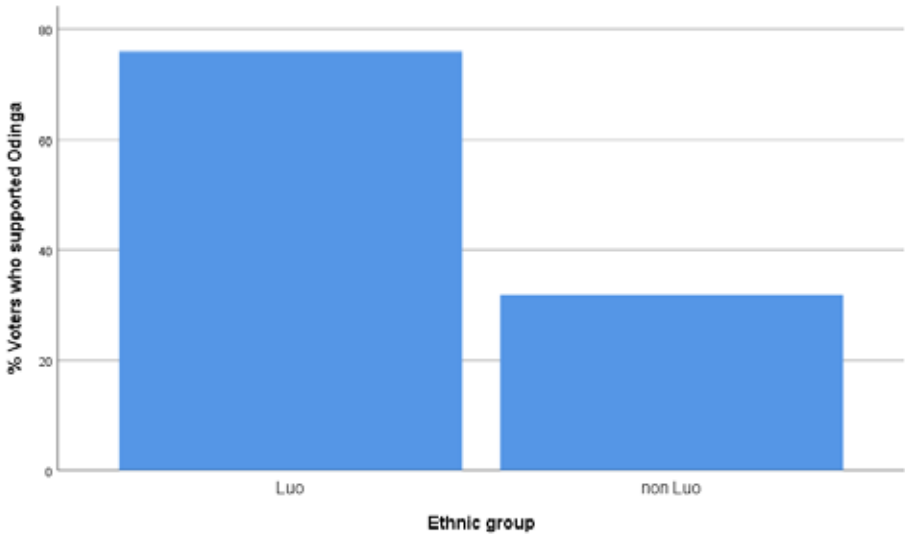
Raila Odinga and the Luo vote



Odinga is a Luo. He has obtained 76,4% of the Luo vote against 5,1% for his opponent Kenya. The difference is 71,3%.

Voted for Odinga * Are you a Luo or not? Crosstabulation

		Are you a Luo or not?		Total	
		Luo	non Luo		
Voted for Odinga	OdingaVoters	Count	120	427	547
		% within Are you a Luo or not?	75.9%	31.8%	36.5%
OdingaOpp		Count	38	915	953
		% within Are you a Luo or not?	24.1%	68.2%	63.5%
Total		Count	158	1342	1500
		% within Are you a Luo or not?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	118.826a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	116.929	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	115.024	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	118.747	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	1500				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 57.62.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Based on the cross-tab, the hypothesis about Luo support for the Luo candidate is also supported by facts. Among Luo voters, 75,9% voted for Odinga, compared with 31,8% of non Luo, about a 44-point difference. According to chi-square (118.826^a, P-value =0.000) we can infer that, in the population from which the sample was drawn, Luo are more likely than non-Luo to vote for Odinga. Our hypothesis is verified. Both

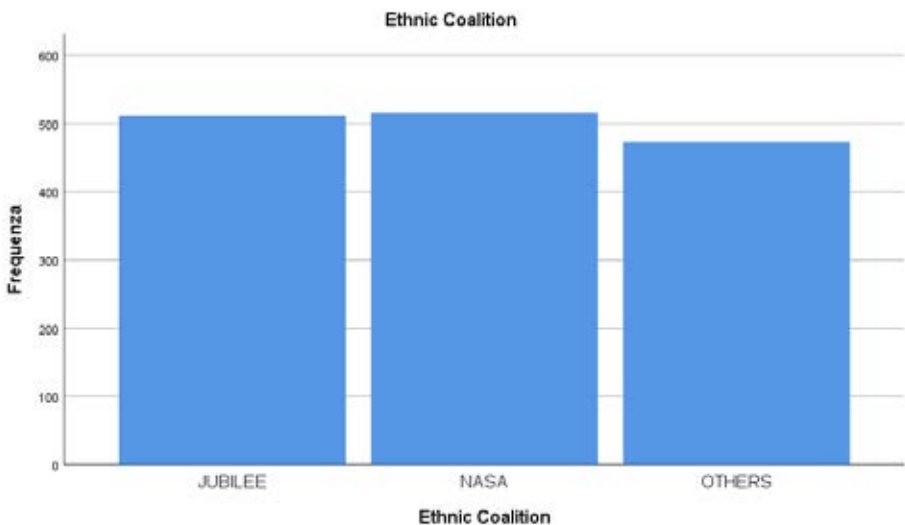
ethnic groups the Kikuyu and the Luo voted overwhelmingly in favor of the ethnic kin. And the connection between the candidate head and the ethnic group is very strong. Support for the candidate of the other ethnic group is evenly distributed, respectively 4,7% and 5,1%, that is, within the margin of error.

Ethnic coalitions and voter behavior

Now let's prove the relationship that exists between ethnic coalitions and their respective group loyalty. As we said in the beginning, the Jubilee Alliance was comprised of President Uhuru Kenyatta (Kikuyu) and his deputy William Ruto (Kalenjin) while the opposition National Alliance (NASA) was led by Raila Odinga (Luo), Moses Wetangula (a Luhya) and Kalonzo Musyoka (Kamba). Let's create a variable ethnic coalition with three categories: JUBILEE (Kikuyu, Meru – the Meru are known to be closely related linguistically and culturally to the Kikuyu – and Kalenjin), NASA (Luo, Luhya, and Kamba) and OTHERS (Kisi, Mijikenda, Turkana, Massai, and “others”).

Ethnic Coalition

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	JUBILEE	512	34.1	34.1	34.1
	NASA	515	34.3	34.3	68.5
	OTHERS	473	31.5	31.5	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



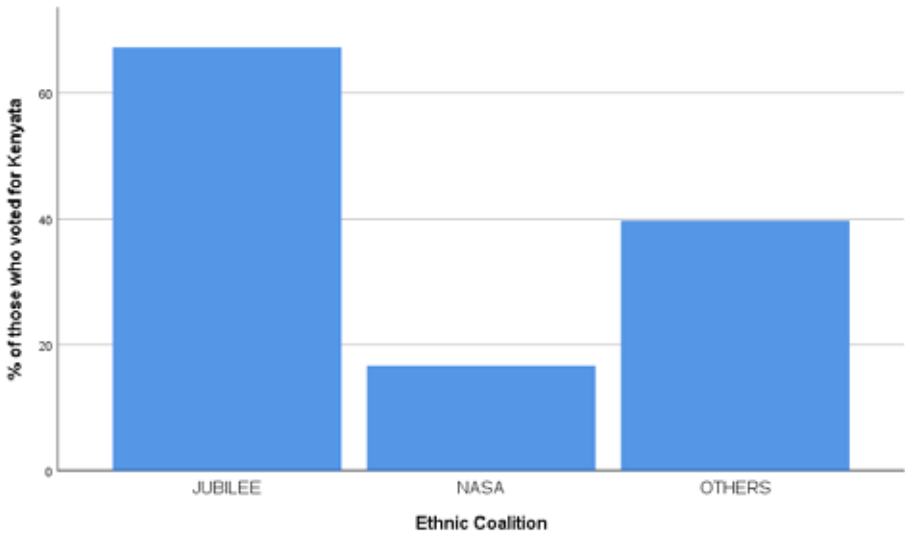
Now let us probe the loyalty of each ethnic block to its coalition.

If the election for president were being held today and the candidates were UHURU KENYATTA and RAILA ODINGA, for whom would you vote? * Ethnic Coalition
Crosstabulation

		Ethnic Coalition			Total	
		JUBILEE	NASA	OTHERS		
If the election for president were being held today and the candidates were UHURU KENYATTA and RAILA ODINGA, for whom would you vote?	Kenya	Count	344	86	188	618
		% within Ethnic Coalition	67.3%	16.7%	39.7%	41.3%
	Odinga	Count	80	287	180	547
		% within Ethnic Coalition	15.7%	55.8%	38.1%	36.5%
	Neither	Count	53	80	58	191
		% within Ethnic Coalition	10.4%	15.6%	12.3%	12.8%
	Undecided	Count	34	61	47	142
		% within Ethnic Coalition	6.7%	11.9%	9.9%	9.5%
	Total	Count	511	514	473	1498
		% within Ethnic Coalition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

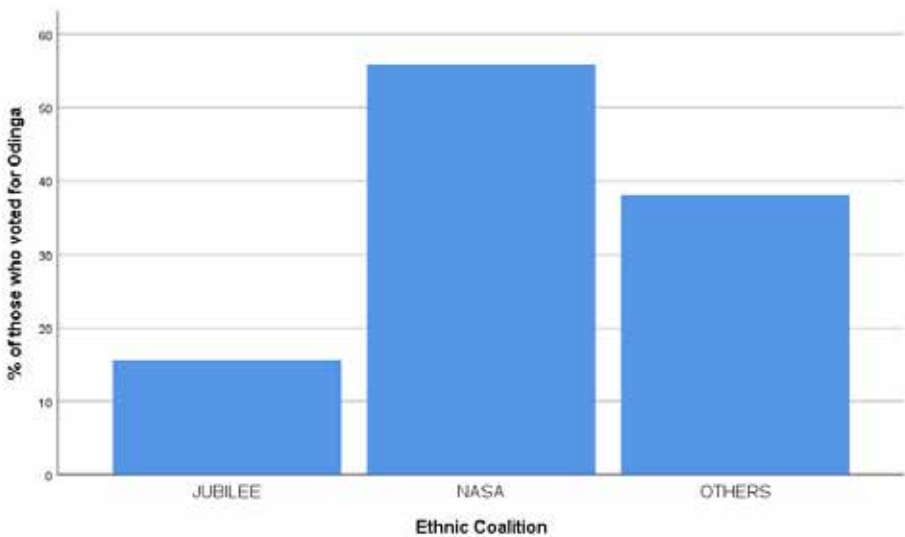
Kenyatta-Ruto ticket

67,3% of the JUBILEE ethnic coalition voted for the Kenyatta-Ruto ticket. It falls down from 81,3% (Kikuyu loyalty to Kenyatta)



Odinga-Kalonzo ticket

55,8% of the NASA ethnic coalition voted for the Odinga-Kalonzo ticket. It falls down from 76,4% (Luo loyalty to Odinga)



Here the ethnic coalition shows loyalty to their group. But this loyalty is weaker. Worth noticing is that support for each candidate is evenly distributed among OTHERS 39,7 for Kenyatta and 38,1% for Odinga – within the margin of error. Support for the

candidate of the other ethnic coalition is also equally distributed, 15,7% of the JUBILEE voted for Odinga and 16,7% of NASA voted for Kenyata – within the margin of error.

Voter behavior and education

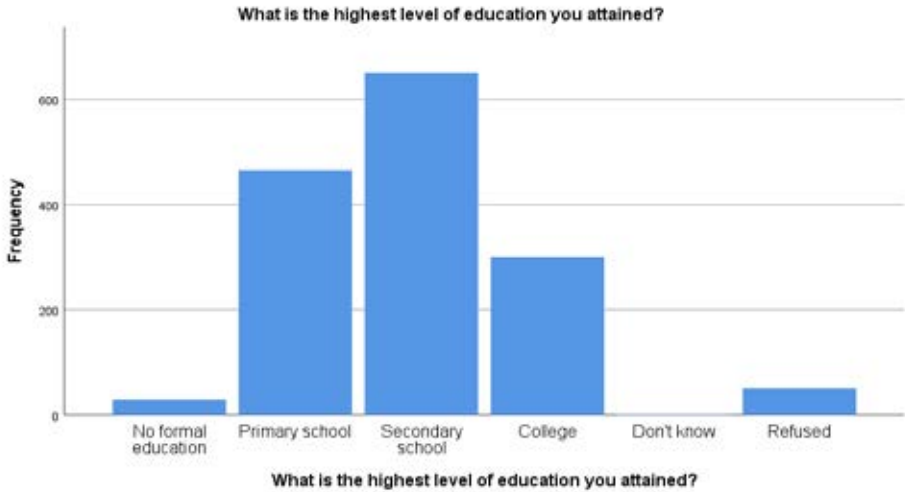
It is conventional wisdom in politics that the level of education has an impact on the voter political choices. Does this assumption hold for the Kenyan voters? To assess the level of education the following question was asked to the respondent:

“What is the highest level of education you completed?”

According to the respondent’s answer we were able to divide the level of education in 4 categories: no formal education, primary education, secondary education, and college. The results yielded the following distribution.

What is the highest level of education you attained?

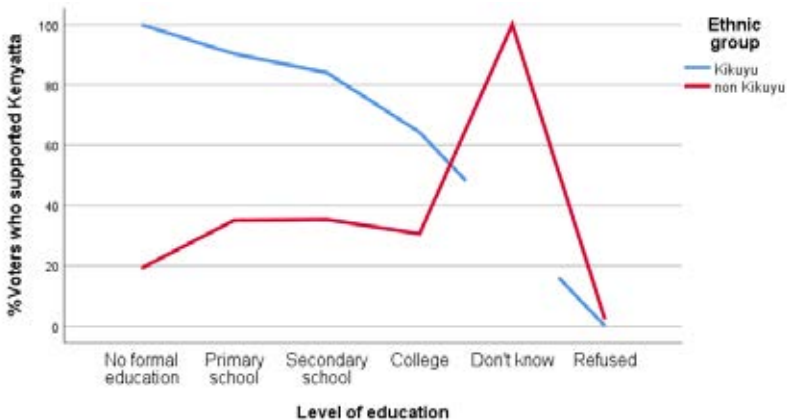
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No formal education	29	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Primary school	466	31.1	31.1	33.0
	Secondary school	650	43.3	43.4	76.4
	College	300	20.0	20.0	96.5
	Don't know	1	.1	.1	96.5
	Refused	52	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	1498	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.1		
Total		1500	100.0		



Let's assess the impact of education on voter behavior when the variable ethnicity is controlled. The test gives us the following results:

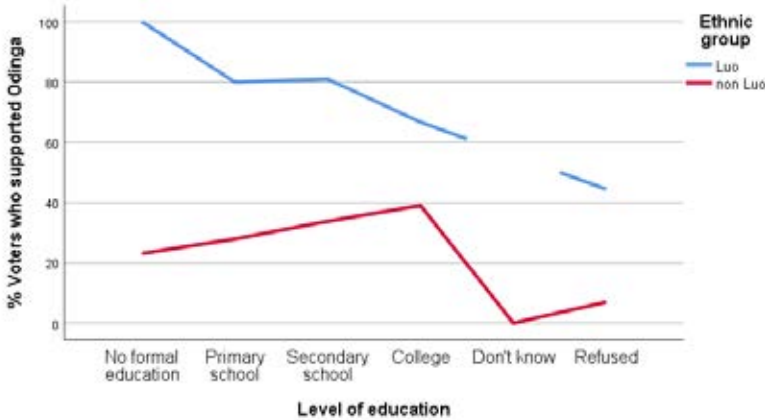
Kenyatta

100% of the Kikuyu with no formal education voted for Jubilee, 90.3% of Kikuyus with primary education voted for Jubilee, 84.1% of Kikuyus with secondary education for Jubilee and 64.3% of those with college education voted for Jubilee.



Odinga

100% of Luo with no formal education voted for NASA and Odinga, 80% Luo with primary and secondary education and voted for Odinga, while 66.7% of Luo with College education voted for their champion Odinga.



The pattern here is clear. The more one is educated the less he sides with his ethnic group. As the data show, the more voters are educated the less they seem to affiliate with ethnic voting. Conventional wisdom holds true in the case of Kenyan voter behavior. The level of education is inversely proportional to affiliation with ethnic voting.

Voter behavior and social class

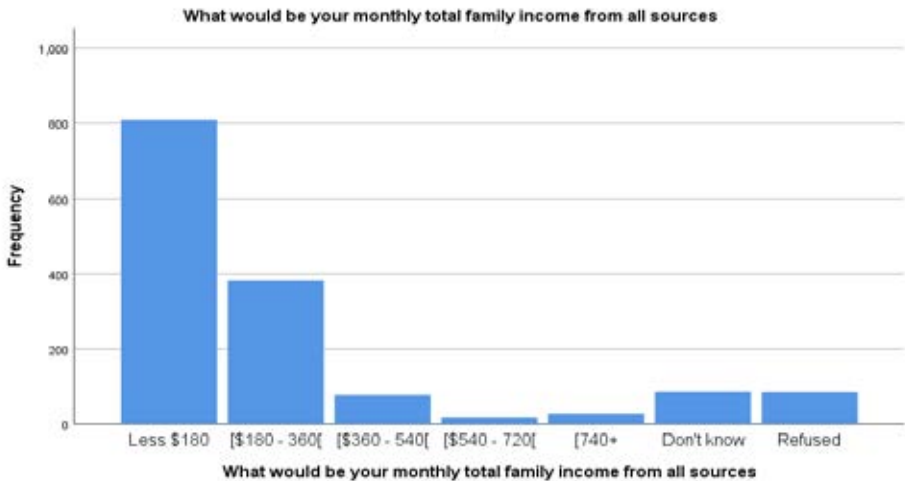
Social class was assessed according to the monthly income of the respondent. This variable was obtained by asking the following question:

“What would be your monthly total family income from all sources?”

According to the living standard of the country, those making less than \$180 per month were categorized as poor, those making [\$180 - \$360[per month as low middle class, those making [\$360 - \$720[per month as high middle class, and those above \$720 per as rich.

What would be your monthly total family income from all sources

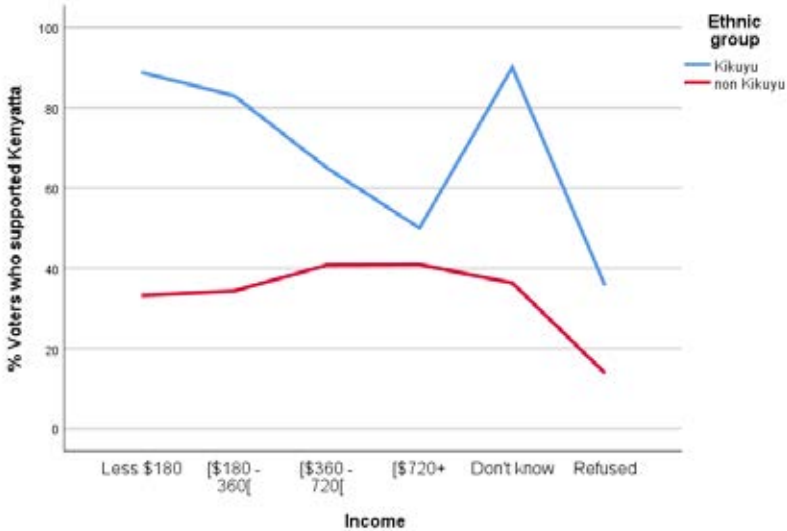
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less \$180	809	53.9	54.4	54.4
	[\$180 - 360[	382	25.5	25.7	80.0
	[\$360 - 540[	78	5.2	5.2	85.3
	[\$540 - 720[	18	1.2	1.2	86.5
	[740+	28	1.9	1.9	88.4
	Don't know	87	5.8	5.8	94.2
	Refused	86	5.7	5.8	100.0
	Total	1488	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	12	.8		
Total		1500	100.0		



Conventional wisdom also assumes that wealth influences voter behavior. Is this valid for the Kenyan voter? Let's look at the impact of income and social class when we control ethnicity.

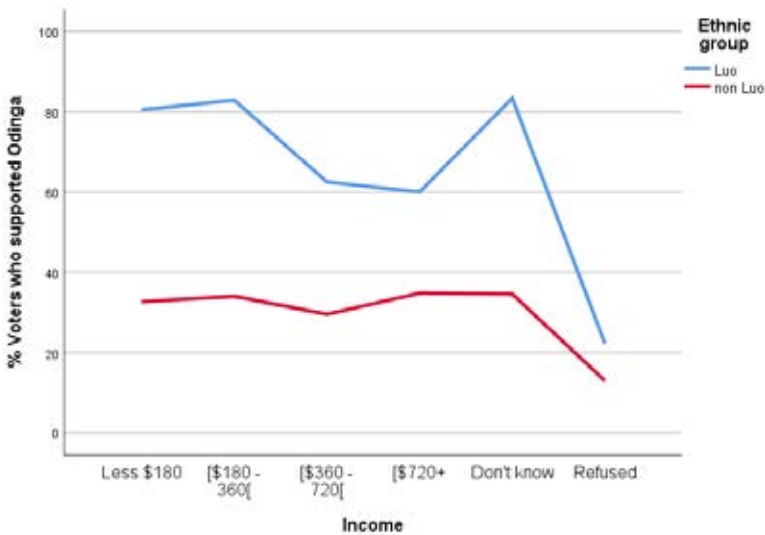
Kenyatta

88% of Kikuyu making less than \$180 voted for Kenyatta,
 82.9% of Kikuyu making [\$180 - 360[voted for Kenyatta
 65% of Kikuyu making [\$360 - 720[voted for Kenyatta
 50% of kikuyus making [\$720 +[voted for Kenyatta.



Odinga

80% of Luo making less than \$180 voted for Odinga,
 82,9% of Luo making [\$180 - 360[voted for Odinga,
 62,5% of Luo making [\$360 - 720[voted for Odinga,
 60% of Luo making \$720 and above voted for Odinga



Again here the pattern is clear. The higher the income the less one sides with the political views of the ethnic group.

Voter behavior and age

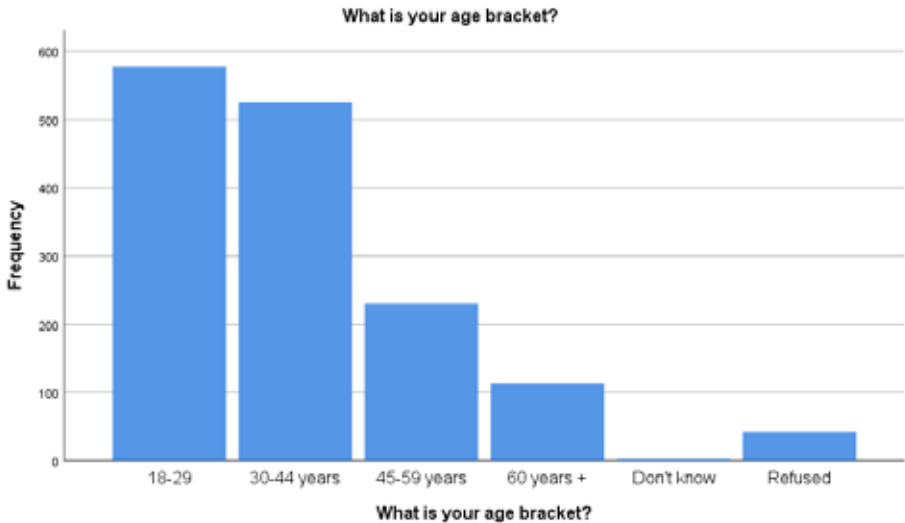
It is assumed that with age, people tend to be conservative with regard to their traditional value system. In this case, voters would be expected to side with ethnic affiliation as they grow older.

To create the age category respondents were asked the following question:
“What is your age bracket? Are you...”

The variable age was divided into 4 categories: [18-29], [30-44], [45-59], and [60 and above]. The table of frequency gave us the following distribution.

What is your age bracket?

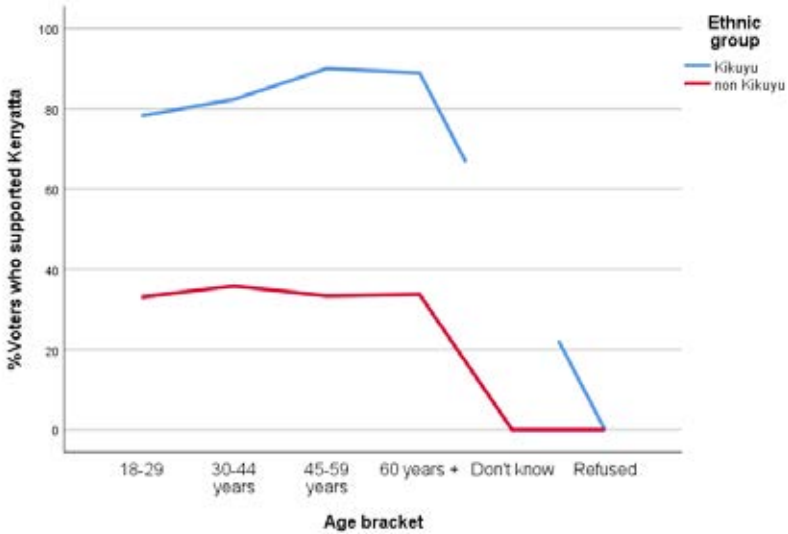
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-29	577	38.5	38.7	38.7
	30-44 years	526	35.1	35.3	74.0
	45-59 years	230	15.3	15.4	89.5
	60 years +	113	7.5	7.6	97.0
	Don't know	2	.1	.1	97.2
	Refused	42	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	1490	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	10	.7		
Total		1500	100.0		



How does age influence voter behavior? Let's look at the impact of age when we control ethnicity.

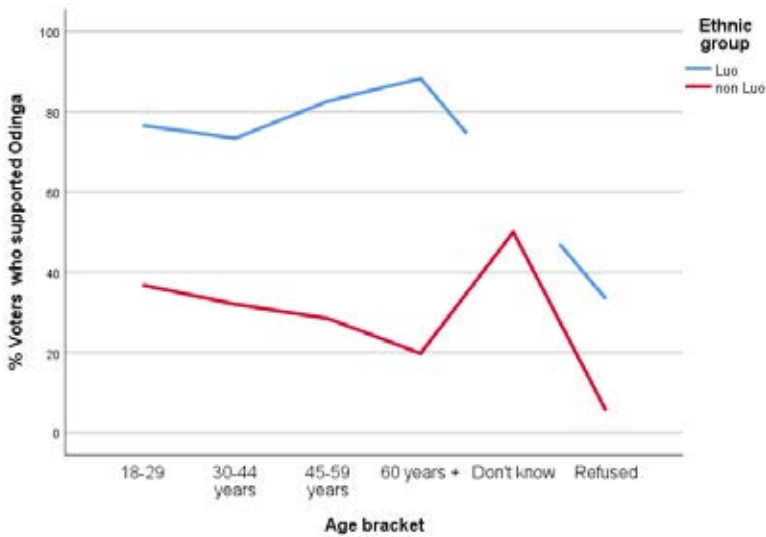
Kenyatta

78.2% of the Kikuyu block aged [18-29] voted for Kenyatta,
82.3% of the Kikuyu aged [30-44] voted for Kenyatta
90% of the Kikuyu aged [45-59] voted for Kenyatta
88.9% of the Kikuyu aged [60 and above] voted for Kenyatta.



Odinga

76.6% of the Luo aged [18-29] voted for Odinga,
73,3% of the Luo aged [30-44] voted for Odinga
82.6% of the Luo aged [45-59] voted for Odinga
88.2% of the Luo aged 60 + voted for Odinga.



Age clearly plays a role, even minimal. Here also, there is a pattern, the older the voter grows the more he tends to side with the ethnic group. Young people tends less to side with ethnic rhetoric.

Religion and Kenyan voter behavior

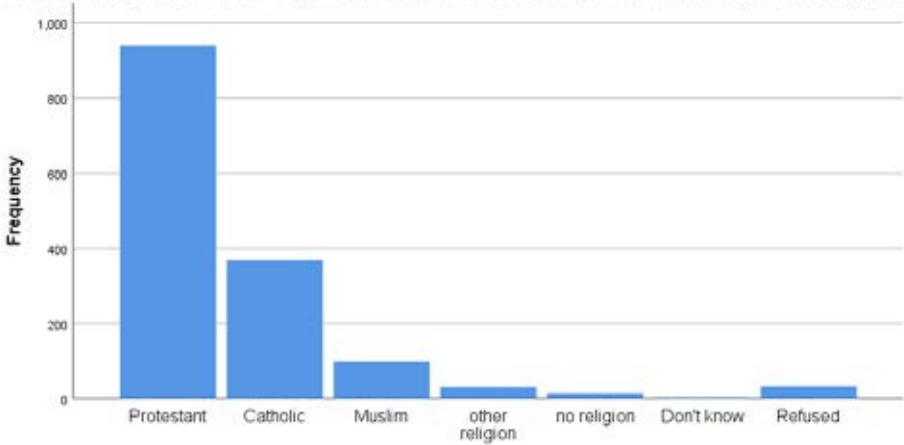
It is commonly admitted that, being a strong marker of identity, religion may play a role in influencing about whom to vote or not. To identify the religious affiliation of the respondent we asked the following question:

“What is your religious affiliation/preference – are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim, member of another religion or no religion?”.

What is your religious affiliation – are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim, another religion or no religion?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Protestant	939	62.6	63.0	63.0
	Catholic	368	24.5	24.7	87.7
	Muslim	100	6.7	6.7	94.4
	other religion	32	2.1	2.1	96.5
	no religion	15	1.0	1.0	97.5
	Don't know	3	.2	.2	97.7
	Refused	34	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	1491	99.4	100.0	
Missing	System	9	.6		
Total		1500	100.0		

What is your religious affiliation – are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim, another religion or no religion?



What is your religious affiliation – are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim, another religion or no religion?

Let's assess the impact of religion in voter behavior when we control ethnicity. Kenyatta is a Catholic and Odinga is a Protestant. Protestant Kikuyus voted at 81,7% for Kenyatta. 73,5% of Catholic Luo voted for Odinga. There is no pattern and the result is even counterintuitive. The overwhelming majority of Protestant Kikuyus voted for a Catholic and the overwhelming majority of Catholic Luo voted for a Protestant. So results show that religion does not play a role in influencing Kenyan voter behavior.

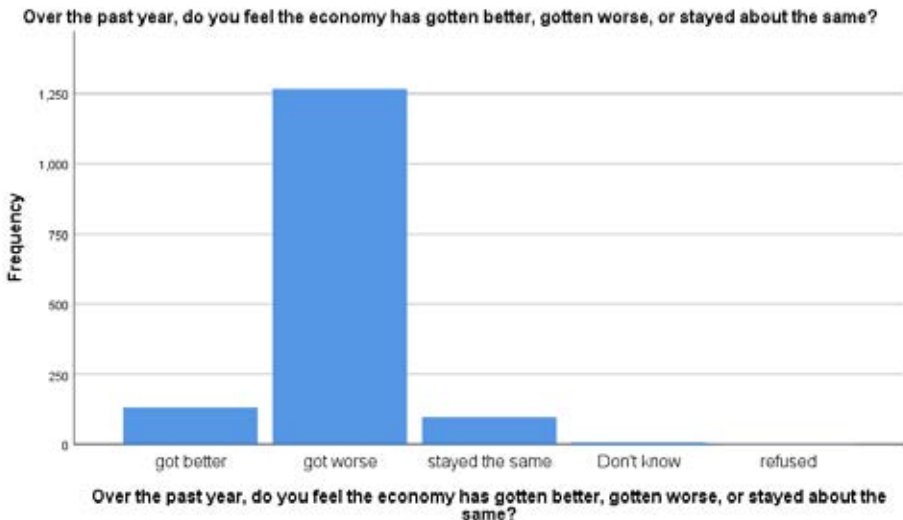
The economic situation of the country and voter behavior

It is commonly agreed upon that the ongoing economic situation of the country is a powerful predictor of who will win or lose the election. A general economic satisfaction among voters will serve the purpose of the incumbent candidate. To feel the thermometer of the economic situation of the country, the following question was asked:

“Over the past year, do you feel the economy has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?”.

Over the past year, do you feel the economy has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	got better	131	8.7	8.7	8.7
	got worse	1267	84.5	84.5	93.2
	stayed the same	96	6.4	6.4	99.6
	Don't know	5	.3	.3	99.9
	refused	1	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	1500	100.0	100.0	



These results are surprising, to say the least. The deep seated feeling among the people was that the country was heading in the wrong direction economically; and yet they voted for the incumbent candidate, the one responsible for their hardships.

Only 8.7% were satisfied with the economy.

The overwhelming majority, 84.5% of people, answered that the economy has gotten worse.

6.4% said the economy had remained the same.

More surprising is the voting behavior of the Kikuyus who overwhelmingly voted in favor of Kenyatta. 84% of them said that the economy were not satisfied with economic growth and either that things got worse (73,2%) or stayed the same.

Tavola di contingenza Over the past year, do you feel the economy has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same? * Are you a Kikuyu or not?

		Are you a Kikuyu or not?		Totale	
		Kikuyu	non Kikuyu		
Over the past year, do you feel the economy has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?	got better	Conteggio	41	90	131
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	16.0%	7.2%	8.7%
	got worse	Conteggio	188	1079	1267
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	73.2%	86.8%	84.5%
	stayed the same	Conteggio	28	68	96
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	10.9%	5.5%	6.4%
	Don't know	Conteggio	0	5	5
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%
	refused	Conteggio	0	1	1
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
	Totale	Conteggio	257	1243	1500
		% in Are you a Kikuyu or not?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Something is sure, the economic uneasiness had no great impact on the Kikuyu support for their candidate. Here conventional wisdom in politics does not hold true in front of ethnic affiliation.

Conclusion

Ethnicity is a reality in African politics today. Previous Kenyan presidential elections had been fraught with ethnic violence and current President Uhuru Kenyatta was even indicted by the ICC on the motive of fueling ethnic hatred. The data resulting from this study prove that ethnicity has been the most potent predictor of Kenyan voter behavior in the past Presidential electoral contests. Besides ethnic belonging, the study has also identified other sociological factors like income, education, and age. Those at the top of the ticket can almost be sure to garner around 80% support from the ethnic folks, the Kikuyu for Kenyatta and the Luo for Raila. Ethnicity is a factual reality in the social and political life of Kenya and Africa in general. At the outset of this research, I was told by several government officials that Kenyans do not speak about ethnicity. This taboo leaves a void in public life and political discourse. This void is easily filled up by the politicians who take advantage of the silence to manipulate, misinform, and instill fear and division among the people. Ethnicity needs to be taken into account and become a matter of public debate. For example, people should be free to speak – even jokingly – about the contradiction that exists between the negative economic rating of an incumbent candidate and yet the political decision to continue to support him and failed policies. In most advanced democracies voting blocs exist and no one is not afraid to talk about it. Voting is one of the freest acts in political life. Anyone is free to choose one's candidate. The polling booth is meant for that, for privacy and secrecy. Ethnicity becomes an issue of concern only when it is used as a criterion for political choice in public life. Moreover, as the numbers indicate, variables like education, income, and age have an impact in mitigating the power of ethnicity. The more people are educated and wealthy the less they vote along ethnic lines or to say it otherwise, the less people are educated and poor the more they tend to identify with their group. On the contrary the younger people are the less the side with their ethnic folks. Instead of banning the issue from public debate, efforts should be put to raise people's income and education level. Changing the tides of ethnic conflict should also focus on the youth and educate them to values of cultural diversity.

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Aetiological Explanations of Epilepsy and Implications on Treatments Options among Yoruba Traditional Healers in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

In Nigeria, traditional healers play major roles in the treatment of patients living with epilepsy and their status as well as worldview have a considerable influence on the therapies or treatments that are provided, thereby affecting the quality of care and rights of their clients. With the dearth of studies on these healers' management of clients with epilepsy, this study explored their perspectives on the aetiology of epilepsy and how their view and understanding of the condition shape the treatments and therapies that are accessible to their clients. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 traditional healers considered as experts in the treatment of epilepsy in two Yoruba communities in Southwest Nigeria. Findings showed these healers perceived epilepsy as a health condition that is highly stigmatised and fearfully avoided among the Yoruba people. A multicausal view was advanced in their aetiological explanations of the causes of epilepsy ranging from natural, hereditary, and the supernatural. Each epilepsy case requires clear divination to understand the underlying cause and possible regimen to adopt in providing help and recovery. Treatments are often in stages and mixed as the individual progresses towards recovery. Of all the aetiologies, epilepsy cases that are attributed to preternatural and supernatural forces were considered most difficult to treat. The paper concludes that with the traditional healers' status in the community, and acceptance of their treatment modalities, the absorption of traditional medical practice will aid the supervision of their practice and help reduce exploitation and improve the quality of care.

Keywords: *Aetiological explanation, epilepsy, traditional healers, Yoruba people, Nigeria*

Résumé

Au Nigeria, les guérisseurs traditionnels jouent un rôle majeur dans le traitement des patients atteints d'épilepsie et leur statut ainsi que leur vision du monde ont une influence considérable sur les thérapies ou les traitements qui sont fournis, affectant ainsi la qualité des soins et les droits de leurs clients. Avec le manque d'études sur la prise en charge par ces guérisseurs des clients atteints d'épilepsie, cette étude a exploré leurs perspectives sur l'étiologie de l'épilepsie et comment leur vision et leur compréhension de la maladie façonnent les traitements et les thérapies accessibles à leurs clients. Des entretiens semi-directifs ont été menés avec 24 guérisseurs traditionnels considérés comme des experts dans le traitement de l'épilepsie dans deux communautés Yoruba du sud-ouest du Nigeria. Les résultats ont montré que ces guérisseurs percevaient l'épilepsie comme un problème de santé hautement stigmatisé et évité avec crainte parmi le peuple Yoruba. Une vue multicausale a été avancée dans leurs explications étiologiques des causes de l'épilepsie allant de naturel, héréditaire et surnaturel. Chaque cas d'épilepsie nécessite une divination claire pour comprendre la cause sous-jacente et le régime possible à adopter pour fournir de l'aide et du rétablissement. Les traitements sont souvent par étapes et mélangés au fur et à mesure que l'individu progresse vers la récupération. De toutes les étiologies, les cas d'épilepsie attribués à des forces surnaturelles et surnaturelles ont été considérés comme les plus difficiles à traiter. L'article conclut qu'avec le statut des guérisseurs traditionnels dans la communauté et l'acceptation de leurs modalités de traitement, l'absorption de la pratique médicale traditionnelle facilitera la supervision de leur pratique et aidera à réduire l'exploitation et à améliorer la qualité des soins.

Mots-clés: Explication étiologique, épilepsie, guérisseurs traditionnels, peuple Yoruba, Nigéria

1. Background

Epilepsy is a severe nervous disorder and the most common non-communicable disease in low-resource countries (Okoye *et al.*, 2016). It is estimated that 50 million people are affected by epilepsy worldwide, and eighty percent of epileptic victims are found in developing countries (Ekeh & Ekrikpo, 2015). Epilepsy is the most prevalent nervous disorder in children and poses a serious effect on their quality of life with resultant educational difficulties due to the stigma attributed to the condition and severe seizure attack (Lunardi *et al.*, 2012).

Historically, epilepsy has been highly misinterpreted and stigmatised. The belief that an evil spirit causes it, and it is highly contagious are common explanations for seizures and people living with epilepsy are regarded as mentally insane until 1800 (Kaddumukasa *et al.*, 2018). Epileptic victims experience stigma because of the myth and misconceptions about the illness condition. In low-income countries, including Nigeria, people isolate themselves from people living with epilepsy because of the fear of contracting the disease (Nuhu *et al.*, 2010). In Uganda, people who have epilepsy are not

permitted to eat in the same plate with the rest of the family. They also face difficulties in securing jobs and education, as they may be asked to stay at home in order not to infect others. People living with epilepsy face discrimination in many ways. In some countries, the disease condition is kept hidden by family members so that the victim and other members of the family can find a suitor (Ghanean, Nojomi & Jacobsson, 2013).

Traditional medicine occupies a critical space in healthcare provisions and support for other spheres of life in Africa. This healing system was dominant until the emergence of modern medicine. Nonetheless, patronage of the African traditional medical is still high with respect to certain complex health and non-health related conditions. Traditional healers have remained active in the delivery of care for patients living with epilepsy in many parts of Africa (Kaddumukasa *et al.*, 2018). In most African countries, traditional healers are the first to be contacted for treating epilepsy conditions. This is as a result of grounded belief in spiritual factors. Traditional healers believe in the spiritual causes of epilepsy and treatment of the patient as a whole (Kaddumukasa *et al.*, 2018). Traditional healers not only focus on the biological aspects of the illness but also the social and spiritual basis of the illness (Mokgobi, 2014).

Available evidence indicates higher treatment gaps for people living with epilepsy in low resource settings compared to those living in developed countries (Mushi *et al.*, 2013). Cultural belief, cost of treatment, lack of knowledge, alternative medicine and stigma result in the epilepsy treatment gap (Mushi *et al.*, 2013). In developing countries such as Nigeria, traditional belief, limited trained medical personnel, inadequate access to the anti-epileptic drug, distance to the clinic widen the treatment gap. Patients living with epilepsy spend a substantial amount of money to get treatment from traditional healers. They may even travel a long distance to consult the traditional healers (Mbuba *et al.*, 2008).

Some researchers have argued that the definitions attributed to epilepsy in African countries influence the pathways to care for epilepsy clients. In societies deeply rooted in spiritual belief, epilepsy is explained in terms of affliction by the supernatural forces and the traditional healers are consulted for this reason. Traditional healers focus on the social issues surrounding patients' illness and attribute the causes of epilepsy to affliction by the witches and hereditary factors (Guekht, 2018). In Sudan, regardless of the impediments or complications of traditional medical practice, the majority still patronise traditional healers, place them in high esteem and value their practice or approach of healing (Mohammed & Babikir, 2013).

Culture influences people's perceptions, attitudes and misconceptions around epilepsy. It also shapes help-seeking behaviour and pathways to health among those living with the condition. Myths and misconceptions regarding epilepsy have been a dominant view of different societies and religions across the world (Vancini *et al.*, 2014). Historically, epilepsy was believed to be caused by gods because of the notion that only a god could make a man unconscious, yield to convulsing and have the power to restore a victim back

to the original state (Mushi *et al.*, 2016). People suffering from epilepsy are thought to be possessed or chosen by the gods based on the cultural belief of this particular society which impacts on the attitudes of the society to the people living with the condition and the care rendered to the victims.

In a study conducted in Saudi Arabia, the causes and treatments of epilepsy have been attributed to numerous sources. The belief is that epilepsy can occur when God is testing the patient's faith or punishment from God. This belief enables them to accept the illness as part of their destiny and see it as pre-planned and established by God. An equal proportion of participants attributed the causes of epilepsy to spiritual and medical factors (Alkhamees, Selai & Shorvon, 2015). In Northern Ghana, epilepsy causation was attributed to spiritual factors, punishment for certain actions and violation of taboos (Adjei *et al.*, 2013). In Cape Town, traditional healers regard epilepsy as an illness of falling or fitting and it is caused by witchcraft, the anger of the gods, poison, and bewitchment (Keikelame and Swartz, 2015).

Traditional healers in Namibia conceive epilepsy as a health challenge that can occur from natural and preternatural sources (Toit & Pretorius, 2018). In Batibo Health district, Cameroon, traditional healers attribute the cause of epilepsy to witchcraft or insanity and can be transmitted through sexual intercourse, blood and saliva (Njamnshi *et al.*, 2010).

Traditional healers in Kilifi, Kenya define epilepsy as a condition whereby an individual falls on the ground, shakes, becomes unconscious and this occurs repeatedly. Traditional healers in Kilifi attribute the cause of epilepsy to natural or ancestral cause. The natural spirit is believed to be the most common cause of epilepsy; a situation whereby the spirit enters into a child, causes convulsion and diminishes when the spirit leaves the child. Shaking is perceived as the effort of the individual to release himself from the spiritual force. Traditional healers in Kilifi also believe that when an epileptic victim dies, if certain rituals are not performed, the condition will be passed to the next child in the family (Kendall-Taylor *et al.*, 2007). In Uyo, epilepsy is believed to be infectious among traditional healers and can spread through close contact with the person living with the condition (Abasiubong *et al.*, 2009).

The wide variation in aetiological explanations and treatment remedies can increase vulnerability to exploitation and poor quality of care among help-seekers. Despite these possibilities, there is a shortage of studies focusing on the implications of quality of care and access to effective treatments within the traditional medical system. Hence, this article addresses issues relating to traditional healers' explanation of epilepsy and likely implications on treatment outcomes. This research examines the worldviews of Yoruba traditional healers on the aetiology of epilepsy.

2. Theoretical Framework

Social constructionism theory constitutes the theoretical framework for this study. The theory is used to explain the cultural views of the society on epilepsy and its influence on patients living with the condition. Social constructionism theory defines human life as socially and culturally constructed. According to Ian Rory Owen (1992), human existence is influenced by social and interpersonal factors. The primary interest of social constructionism is culture and society. Galbin (2014) describes social constructionism as the theory that focuses on the culture of the society and its influence on individuals and society at large. What is considered normal and abnormal in society is based on the collective agreement of the society. The system and belief of the community are shaped by the normative rules that are culturally constructed. Social constructionism also believes that individuals are shaped by the culture and traditional beliefs of society.

The culture of a particular society shapes the beliefs and values of the group of people in a society. Culture is what governs the way of life of people in the society. The culture of the society has a great influence on people's definition of what is normal and abnormal. Over the years, epilepsy is perceived as an abnormal disorder caused by evil spirits in many African countries including Nigeria because of the cultural belief and definitions attributed to it. The cultural meanings associated with the symptoms of epilepsy results in the stigmatisation of people living with the disorder. As critical stakeholders in the treatment of epilepsy, traditional healers help in promoting misconceptions and myth regarding the aetiology of epilepsy, and this also reflects on their mode of treating epilepsy clients. So, epilepsy is culturally constructed in society.

Methods

Research Design

The study employed an exploratory research design to draw information on the traditional healers' explanation of epilepsy. This method was adopted to generate extensive information on the aetiological explanation for epilepsy among traditional healers in Ile-Ife. The ancient city of Ile-Ife was considered suitable for this study due to the high presence of renowned traditional healers that attract patronage clientele beyond the town for their expertise and healing prowess. Among these healers are specialists with diverse therapies and treatments for epilepsy and their healing homes are well known and patronised by members of the communities of Ile-Ife and Modakeke-Ife. These healing homes are structured around the experience and exposure levels of the healers. Despite the less formalisation of these healing homes and the practice of

traditional medicine in Nigeria, practitioners within this medical system have unions that regulate who is accepted and what ethics should guide their practise. Some of the ethical guidelines are unwritten, but they are revered and sacrosanct in ensuring that remedies and therapies that are offered are potent and effective. Against this backdrop, all the participants were recruited from six traditional medical associations in Ile-Ife/Modakeke. The target population for the study comprised male and female traditional healers that specialise in the treatment of epilepsy.

2.2. Sampling and Recruitment Procedure

The Snowball sampling technique was used in recruiting participants across the six associations in Ile-Ife. Recruitment commenced with an initial interaction with the leaders of each association to identify members that have the requisite knowledge and expertise in the treatment of epilepsy. This approach was adopted to the selection of respective respondents in the study.

2.3. Data Collection

Data was obtained through a face-to-face interview. A structured interview guide was designed based on evidence from the literature and prior interactions with experts in the practice of traditional medicine. It was adopted to generate quality evidence on traditional healers' beliefs about the causes of epilepsy; provide insights into the cultural meanings attributed to epilepsy which shape the perception of healers to the condition and perceived therapeutic outcomes for people living with epilepsy.

The use of topic guides provided the participants ample opportunity to explore their perspectives and experiences around epilepsy and care provision. The questions on traditional healers' opinions on the aetiology of epilepsy attracted quick and extensive response. As such, in-depth information on the perspectives of traditional healers on the aetiology of epilepsy was generated. When using this method, there is a likelihood for the researcher's bias, but the researcher overcame these challenges by being objective and uninfluenced by personal belief. All the interviews took place at convenient locations for the participants.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using thematic and case narrative techniques with network mapping of important findings with the aid of Atlas ti.8. All the recorded interviews were transcribed from Yoruba to English. The transcripts obtained from the field were read and re-read several times by the researchers to be conversant with the data.

2.5. Ethical Consideration

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institute of Public Health, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria (IPHOAU/12/1325). The participation of all interviewees was voluntary. Participants were well informed before the interview section that anyone who wishes to pull out from the interview would be allowed to do so. The issue of confidentiality, anonymity and the principle of non-violation was examined and confirmed. Investigators ensured anonymity among participants and maintained the confidentiality of information to avoid revealing any personal identifiers.

Results

Socio-demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees showed that eighteen were males; only six were females. Four of the twenty-four healers are into herb selling and twenty claimed to be diviners/herbalist. The mean age in years of male interviewees was 55.7 and 54.2 for female interviewees. Four of the traditional healers attended tertiary institution, some attained secondary education, and few did not attend school at all.

From the literature and data analysis, we generated key themes relevant to our study to examine the perspectives of traditional healers on the aetiology of epilepsy and its impact on treatment options.

Perspectives of Traditional Healers on the Aetiology of Epilepsy

The participants conceived epilepsy as a condition that is typified and categorised into three forms. Classifying the health condition this way appears fuzzy and largely subjective, going by the boundaries and symptoms that the healers presented as possible indicators. From the position of the healers, the three forms of epilepsy include *Ogun oru*, *waku* and epilepsy, also known as *warapa*. The healers illustrated that *Ogun oru* usually occurs around 1 a.m. in the middle of the night. Although it could happen during the day, it usually happens in the night when such a person is asleep, and the person will become restless and unstable as if he or she is being beaten while sleeping and at the same time makes a strange noise. The type does not see the night, and once it is dark, the illness will occur. *Waku* is described by the healers as also related to epilepsy. It is presumed to happen at any time of the day. The victim will shake, suddenly fall and be unconscious for a long period. The healers affirmed that all these three belong to the same family as epilepsy but are assigned different names, and there is not much

difference in treating them. The healers establish epilepsy as a health condition that is sensitive to noise. Once the victim is exposed to where there is noise, the illness is more likely to manifest.

When asked the relationship and disparities amongst epilepsy-*warapa*, *ogun oru* and *waku*, the traditional healers stated:

“*Ogun oru*, *warapa*, *waku* are closely associated. If *waku* happens to someone, he may suddenly fall and he may die in the process. When epilepsy happens to someone, the person will roll on the ground and will stand up again. *Ogun oru* is the same thing, it happens in the middle of the night and the person will start shouting. The person will be barking like dog. If the person regains consciousness later and they tell him or her that he or she barked, he will deny it. It can affect or seize the brain for a while, so they are in the same category?”

Male traditional healer, aged 15, *Isale Ope, Modakeke*

“The comment from another participant corroborates this:

“Epilepsy makes the victim fall at any time while *oogun oru* occurs in the night when our mothers (witches) are piercing the fellow with a needle. It occurs in the night; they sleep during the day.”

Female traditional healer, aged 55, *Oke Isoda, Ile-Ife*

These three categories described by the healers entail that the victims will be unconscious of what is happening around them, but after a while, they will regain their consciousness. However, the healers have different views on the peculiarity of saliva with epilepsy. Some are of the view that the three categories of epilepsy are closely related but slightly different with foaming from the mouth peculiar to epilepsy. However, some others affirmed that for the three categories of epilepsy, patients salivate and bring out foam from the mouth during any seizure as reported in the excerpts below:

Another is *waku*, which is different from epilepsy (*Warapa*). The sign that comes with epilepsy is that once the victim wakes up, saliva surely spills out from the mouth, but for *waku*, which also has cure, the victim will fall on the ground suddenly but will not spill out any saliva like the epilepsy victim.

Male traditional healer, aged 50, *Ajamopo Ile-Ife*

Epilepsy is divided into three: The first is *Ogun oru*. This one is prone to happen at night. Once it is in the night, epilepsy will surface. With the second, the person might be sitting and start shaking and suddenly fall and become unconscious for a long period. The third one is the one that does not like noise. These three types are epilepsy. They have different names, but they are all the same in effects. All of them involve the dropping of saliva.

Male traditional healer, aged 70, Ile-Ife

Natural Explanations of Epilepsy

Traditional healers in this study attributed the causes of epilepsy to natural and spiritual factors. For the natural causes, most of the healers believe that epilepsy could be hereditary at times. Some healers explained that if a pregnant woman was being affected by epilepsy, her unborn child might also contract epilepsy because the illness is in the blood of the woman. A healer, a female from Oke Isoda, shared the view:

Epilepsy can be inherited from a mother to the child. The child can inherit it because it is in the mother's blood.

Female traditional healer, aged 55

Findings from this suggest that many healers still assert that heredity is a factor in the causes of epilepsy. However, the spiritual factor is still more specified as a primary causal factor in the occurrence of the illness.

Preternatural Forces and the Aetiology of Epilepsy

Emphasis is placed on supernatural factors as a major cause of epilepsy. The healers revealed that epilepsy is more of spiritual than natural; it is mostly inflicted on the victims. Given this position, the healers described epilepsy as an illness of the body which can be inherited or inflicted on the person. The healers in this study regard epilepsy as a shameful illness which may be caused as a result of one's mistake. They opined that epilepsy could also be deliberately inflicted on someone as a way of hindering the person from progressing in life.

The Bad or Evil Machination as an Aetiological Cause of Epilepsy

A female healer in Oke Isoda referred to a man who was brought to her for treatment. He was supposed to travel out of the country, and when he got to the airport, he suddenly fell and had an episode that had never happened to him before. The healer explained

further by saying that the man experienced the attack because they wanted to use the illness to stop him from achieving his dreams.

This excerpt from her exemplifies this:

One boy was travelling to America. He got to Lagos airport and suddenly fell, which had never happened to him before. When they started taking him to different healing homes, those that know me in Lagos gave my number to one of his family members, and I was called. They narrated the issue to me, and I told them to send me his name and his mother's name. They later called, and I told them the root of the problem. I was asked if I could treat him and I told them that I was not the one that will do it, God will do it because he is the only one that is powerful. So, he was brought to me and I explained the issue to them. What happened to him did not come from his father's family but he was tortured because of his mother. The reason is that the people who inflicted epilepsy on him were aware that once the guy travels out of the country, the mother would also benefit from it and would become a mother to an abroad-based son. So, children can be punished because of their mother and some mothers are being punished because of their children.

Female traditional healer, aged 55, Ile-Ife

In this case, the traditionalist is of the view that many at times, epilepsy is inflicted on people because of what destiny has in store for them. According to her, the wicked ones inflicted the illness on the man because he was deemed progressive in life.

Epilepsy can also be inflicted on people in the dream through food mostly by the wicked ones. As a possible source of affliction, a healer shared a recent experience:

Epilepsy can be caused by the wicked ones. It can also be an attack from one's dream, and also amongst friends and family. The one I said I treated 6 days ago, they brought him from school, it just happened to him all of a sudden, but God took control. They inflict the illness on people both in the physical and in one's dream, also through eating and drinking.

Male traditional healer, aged 52, Pedro road, Ile-Ife

Epilepsy is perceived as a terrible illness, as the patient must not stay where there is noise. The healers explained further by stating that the illness usually manifests amidst the crowd. Maybe they are celebrating a particular festival or in the market and purpose is to disgrace the victim. So, the opinion of the traditional healers is that this illness is more spiritual than natural and that it is a shameful illness.

In our conversation with the herb seller, she said

Epilepsy is a shameful illness that brings shame because it happens to people where they will be disgraced. It happens in the midst of people. Because it is allergic to noise, anyone with epilepsy does not hear sounds from drum beats, noise, etc. They have to be far away from noise.

Female herb seller, aged 52,

I treated a boy three months ago, who has this special experience. When it happens to this boy, he will be on the same spot, and all his body looks like bone. All the body and eyes will be swollen. When we made findings, we discovered that it was inflicted on him and it is a shameful illness. They usually use it to disgrace some in the midst of people. About 98% of the occurrence of the illness is inflicted on the person. It is from the findings that we could know the remedies to use for the patient.

Male traditional healer, aged 50, London Street, Ile-Ife

For him, 98% of the epilepsy cases are caused by afflictions by the wicked ones. The healer elucidated that the reason the wicked ones inflict this illness on people is to disgrace them and through findings, he was guided on the approach to use in treating the patient.

Some healers affirmed that arrow might be shot at some people at midnight and they may fall from the bed, and by the time they want to stand up, they will start experiencing the symptoms of the illness. Some healers explained further by declaring that there are ways through which people get angry with someone. For instance, through the way we talk, through pride, being discourteous to elders, this can cause bitterness and such a person can decide to take revenge by inflicting the illness on the discourteous fellow. A healer explained further by stating that epilepsy is common amongst the black people because God did not create everyone equally. Some came to the world to do good, some to act wickedly, which is why some deliberately inflict the illness on the victims. Some healers are also of the view that the spirit can also inflict the illness on some people when they walk on the streets at certain periods.

A male healer attributed epilepsy to breaking family taboos. It is deduced that some

children are affected by epilepsy as a result of some obligations that are expected of their parents to observe but are being neglected by them as a result of their religious affiliations, belief or sentiments. For example, the failure of parents to observe certain rituals at the birth of a child or children in a family may affect such a child or children later in life.

In our discussion with a healer in Oke Ayetoro, he said
Epilepsy can be inflicted on the person or can occur due to family taboo. Another is when they want to give birth, and they inquire about the destiny of child *esentaye* and what should be done for the child as family ritual *oro ile*, and later in life the father becomes a born-again Christian or devout Muslim so he does not do the family ritual again, it will affect the children.”

Male traditional healer, aged 48, Oke Ayetoro, Ile-Ife

In his view, epilepsy can also be caused by failure to observe the family ritual, which he termed as *oro ile*. The belief is that after some parents have inquired about the destiny of their children, they desist from observing the family ritual for them because of their religious belief and this may later adversely affect the children.

As a learned person, I think two things cause epilepsy. Firstly, it can be hereditary and secondly it can be an affliction caused by the wicked ones.

Male traditional healer, aged 50, *Ogboni* lane, Ile-Ife

However, some traditional healers are of the viewpoint that epilepsy can only be caused by spiritual factors. The belief is that epilepsy is not inborn; it is not a factor of heredity or natural occurrences, but as a result of the activities of the powerful or wicked ones. Some healers affirmed that epilepsy could be inflicted on the person to punish the person or stop the person from progressing in life. The witches or wicked ones are believed to be responsible for such an ailment and that it does not occur naturally.

In our interview with a traditional male healer, he strongly believed that epilepsy only occurs as a result of spiritual factors; nobody is born with it. His belief is that all the people being affected by epilepsy are experiencing it because of the evil machinery of the wicked ones.

In our interview with him, he said

The epilepsy you are talking about now, there is no one that was born with it. They did not give birth to anybody with it. It is here on earth that they contracted it. It is caused by the wicked ones.

Epilepsy usually does not start happening to someone suddenly. One cannot walk without shaking the head (i.e., without offending people). They usually inflict illness on people most of the time.

Male traditional healer, aged 70, Iremo

The belief that epilepsy can only occur as a result of spiritual factors is also stressed by some other traditional healers.

Epilepsy is an affliction most of the time. It is not a natural occurrence. It is the wrath of the wicked ones.

Male traditional healer, aged 72, Ile-Ife

Epilepsy is an ailment caused by the wicked ones. We call them the mothers (witches). The ailment could come through eating in one's dream. It could be when someone's saliva is taken and used, but it is not an ailment that happens to someone all of a sudden. The world inflicts it on someone.

Male traditional healer, aged 70, Oke Isoda, Ile-Ife

Epilepsy is seen as totally caused by the activities of the spiritual forces by some healers. The belief is that it is not natural but solely lies on the wicked ones. When we inquired about some cases they have treated, we observed that the narrative of the healers is mostly on a spiritual cause as a dominant factor in the occurrence of the illness. Drawing from the experience of the interviewee, a traditional male healer aged 50 years narrated how envy and greed can encourage wickedness and the length some individuals could go in afflicting anyone with epilepsy. In his words:

The patient in question, the illness was inflicted on him by someone in his family over properties. He is the first son. He has a brother who is not serious, and he does not have any job. It was the brother who now thought of what he could do. He did not want to kill his brother. He felt that if he inflicted epilepsy on him, he would have been able to sit on his brother's properties before he regains his consciousness or gets someone to treat him. He would have got what he wanted. So that was why he inflicted the illness on him. When they brought this man, it was very serious. So, the illness was inflicted on him because of his properties. It was when I made findings that I realised that it is within the household that the illness was inflicted on him. So, God took control, oracle took control, and he is fine and perfectly healed.

Male traditional healer, aged 50, Ilode, Ile-Ife

In this case, the healer expressed that epilepsy was inflicted on the man by his brother to acquire his properties. The healer made findings on the genesis of the problem and found that the origin of the illness is within the family. So, this healer is of the view that spiritual factors cause epilepsy.

The one that put me into trouble was in Aba Sule, Aba Alhaji, Edo side. They are from Modakeke, but I was their customer. They had a farm in that place. There was a fight in the village. Someone went to put something on the land of the patient, and he started being affected by epilepsy. They first took the affected man to the church. They spent a lot of money. On this case, they sold a big farm before they now saw someone that directed them to me so they came to me and I started taking care of him. After the treatment, I encountered a problem, but I tried and took care of the patient then, and God took control. He spent just three days with me. After three days, I gave him some remedies to go and be using it, and he is now cured.

Male traditional healer, aged 51, Itakogun, Ile-Ife

He disclosed that epilepsy was inflicted on a man by putting a charm on the farm of the patient due to the fight that ensued regarding farmland in the village. This case is also based on affliction by the wicked ones.

This shows that though some healers recognise the role of heredity in the occurrence of epilepsy, they strongly believe that epilepsy is mostly caused by spiritual factors. It is as a result of the influence of the activities of the wicked ones that this condition comes into play. This shows the different standpoints expressed by the healers as the causal factor of epilepsy, and this can also be relayed in terms of the model of care available to the victims in the traditional setting.

Communicability of Epilepsy

The traditional belief surrounding the causes of epilepsy is strongly attached to the affliction of the illness by the wicked ones. Lizards are commonly attached to the illness and those afflicted with the condition are considered to harbour a male and a female lizard in their bodies. The lizards as presumed will dwell in their hosts and trigger the symptoms by hitting themselves against their hosts. This is explained below:

What is called epilepsy is like a lizard. They are both male and female inside. The period in which they hit one another is the period in which it manifests in the person. But we have what we use to suppress it because the affected will vomit it and you will see it vividly. It is like a lizard, but it is not as big as a lizard, but it is in the form of a lizard.

Female herb seller, aged 52, Ile-Ife

The array of media of contracting epilepsy reflects in the narratives of the healers and their prescriptions around how to avoid the illness and possible treatments that are available for those living with it. Findings in this study reveal that the healers have different views regarding the contagious nature of epilepsy. Some healers are of the view that people can contract epilepsy by stepping on the saliva of the victim. A healer explained that there is a cultural belief attributed to epilepsy that anybody who sees the patient with epilepsy when standing up after the fall will also contract it.

Firstly, if a patient with epilepsy falls, they say they do not get up in the presence of people. Anybody that sees how a person living with epilepsy stands up after falling will contract it. Secondly, epilepsy is a serious condition to the extent that if anyone steps on the saliva of the victim, the person will contract the illness through that.

Female herb seller, aged 56, Ile-Ife

However, most healers ascertained that epilepsy is not contagious and stepping on the saliva of the patient does not necessarily mean the person will contract it. The healers explained further that sharing the same plate and utensils with a person living with the condition cannot lead to an affliction:

What is happening to them is not more than forcefully falling, and foaming from the mouth, and some are hereditary. Epilepsy does not spread even if one eats together; it is not contagious, but

we must be making the affected happy every time. We should not discriminate. If they use a bowl for drinking water, and we should collect it from them and use it for drinking. We should play together so that the patient will not worry.

Female traditional healer, aged 54, Lokore, Ile-Ife

If a person being affected by epilepsy wants to eat, we can eat together, it does not spread.

Male traditional healer, aged 47, Omitoto, Ile-Ife

Findings revealed that some healers are not swayed away by the cultural belief in the fact that epilepsy can be contagious. Rather, they admitted to the fact that epilepsy is not infectious, and this may reflect a good relationship with their patient.

The Treatability of Epilepsy

Epilepsy is conceived as a health condition that could suddenly occur after months of incubation of affliction. In line with a popular view and interpretations of epilepsy among the Yoruba people, the healers reiterated the assumption that an afflicted individual would have a type of lizard in his or her body. Once the lizard in question has spent sufficient time in the host, then the symptoms would surface. At maturity, an afflicted person will manifest epilepsy by foaming from the mouth, experiencing stiffness, shaking, tongue rolling and rolling on the floor. In the words of a healer, there are no age barriers and locations to epilepsy:

Epilepsy does not know children. It can happen to anybody. There is nobody that they cannot inflict epilepsy on. Epilepsy causes sudden fall in people suffering from it. The person will be stiff, foaming from the mouth and rolling the tongue, which is epilepsy. When it occurs, after some time, without the affected using anything, it will release the patient, and he/she will get up. Then, it has started manifesting. That is when we will now know that the person is being affected by epilepsy. During the manifestation of epileptic seizure, the patient's head may hit the rock. He may die in the process due to brain damage.

Male traditional healer, aged 60, Osunle, Modakeke

All persons living with epilepsy foam from the mouth *Akiwarapa abi itofunfun lenu*. When they fall on the ground, you will think they will die, but later they will stand up. It usually causes shame for some people. By the time the person stands up and sees people, he will be ashamed.

Male traditional healer, aged 52, Pedro Road, Ile-Ife

All the healers are of the view that epilepsy is treatable once all the necessary procedures are followed if the client is well-taken care of and the necessary remedies are given to the patients. A healer revealed that once the victim vomits lizard or intestine parts, they will recover. Below is an excerpt from the interview:

It can be treated; epilepsy can be cured once all the necessary procedures are followed. If the client is well-taken care of and the necessary drugs are administered, it can be cured. That is what I said earlier that if epilepsy is caused by the wicked ones, it will take up to a month for it to be cured. Some victims could even vomit what will look like a lizard. Another vomit could look like faeces and intestine parts. When this happens to a victim, it means that the epilepsy has been cured for good. However, western medicine will hide it inside the body and after two months, it will resurface and now much worse than the beginning. It is traditional medicine that cures epilepsy.”

Male traditional healer, aged 70, Oke Isoda, Ile-Ife

The healers further explained that they have close relationships with their clients, which in turn influence their level of recovery. Some of them elaborated further on the fact that they have people working for them as caregivers that ensure the well-being of their patients. They are of the view that epilepsy is easier to cure if they spend quality time with them and ensure their comfort around them. Some of them illustrated further on the fact that they have a cordial relationship with their patients; they can eat together, play with them and spend quality time with them. The healers added that they do not make them feel discriminated against or isolated. They joke with them, play games with them and through that, they will feel elated, and anything they are using for them will work for them. The belief is that when they are happy, the medicine they are giving them will be effective. The healers admitted that everyone is equal regardless of their shortcomings and all humans are created by God but by making them happy and comfortable, they will be healed.

In the words of a healer:

It is compulsory for us to have time to take care of them since we do not have any other work. What we do is to save lives, so we save lives. What we use to take care of them, some are nearby, some are not nearby. It depends on how serious a person's problem is. It can be cured.

Male traditional healer, aged 51, Itakogun

The healers ascertained that epilepsy can be cured with the use of traditional medicine.

ti won ba n so pe ogun ki i se ebo, ogun ni solution what they call medicine is solution, it is not ritual. So, it is treatable and can be cured.”

Male traditional healer, aged 50, *Isale Ope, Modakeke*

This is also emphasised by another healer when we inquired about the treatability of epilepsy. He replied

There is a saying that when treatment is done, and the potency of such treatment should be examined. I am 99% sure that it can be cured. I know five methods for treating epilepsy. We start with the little treatment first and if it does not cure it, we use the stronger treatment. It is like giving a child paracetamol for a headache or fever, but if the paracetamol does not relieve it, you use something stronger such as Arthemeter, Fansidar and the likes.

Male traditional healer, aged 50, Ogboni lane, Ile-Ife

This is also stressed by another healer when he was asked if epilepsy is treatable. He told me:

It can be treated very well, only that it is difficult to treat. It is not just one or two methods that can be used in treating the ailment. It is not that you will use one treatment and then stop. But once I administer one at first, after a while, I change it to another method again.

Male traditional healer, aged 72, Oke Isoda, Ile-Ife

However, some healers are of the view that some patients living with epilepsy fail to recover from the condition because they are unable to give what the owners of the earth “the witches” demand. The belief is that it is the witches that can release them from their captivity and the spiritual world. Inability to appease the witches, they will not recover from the illness. An excerpt from the interview can be seen below:

By the grace of God, nobody comes here in tears and does not go back home in joy, except if I tell them what the owner of the earth “witches” says they will collect from them and they are not ready to do it. I will tell them to take the person away because I cannot come and set free and pay with my life or the life of my wife and children. I will not collect any money from anybody.

Male traditional healer, aged 60, *Osunle, Modakeke*

Evidence from these findings reveal that epilepsy is believed to be treatable and healers are well attached to their patients and show a sense of commitment towards their work. The healers are noted for the kind of relationship they build with their clients and the time devoted to their work. However, some of them are of the stance that for successful treatment, certain things must be given to the spiritual being. There is a considerable level of commitment and availability shown by these healers in the successful treatment of their clients.

Appeasement and Enhancing Therapeutic Outcomes

It was established by some healers that the first thing a healer should do for the people living with epilepsy to recover from their condition is to do appeasement. Appeasement is expressed as the primary way for the successful treatment of epilepsy which must be carried out by the healer. Some healers explained further that once appeasement is done, anything they touch will be possible. Even if it is only water they give to the patient, they will be cured. The healers explained that failure to do this will not result in fruitful outcomes.

It is common among us that are traditional healers. We will first consult the divination tool “Ifa” oracle to know if there is no involvement of the wicked ones in it. If the wicked ones are involved, we will first appease them. After appeasing them, we will now start using many remedies. If the patient has done everything that he/she is supposed to do, the illness will not re-occur again. Some are not caused by the evil forces. We do not appease for the natural ones and we will give the patient different remedies that he can be using.

Male traditional healer, aged 51, *Itakogun, Ile-Ife*

However, a healer explained further that appeasement is not done for epilepsy that occurs naturally. Different remedies are only given to patients for proper recovery. This indicates that among the healers, there is a disparity in the procedure or steps taken between epilepsy that is viewed as naturally caused and the one that is spiritually caused.

Also, it was stated that remedies should be prepared on the ground because patients may be brought all of a sudden and emergency treatment may be needed to rescue the life. It was further detailed that the healer must do everything he can to save the life of his/her patient even if it requires fetching water early in the morning without talking to anyone. It was expressed that after carrying out the necessary procedures on the water, the patient will drink it and vomit inside the bowl. Also, some healers added that part of their role is to make the patient feel comfortable around them by playing with them, watching movies together and playing games with them.

What the traditional healer can do for those receiving treatment for epilepsy to recover are that we should make them happy, we should not maltreat them. If we do not maltreat them and we treat them like other children, they will recover quickly. So, their age mates should be friends with them. They should not be left alone with people saying, and they are sick. They should be in the midst of people.

Male traditional healer, Aged 50, Ilode, Ile-Ife

This shows that the healers spend quality time with their patients, and they are more involved in their personal lives by engaging in discussions with them and giving them hope of recovery. The findings also reveal that the patients feel comfortable around the healers and are likely to have a close relationship with them.

Epilepsy Treatments as a Service to Humanity

In this study, some healers revealed that any healer treating epilepsy must treat the patient free of charge without collecting any money on it to avoid repercussion. The belief is that anyone who treats epilepsy and collects money for the treatment will suffer the consequences. They further explained that the illness would never leave the healer's lineage. The healers expatiated that if the healer did not give birth, it would affect his or her close relations' child.

In our conversation with a healer when we inquired about his opinion regarding epilepsy, he said

One does not treat epilepsy and collect money. We do not cure mental illness and collect a vow “*eje*”. Any healer that collects vow will be cursed because it will affect the children.

Male traditional healer, *aged 50, Modakeke* (code 54:4)

However, some healers are of the view that they can collect money in the treatment of epilepsy without any repercussion whatsoever. The belief is that the inability to collect money in the treatment of epilepsy is only applicable in the olden days; it is not feasible in this contemporary time. A healer further explained that any patient who does not have the money to use to buy the materials required in treating them will continue to be affected by the illness. The healers with this similar view revealed that they do collect money, but they do not collect it directly from the patient to avoid repercussions that come with it. The healers stated that they do tell the patient or family of the patient to put the money inside the hen’s cage and they later ask someone, which could be their children to help them pick the money inside the cage. When the money is brought before them, they will reply to the person by saying, “they saw the money by chance”. The healers would not admit that the money is being given to them but rather say they got the money by chance.

In addition, the healers explained further that the second option, which is more rampant among them in recent times is that they do tell the patient or the family to send the money into their account. The belief is that when these precautions are made, they will not suffer from the consequences attached to the treatment of the illness.

In our discussion with a healer, he said

We collect money but we don’t directly receive their money with our hands. Any traditional healer that wants to treat a client must not ask for money and collect it directly with the hand from the patient. During the days of our fathers, they put the money inside the cage in which a hen is usually kept, give it to the healer, and he then takes the money inside it. Another which is practised in our time now is that an account number is given so that the money can be sent there. There is no healer that will collect such money on the spot or else there could be a repercussion. That is the way it is.

Male traditional healer, *aged 70, Ile-Ife*

Based on these findings, it is revealed that epilepsy is still grounded in strong cultural beliefs. This shows the level of sentiments attached to the treatment of patients living with this condition. The belief attributed to this condition can be relayed in the kind of attitude shown in rendering care to the patients and can also influence how the healers are treating the patient.

Nevertheless, the cultural definitions attributed to epilepsy also play a role in the availability and disposition of traditional healers treating epilepsy. The belief that if money is collected directly from the patient or family, it will affect the healers' children have scared a lot of them away from rendering quality service and care to the victims.

Discussion of Findings

The result shows that traditional healing practise is embedded in cultural belief in multiple factors in the aetiology of epilepsy. The findings from this research in a way corroborate the findings of Abasiubong, Ekott, Bassey and Nyong (2009) that spiritual forces play critical roles in the cause of epilepsy in some cases. Traditional healers had a range of views regarding causal factors of epilepsy that include biomedical factors, which were heredity factors and spiritual causes which could be caused by affliction by the wicked ones, witchcraft, attack from the dream, food poisoning and family taboo. Most of the healers maintained the stance that epilepsy can be attributed to witchcraft, spiritual forces and evil activities of the wicked ones, which is consistent with some findings from previous African studies conducted in Zambia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Namibia (du Toit & Pretorius, 2018).

Epilepsy was perceived as a shameful illness caused by natural factors, including genetics, preternatural and supernatural forces. Whether epilepsy was conceived as caused by natural, preternatural or supernatural forces, the periods of occurrence and physical spaces were described as similar. The pattern in the occurrence and spaces of manifestations was described as open and often attracts shame and stigmatisation. People living with epilepsy, for instance, would easily manifest symptoms in crowded spaces. Unfortunately, in the study settings and similar to the literature, epilepsy is stigmatised, and such people are avoided. This finding is consistent with reports from previous studies, which revealed that epilepsy is considered a shameful illness among the traditional healers. Keikelame and Swartz (2015) in a study conducted among traditional healers in Cape Town, South Africa revealed that epilepsy was perceived as a shameful illness caused by witchcraft, the anger of the gods and poison, which is in variance with biomedical explanations.

By appealing to an interpretative constructivist stance, the healers in this study espoused further the preternatural aetiology of epilepsy and the chances that certain ecological factor like the types of animals that exist in a context could provide insights

into the causal chain and the possible routes for solution to some epilepsy cases. Lizards are common reptiles that live close to residences of the Yoruba people. As reptiles, the agama lizard is forbidden and cannot be consumed but serves as an important animal material for medicine making and preparation of concoctions for different purposes. The agama lizard moves his head constantly in a manner that resonates with some symptoms of epilepsy and as such, this male type of lizard and the female counterparts are construed to possess the potentials of being used as medium of afflicting targets with epilepsy. The symptoms around epilepsy stated by some healers include neck stiffness, loss of consciousness, shaking, tongue rolling and rolling on the floor. This is supported by the findings of Kpobi, Swartz and Keikelame (2018).

Animal materials are common ingredients in how some healers prepare their remedies (Baskind & Birbeck, 2005). The animals that are considered to possess healing properties and are useful vary and also depend on the ecology of the healer, their experiences and practices within their healing occupations (Baskind & Birbeck 2005; Mohammed & Babikir 2013). The belief is widespread among the Yoruba people in Southwest Nigeria, and lizards to date remain an important ingredient in the production of concoctions or treatments for certain cases of epilepsy.

A further extension of the preternatural causation of epilepsy was the extreme views on the contagious possibilities of epilepsy. One of such construction is that epilepsy could be contracted by stepping on the saliva of an infected person. This view was shared by a few of the healers. Nonetheless, a similar interpretation was reported by Njamnshi et al. (2010) among a group of traditional healers in Cameroon. Some healers also debunked the theory of body fluid exchange as a possible source of contracting epilepsy, but the idea that saliva could spread epilepsy appeared popular. The view could be responsible for the maintenance of distance from people manifesting the symptoms of epilepsy. The fear is that drawing close to someone that had a seizure could lead to being afflicted with epilepsy. This was similar to the findings of Baskind and Birbeck (2005) in Zambia where traditional healers believed that witchcraft afflicts their victims with epilepsy through their urine, faeces and saliva. To some other healers, pepper and the edge of the broom could act as a medium through which epilepsy can be inflicted on people.

This study also revealed that epilepsy is believed to be treatable by all healers once the necessary procedures are carried out on the patients. Some healers disclosed that once a patient has vomited something that looks like a lizard, wall gecko or intestine parts, the patient will recover from the condition. Findings revealed that some patients living with epilepsy fail to recover from the condition because of the lack of social support from relatives. This is similar to the findings of Keikelame and Swartz (2017) that lack of social support from significant family members is a hindrance to patients' care and recovery. The strong religious belief that kicks against traditional medicine, inability to appease the witches who are the owners of the earth, eating abominations, such as palm wine, beans cake, okro soup, when the substance used in inflicting epilepsy

on the victim is thrown inside the river, inadequate knowledge of healers treating epilepsy, exploitation by healers and inability to collect money for treating epilepsy are hindrances to patients' recovery. The results in this study show that traditional healers do not directly collect money from the patient for the treatment of epilepsy because of the cultural belief attributed to the condition. This shows the level of discrimination attached to the condition.

Conclusion

Epilepsy is a chronic, complex and multidimensional condition deeply rooted in traditional African belief. The cultural belief attributed to epilepsy influences the patronage of traditional healers. Traditional healers attribute the causes of epilepsy to natural and preternatural forces, and this influences their disposition to the treatment of patients living with the condition. Our findings provide insight into the cultural worldviews of epilepsy among traditional healers. Traditional healers play vital roles in providing care for patients living with epilepsy. As critical stakeholders, traditional healers are germane in passing and retracting beliefs that promote misconceptions and access to quality care for epilepsy. Internal regulations of traditional medicine and quality of care are urgently required to ensure the credence of treatments, therapies and also promote the patient's right to choose treatments and quality of care.

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Authors Contributions:

OMA conceived the research idea, provided the guide and supported TA in successfully carrying out this research.

TA carried out this research as her thesis for a Master of Science degree in Sociology and Anthropology under the supervision of OMA. The data analysis was a shared responsibility. Both authors approved the submission of this article.

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Le travail domestique : occultation de la personne et de catégories de genre existantes

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Résumé

Le travail domestique est présenté dans la littérature et les représentations sociales comme un métier essentiellement féminin et du domaine privé. Le développement de ce secteur et sa situation actuelle au Burundi et dans la sous-région interroge les présupposés théoriques souvent mobilisés pour décrire et expliquer le phénomène. Cet article a pour objectif de montrer les limites d'une vision restée occidental-centrée du travail domestique et de réactualiser le débat sur la question au regard des développements en cours dans le monde du travail. La présente étude se base sur des données ethnographiques produites sur le terrain burundais. Comme dans les autres pays de la Région des Grands Lacs Africains, il y a presque autant d'hommes que de femmes exerçant ce genre de travail. Ces travailleurs sont poussés à s'engager dans ce genre d'activités à cause des conditions de précarité dans lesquelles ils se retrouvent eux-mêmes et leurs familles. L'article prolonge en même temps l'intérêt porté à l'étude des catégories à la marge et interroge dès lors le travail domestique au prisme des catégories de genre. De plus, étant donné que le travail constitue un type de rapport social, l'article ouvre des pistes de recherche sur le genre et la domesticité dans leur articulation aussi bien des rapports conjugaux que ceux présents dans le travail salarié classique.

Mots clé: Genre, travail domestique, Burundi, dichotomie public/privé, rapport social

Abstract

Domestic work is presented in literature and the social representations as an essentially female occupation and taking place in the private realm. The development of this sector of activities and its current situation in Burundi and the sub-region questions the theoretical assumptions often mobilized to describe and explain the phenomenon. The article highlights the limits of a still western-centered vision of domestic work and spark a new debate on the issue in the light of current developments in the sphere of salaried work. This study is based on ethnographic data produced in the Burundian field. As in other countries of the African Greats Lakes Region, there are almost as many men as women in this kind of work. These workers are pushed to engage in this kind of activity because of the precarious conditions in which they find themselves and their families. The article thus extends the interest in the study of marginal categories and therefore questions the domestic work through the prism of gender categories. Moreover, given that this work constitutes a type of social relationship, the article opens up avenues for research on gender and domesticity in their articulation of both marital relationship and those taking place in classic salaried work.

Keywords: *Gender, domestic work, Burundi, private/public dichotomy, social relationship*

Introduction

La domesticité a existé depuis des siècles et serait une constance anthropologique universelle (Héritier, 2001). Partout dans le monde, des gens se sont retrouvés au service des autres à différentes époques, sous des formes variées. Les tâches qu'assument les travailleurs domestiques jouent un rôle capital pour accroître notamment la participation des femmes au marché du travail, mais il s'agit aussi d'un secteur qui pourvoie de l'emploi à un nombre assez important de gens (Fouquet, 2001). Malgré cette importance, il s'agit d'une catégorie de travailleurs qui attirent moins l'intérêt aussi bien des pouvoirs publics que des chercheurs (Destremau et Lautier, 2002). En témoigne la difficulté à appréhender statistiquement ce phénomène (Hau-nung Chan 2005, Simonovosky et Luebker, 2012) et son occultation dans l'analyse des rapports de genre. Lorsqu'il en est question, le travailleur est considéré comme le prolongement de l'activité de la femme, surtout qu'il est présenté souvent comme une figure féminine (Rollins, 1985 ; Roy, 2006). Il occupe souvent les femmes des classes populaires et surtout des femmes migrantes (Jeffrey, 2015 ; Kambouri, 2008). Pourtant, il y a aussi des contextes, par ailleurs pas isolés comme celui du Burundi, où une majorité de ces travailleurs est masculine (Deslauriers, 2017). Le système de domesticité n'advient cependant pas avec la colonisation. Nsabimana (1993) et Botte (1982) montrent qu'à différents échelons de la hiérarchie sociale et politique, la plupart des dignitaires avaient plusieurs personnes à leur service. Les chefs locaux, qui étaient en charge du recrutement de cette main d'œuvre détournaient une partie de

cette dernière à leur avantage¹. Le présent article se donne pour objectif de prolonger les réflexions sur la place du travail domestique dans les théorisations sur le genre et sur la dichotomisation des espaces privé et public lorsqu'il s'agit de parler de ce type d'activité. Après une brève présentation du contexte et de la problématique, l'article revient sur la signification du travail domestique en tant que relation de travail particulière, montre ensuite la nécessité d'une révision épistémologique concernant le genre du travailleur et l'espace dans lequel son travail prend place. La conclusion récapitule les principales intuitions et propose des pistes de recherche pouvant enrichir les réflexions sur ce sujet.

Contexte du travail domestique et problématisation

Du fait de sa perte d'importance numérique en occident, le travail domestique attire moins l'attention des chercheurs en tant que clé d'analyse des rapports sociaux. Lorsque cette dimension est prise en compte, elle est souvent analysée sous l'angle des rapports de classe, de race. Dans ce dernier cas, les analyses opposent souvent les femmes entre elles. Cet aspect est mis en évidence par Destremau & Lautier en ces termes : « *Si la relation de travail domestique relève bien des rapports de genre, elle présente cet aspect paradoxal de se nouer avant tout entre deux femmes* » (Destremau & Lautier, 2002, p. 253). Même reconnu, le travailleur domestique semble globalement occulté dans les réflexions portant sur la division du travail domestique entre hommes et femmes et sur celles portant sur le genre. En raison de l'importance numérique plus ou moins négligeable de ces travailleurs dans le contexte occidental (Simonovsky & Luebker, 2012), ces analyses gardent leur pertinence dans ce contexte mais la transposition des théories élaborées à partir desdites analyses gagnerait à être nuancée lorsqu'elles doivent s'appliquer dans les contextes non-occidentaux.

En effet, lorsqu'il s'agit de considérer ce travail en dehors du contexte occidental, plusieurs aspects invitent le chercheur à être attentif à ce personnage d'autant plus que la plupart des familles font recours à ce type de professionnel. Au Burundi, Nkurunziza (2017), estime qu'ils seraient environ près de quatre-vingt milles à exercer dans les ménages, surtout dans les centres urbains. La difficulté tient au fait qu'il reste difficile de se représenter la proportion des ménages qui emploient les travailleurs domestiques (Simonovsky & Luebker, 2012.)

Au-delà de constituer un objet de prestige de classe sociale le travail domestique constitue aussi une aide précieuse dont certains foyers ne sauraient se priver et cela pour deux raisons majeures selon la recherche ethnographique réalisée. La première tient à la nécessité de ce service pour libérer la femme qui s'en chargerait et de lui permettre de prendre un emploi rémunéré à l'extérieur du foyer ou au mieux d'augmenter ses chances de gagner des revenus supplémentaires.

1 Mechtilda Inakinonko, indique que son père, qui était lui-même un chef dans sa localité, recrutait des gens pour aller travailler à la cour du Roi ou chez les Princes mais retenait une partie pour travailler chez lui. Communication personnelle le 8/6/2018.

Une autre raison tient à l'ignorance ou à la dévalorisation de ce travail et de sa signification aux yeux d'autrui. En effet, pour avoir grandi dans des familles où tout le travail domestique était fait par un personnel recruté à cette fin, beaucoup de filles et surtout de garçons se retrouvent épouses et maris sans la moindre connaissance de comment ce travail se fait. A l'instar de cet interlocuteur de Ehrenreich (2003) qui lui dit « *Je ne suis pas confiante en moi-même en cette matière* » ou « *je ne saurais vraiment pas par où commencer* ». Cela peut se comprendre dès lors que beaucoup de gens apprennent à faire ce travail de leurs parents et que ces derniers ne le font pas eux-mêmes. L'auteure constante qu'il s'agit d'un problème qui se transmet à l'instar d'un gène et fait constater que dans la société américaine qu'elle étudie « *La classe supérieure américaine élève une génération de jeunes qui vont, sans assistance constante, suffoquer dans leurs propres détritrus* » (Ehrenreich, 2003, p.100). D'une manière ou d'une autre, la présence des travailleurs domestiques pérennise la nécessité de ces travailleurs et permet de reproduire non seulement la nécessité de ce service mais également les conceptions et représentations sociales du travail domestique.

En outre, alors que dans le monde occidental, ce secteur est dominé par les femmes comme en témoigne le vocabulaire utilisé², on observe que dans certaines parties du monde, des hommes participent davantage à ce travail (Gubin & Piette, 2001). Un rapport d'une enquête réalisée par IDAY (2016) révèle par exemple qu'en Afrique de l'Est, il y a 6 femmes pour 4 hommes dans cette profession à l'exception du Burundi où les hommes sont majoritaires. Selon l'enquête réalisée par une Organisation non Gouvernementale Terre des Hommes en partenariat avec IDAY³ dans certaines agglomérations urbaines burundaises, les hommes/garçons représentent 61,3% des travailleurs domestiques contre 38,7% des filles/femmes. Il s'agit par ailleurs d'une évolution historique récente car au début de ce travail salarié dans le contexte burundais, il s'agissait d'un travail plutôt exclusivement masculin. Les agents de l'administration coloniale, qui étaient pour la plupart des militaires, des célibataires ou des missionnaires, ont embauché des hommes (Deslauriers, 2017) en partie en raison des restrictions d'accès à la ville qui frappaient les femmes et la conception du travail salarié féminin (De Baeck, 1957).

A partir de ces considérations, une série de questionnements se posent. Que représente la figure du travailleur domestique dans la configuration familiale ? Dans le contexte où ce travailleur peut être aussi bien une femme/fille ou un homme/garçon, qu'est-ce que cette spécificité apporte aux analyses sur les rapports de sexe dans la sphère familiale ? En réponse à ces questions une hypothèse théorique s'impose : le travail domestique résiste à ? territorialisation et rejette les dichotomies public/privé et masculin/féminin.

2 Il s'agit d'une travailleuse, d'une migrante, d'une femme de ménage, etc. la littérature occidentale fait rarement mention du garçon ou d'un homme exerçant dans ce secteur.

3 Il ne faut pas oublier non plus qu'ils sont souvent produits à des fins militantes par des organisations non gouvernementales qui ont un intérêt fondamental à souligner la pertinence du travail domestique. Les nouvelles estimations mondiales et régionales s'appuient donc exclusivement sur les sources officielles.

Méthodologie

Les données exploitées proviennent d'une enquête réalisée dans le cadre d'une recherche doctorale sur la reconfiguration des rôles conjugaux dans des familles en situation de vulnérabilité professionnelle masculine. Les données ont été recueillies au cours d'un travail de terrain réalisé entre janvier 2018 et décembre 2020 lors de mes séjours de recherche en Mairie de Bujumbura. L'enquête a été menée par observation et par entretien. Elle a été focalisée sur les conjoints/employeurs en couple. Un complément d'informations a été recueilli, par entretien, auprès d'une vingtaine de travailleurs domestiques, hommes et femmes. Ces entretiens avec les travailleurs ont été réalisés en *focus groups* comprenant entre 5 et 10 participants pour favoriser la richesse des débats. Dans ces entretiens, les hommes et les femmes ont été séparés pour réduire les effets de domination liés au genre. Durant ce processus, des notes de terrain ont été prises pour mieux saisir la matérialité des propos qui sont développés par les deux catégories d'enquêtés. Ces données empiriques sont confrontées à la littérature existante sur le sujet.

Le travail domestique théoriquement mal délimité et empiriquement difficile à appréhender

Le travail domestique est mal délimité théoriquement et cela rend difficile son appréhension empirique. Dans ce domaine, le travailleur semble ne pas avoir de cahier de charges connues. Une caractéristique commune fédère toutes les catégories de travailleurs domestiques selon l'OIT (p. 2, n.d), il s'agit du fait qu'ils sont employés dans ou par un ménage.

Avant de poursuivre la discussion, une remarque s'impose au regard des données produites sur le sujet dans le contexte de la présente étude. La littérature sociologique présente parfois la domesticité comme un type d'esclavage moderne. Ce genre de considération peut cependant être nuancée si on tient compte de la rareté de l'emploi et l'absence de politiques destinées à concilier le travail et la vie de la famille surtout pour les femmes dans le contexte burundais. C'est ce que fait constater d'une certaine manière Dominique Fougeyrollas-Schwebel lorsqu'il fait remarquer que « *Le travail domestique relève aujourd'hui de la stratégie de flexibilité de l'existence personnelle de certains comme de la nécessité absolue de service d'autres* » (Fougeyrollas- Schwebel, 2001, p.352). Il s'agit d'une solution intermédiaire qui concilie en quelque sorte deux demandes complémentaires comme cela est démontré dans la section suivante.

La domesticité comme gage de survie pour les travailleurs et leurs familles

Diverses études sur l'économie burundaise et les conditions de vie de la population prouvent l'état de paupérisation dans lequel se trouve la plupart des ménages. Les données fournies par la Banque Mondiale (2016, p.158) révèlent que le nombre de personnes vivant dans un ménage est élevé. Il se situe entre 5,6 et 6,1 au moment où les parcelles exploitées sont exigües, de l'ordre de 0,46 ha par ménage. Exclues de force de l'agriculture et partant de moyens de leur subsistance, beaucoup de ces personnes vont tenter leur chance dans les centres urbains. Comme le fait constater Gill Lesly dans le cas de La Paz, une ville bolivienne en arrivant en ville, ces personnes sont prises en charge par les familles qui les emploient et de cette manière leurs familles d'origine se trouvent un peu déchargées (Gill, 1990, p.125). Lors des entretiens réalisés avec le groupe des domestiques, ils ont mentionné qu'ils n'avertissent personne lorsqu'ils décident de s'en aller. Dans une enquête réalisée en 2014⁴ sur la protection des enfants au Burundi, certains parents du monde rural se plaignaient que leurs enfants partent et qu'ils ne savent pas où aller les rechercher. Ces derniers demandaient aux responsables des ONGs œuvrant dans le domaine de la protection de l'enfance de les aider à retrouver et à ramener leurs enfants en famille. Un pari difficile à réaliser si on se représente la pauvreté dans laquelle vivent certaines familles d'après Philippe Auvergnon, (2013), expert de l'Organisation Internationale du Travail dans ses réflexions sur le travail décent. Mais cette pauvreté ne suffit pas pour expliquer le départ de ces enfants. L'image de la ville est idéalisée, considérée comme pleine d'opportunités d'emplois tandis que la dévalorisation du métier agricole se généralise et pousse à l'exode rural fait constater Agadjanian (2003).

Comme le témoignent certains de ces ruraux qui se font embaucher comme travailleurs domestiques, à leur arrivée, ils ne savent rien de la cuisine ou que très peu contrairement aux femmes de ménages albanaises travaillant en Grèce dont parle Kambouri (2008). Ils sont, pour beaucoup, formés par leurs propres employeuses ; d'autres se font aider par leurs collègues exerçant dans des maisons proches. Avec ces lacunes, ils acceptent de très bas salaires, le temps d'apprendre et de maîtriser l'art culinaire. A ce sujet, le constat de Nasima Moujoud (2017) est illustratif. En effet, en se basant sur l'étude qu'elle réalise au Maroc, l'auteure comprend que, du point de vue de ces jeunes, la domesticité signifie un espoir de vivre mieux ou moins mal. Lorsqu'ils estiment qu'ils peuvent se débrouiller assez bien, ils changent d'employeur pour chercher celui qui paierait mieux. L'engagement dans ce travail signifie pour beaucoup de ces jeunes un départ pour une longue aventure urbaine, parce que dès qu'ils ont réuni un capital suffisant, ils se lancent dans d'autres activités. Les interlocuteurs interrogés indiquent qu'ils acceptent le travail domestique tel qu'il se présente parce qu'ils n'ont pas d'autres choix.

4 Il s'agissait d'une étude conduite par l'Organisation Terre des Hommes sur la protection de l'enfant dans certaines provinces où elle mène ses interventions.

Ce qui se passe chez les enquêtés burundais ressemble à ce qui est déjà décrit par les autres chercheur-e-s qui ont analysé la domesticité dans des situations analogues comme celle de la Tanzanie (Bujra, 2000) et de la Zambie (Pendame, 2006 ; Tranberg Kansen, 1992). Par exemple, Janet Bujra fait remarquer dans son étude que les travailleurs n'ont d'autres alternatives que de se trouver du travail ou un autre moyen de subsistance (Bujra, 2000, p.135). Cette situation n'est pas spécifique à l'Afrique. S'il s'agit ici essentiellement d'une migration interne : campagne-ville, la migration internationale est, elle aussi, souvent expliquée comme une aventure à la recherche d'une situation moins mauvaise que celle que l'on mène chez soi. Partant de l'expérience des femmes et filles philippines, connues pour leur présence dans la main d'œuvre domestique en occident, Liane Mozère fait remarquer que pour certaines d'entre elles, il s'agit d'une manière pragmatique de construire un avenir ressenti comme sans issue (Mozère, 2001, p. 316).

Les enquêtés soutiennent que cette profession de travailleur domestique, quand bien-même elle est négligée, elle leur permette de se réaliser dans la vie. Grâce elle, ces jeunes peuvent réaliser certains de leurs rêves comme se marier, acquérir des biens, avoir une certaine considération dans la société. Certains de ces travailleurs disent engager, à leur tour, des ouvriers chez eux pour épauler leurs épouses ou leurs parents. Si ce travail domestique, malgré sa relative dévalorisation, profite à ceux qui l'exercent, il constitue aussi, pour les employeurs, une nécessité pour plusieurs raisons.

Travail domestique : un impératif d'adaptation et un symbole de résistance au déclassement

Pour beaucoup d'auteurs intéressés par le sujet, la présence d'un travailleur domestique est justifiée par la capacité de la femme à financer un substitut à son propre travail ou le luxe réservé à celles qui ont les moyens financiers de faire faire, par les autres, les tâches domestiques qui leur incomberaient sinon (Roy, 2006, p.106). Si cette piste ne doit pas être écartée, il s'avère important de la nuancer comme on le verra dans la suite de la discussion. En occident, le recrutement d'un travailleur domestique s'est expliqué pour certains observateurs, par la volonté de la femme, de se libérer des corvées domestiques pour jouer un rôle actif dans l'espace public (Bujra, 2000, p. 65). N'empêche cependant que, même pour la femme au foyer, le recrutement d'un travailleur domestique ou même de plusieurs, n'est pas exclu comme cela s'observe dans certains ménages Burundais. Dans le travail de terrain réalisé, deux logiques découlant de la réflexion menée dans le paragraphe précédent semblent animer les enquêtés. Il s'agit de la nécessité de poursuivre son activité à l'extérieur pour l'épouse devenue la principale ou l'unique pourvoyeuse de la famille d'une part et d'une symbolique qui est renvoyée à autrui pour montrer que malgré les difficultés, le couple tient le coup.

Economie de la domesticité et adaptation à la baisse de revenus

Lorsque l'état se resserre sur le couple dont le mari est privé de revenus, ce qui est loin d'être une exception dans le contexte burundais, l'épouse, déjà engagée à l'extérieur dans un emploi rémunéré, est susceptible de s'y investir davantage. Certaines des femmes rencontrées durant le travail de terrain expliquent que le salaire qu'elles ont à la fin du mois ne peut pas couvrir les dépenses de la famille. Même lorsque des privations importantes ont été consenties, ce salaire reste, pour la plupart de ménages, insuffisant. Pour cela, il n'est pas du tout maladroit de laisser les enfants à une ou un domestique (Bujra, 2000, p. 65). On peut s'en convaincre facilement au regard de la grille salariale pratiquée dans certains pays comme l'indiquent les données fournies par l'EMCVB⁵ (République du Burundi, 2015). Beaucoup d'enquêtées femmes sont obligées de compléter leur salaire par différentes activités après ou en dehors des heures de service. Une d'entre elles, enseignante à l'école fondamentale, mère de cinq enfants ayant son mari au chômage depuis une année, dit : « *Je peux envisager toutes les réductions possibles par rapport à nos besoins, mais je ne peux pas me passer d'un travailleur domestique parce qu'autrement il me serait moi-même impossible de travailler. Je préfère diminuer la ration mais je dois me rassurer que les enfants aient un aide domestique parce que je ne suis pas présente à la maison la majeure partie de la journée* ». ⁶

Mais, comme le rendent compte aussi bien les employeurs que les travailleurs eux-mêmes, il devient difficile pour un ménage confronté à une réduction drastique des revenus de maintenir les services d'un domestique. Le travailleur est parfois découragé par les amis ou le voisinage de la famille qui veut l'employer. Il est prévenu sur les difficultés auxquelles il pourrait être confronté s'il acceptait d'être embauché dans ladite famille. L'expérience de privation que vit une telle famille est aussi une force de dissuasion. Il y a aussi la réticence de certains d'entre eux à accepter de prendre service dans ce type de ménage ; il y a également les départs fréquents des travailleurs nouvellement engagés.

Nonobstant ces contraintes, l'enquête sur de terrain a révélé, que les ménages observés employaient, pour beaucoup d'entre eux, un domestique, parfois même deux. Il peut être difficile de comprendre comment un ménage avec des revenus dérisoires ou incertains, peut garder la détermination d'embaucher une aide. Helena Hirata (2002, p. 22-23) donne une explication : « *les modalités de réalisation du travail domestique varient selon les possibilités autant économiques du couple que sociétales (disponibilité d'une main d'œuvre pour le travail domestique rémunéré)* ». Pour l'auteure, cette possibilité ne peut être intelligible que lorsqu'on prend en compte les deux facteurs à la fois. Si les possibilités du couple sont certes réduites, la main d'œuvre, dans certains contextes, est à l'opposé, plus abondante. Un simple regard sur les salaires perçus par certains domestiques peut servir de preuve à cet effet. C'est ainsi que ceux qui l'exercent le considèrent souvent comme un travail

5 EMCVB : Enquête modulaire sur les conditions de vie/ Burundi

6 Propos de Madame Lydie, une femme de 38 ans, rencontrée le 4/4/2018.

transitoire, un projet intérimaire d'une vie très large (Lakjåa, 1997). Les travailleurs domestiques enquêtés, ont tous signifié que personne ne voudrait se professionnaliser dans ce métier⁷. Ils considèrent la domesticité comme un début d'une aventure urbaine plus large, synonyme d'espoir d'une mobilité ascendante. Ils donnent des exemples des collègues qui ont plus ou moins réussi et qui, aujourd'hui, détiennent des commerces ou sont devenus des chauffeurs des véhicules ou encore sont partis à l'étranger avec leurs « boss » et beaucoup d'autres « *success stories* ».

Le travail domestique : un moyen de résister contre ou d'échapper à un risque de déclassement social

Le fait d'avoir un travailleur domestique dépasse parfois son caractère utilitaire. L'acharnement avec lequel certains couples martèlent la présence des domestiques à leur service témoigne d'une dimension moins avouable mais réelle. Beaucoup d'auteurs font remarquer ce souci d'avoir à son service des travailleurs, certains n'ayant pour rôle que celui de soigner la présentation de l'employeur et de sa famille. Goffman illustre ce souci par des récits ethnographiques riches d'intuitions dans la recherche qu'il a menée sur l'île de Shetland (1973a). Mais, il n'est pas le seul à avoir relevé ce constat. De sa part, Dominique Fougeyrollas Schwebel associe la domesticité au « *désir social du paraître* » (2001, p. 350). Son argument se trouve justifié et amplifié surtout chez les groupes appartenant aux classes sociales moyenne et supérieure. Pour ces dernières, « *Les employeurs de la nouvelle classe moyenne ont utilisé leurs domestiques pour les aider à définir leur nouvelle identité de classe* » (Rollins, 1985, p. 35).

Quand bien même la notion de classe sociale pose de problèmes sur le plan méthodologique dans les pays moins industrialisés, il n'y a pas lieu d'exclure l'existence de différences entre différents groupes. Partout et à différentes époques, la société a toujours connu des différences en son sein. Et l'heure n'est pas à leur suppression ! Des groupes se constituent et tentent de maintenir leurs frontières par les moyens dont ils peuvent avoir à leur disposition. Le problème se pose lorsqu'un membre du groupe se sent menacé de perdre la légitimité d'y appartenir notamment dans les situations de décadence. Étant donné que le chômage est l'une de ces situations que les ménages redoutent, le fait de garder un travailleur domestique paraît être, pour certains, une des stratégies accessibles pour résister à un éventuel déclassement. Dans un des *focus groups* organisés avec les travailleurs domestiques, un d'eux fait constater la manière dont certains « patrons » considèrent les travailleurs domestiques. « *Quand mon patron se trouve à la maison, il veut*

⁷ Christine Deslauriers (2017) mentionne une partie des travailleurs domestiques qui se professionnalisent dans ce secteur, mais ces derniers ont la particularité de travailler dans des ménages plus huppés. Ils sont relativement mieux payés et rentrent régulièrement chez eux surtout en fin de semaine puisqu'ils proviennent pour la plupart de ces derniers des collines surplombant la ville de Bujumbura. Il existe aussi une catégorie de travailleurs domestiques qui travaillent le jour et rentrent chez eux le soir, mais ils sont dans des proportions très réduites et sont difficiles à identifier.

une obéissance plus que celle dévolue à Dieu. En général, même lorsqu'il n'y a pas de travail à faire, les employeurs veulent que l'on soit là »⁸.

Dans certains quartiers en effet ou pour certaines personnes, il y a une question qui est toujours posée lorsqu'un travailleur domestique n'est pas directement accessible lors d'une visite : « *Où est votre travailleur* » ? Les ménages se trouvant dans ce genre de situation disposent d'un répertoire de réponses tout fait. « *Il est monté en congé* » ; « *Je l'ai renvoyé et je suis à la recherche d'un autre* » ; « *Il est allé aider un voisin (ou une parenté)* ». De telles répliques sont lancées à chaque demande. Se priver de travailleur domestique est un signe que rien ne va plus. *Rien ne marche chez un tel, il n'a même plus de domestique !* La situation est d'autant plus préoccupante qu'elle constitue un sujet de débat entre femmes aussi bien sur leur lieu de travail que dans la plupart de leurs rencontres.

Ce souci d'apparence est source de grands malentendus entre travailleurs et employeurs d'autant plus que les demandes ne sont pas souvent clairement exprimées. Par ailleurs, il s'agit de satisfaire à des attentes que ni les patrons ne savent préciser et qui échappent par conséquent aux travailleurs. Dans ces circonstances, les employeurs s'attendent à d'autres compétences permettant au travailleur de cerner ce dont ils ont besoin avant même qu'ils ne le verbalisent (Fouquet, 2001). Enfin, en raison des demandes rarement formulées de façon claire à un travailleur domestique qui ignore parfois l'objet de ses sollicitations incessantes dont il fait l'objet, les deux protagonistes se retrouvent à deux doigts du conflit (Lutz 2008b, p.35). Même si techniquement il maîtriserait le travail, il peut ne pas avoir de l'intérêt à s'y investir davantage d'autant plus qu'il garde un rapport assez ambivalent par rapport à sa famille hôte et inversement (Hau-nung-Chan, 2005). Le travailleur domestique ne peut pas se faire d'illusion qu'il est membre de cette famille tandis que celle-ci le considère toujours comme un étranger lorsque son humanité n'est tout simplement pas déniée et cela de plusieurs manières.

Position paradoxale du travailleur domestique au sein du foyer

Dans la plupart des traditions, l'occupation de l'espace dessine les hiérarchies à respecter. Chacun sait approximativement où il doit s'installer dans les divers endroits constitutifs de l'habitation. Si on s'intéresse à la maison, l'espace de chacun est bien maîtrisé de façon qu'il est courant d'entendre surtout les enfants dire : « *Ça, c'est le siège de papa* ; *Ça, c'est le siège de maman* », etc. Lorsqu'il faut chercher le travailleur domestique, l'on sait souvent qu'il faut aller le voir à l'arrière-cour. Il faut que le jardin soit bien tondu, le véhicule bien lavé ; mais, il n'est pas important de savoir qui est derrière ce labeur. Il s'agit d'un travail dans lequel l'identité de celui qui s'en charge s'efface derrière celle de la « famille » et de son projet social (Gill, 1990, Fougeyrollas Schwebel, 2001). Il est à la fois membre de la famille sans jamais lui appartenir. Ce qui fait dire à Blandine

8 Témoignage de Médique, 19 ans, 3 ans de service, rencontré lors d'un focus group organisé le 31/3/2020.

Destremau & Bruno Lautier que « *La domestique est toujours à la fois dedans et au-dehors. Elle doit « rester à sa place » mais sa place n'est jamais dite* » (2002, p. 253). Celle-ci fait tout le travail, mais elle n'apparaît que sur demande de ses patrons. Elle doit souvent s'effacer elle-même et pourrait faire l'objet de remarques acerbes si elle attendait un petit instant. « *Eclipses-toi vite, ne vois-tu pas que des gens viennent* », entend-t-on souvent. Comme si elle-même n'était pas une personne !

Cette occultation de la personne du travailleur domestique s'observe aussi dans le fait qu'il est parfois considéré comme une personne différente des autres : il ne se fatigue pas, n'a pas de sentiment, n'a pas de rationalité, etc. Certains employeurs veulent les avoir à leur disposition chaque fois qu'ils le veulent et ignorent complètement les besoins et l'état de santé de ces derniers (Gill, 1990). Pour insister sur cette « invisibilisation », Hau-nung-Chan (2005) donne un exemple d'une femme enquêtée qui répond à son interlocuteur que, en tant que travailleur, on peut être en train de nettoyer la pièce dans laquelle le patron travaille et que ce dernier ne percevra parfois pas la présence à moins qu'il ne se rende compte que le matériel qu'il utilise ne le dérange sur ses chevilles.

Dans d'autres cas, à l'instar de la manière dont les esclaves étaient traités notamment en leur refusant des noms, en les considérant comme des objets à la disposition de leurs propriétaires, les domestiques se voient parfois ôter le nom ou sont obligés de le changer (Todd, 2009).

Il n'est pas en effet exclu que le patron, la patronne ou un de leurs proches, porte le même nom que le travailleur domestique (si on sait comment les emprunts de noms circulent) dans ce cas, il est courant que l'on prête un autre nom à ce dernier, parfois même péjoratif. De plus, le travailleur domestique est souvent perçu comme une propriété de son employeur mais aussi des voisins de ce dernier. En effet, pour certains employeurs, il y a quasi assimilation entre ce travail et le travailleur qui l'effectue (Dussuet, 2001). Ce qui fait dire à certains employeurs, « *Tu cherches quelqu'un que tu vas payer alors que le mien sera libre ce jour-là* » ou encore, « *Ne peux-tu pas me prêter ton domestique, j'ai besoin de quelqu'un qui m'aiderait en quelque chose !!* ». Ainsi perçu, le travailleur domestique est réduit à un objet dont l'employeur peut disposer à sa guise (Auvergnon, 2013, p. 4). Souvent, on ne connaît pas son nom, encore moins son âge⁹; il est défini par rapport à son employeur, il est domestique d'Untel.

Ce type de traitement pose problème chez le travailleur domestique dans son agir professionnel. Le problème est exacerbé surtout lorsqu'il y a conflit entre les conjoints ou tout simplement entre des membres de la famille pour laquelle il travaille. Certains des

9 Lors de ma recherche, lorsque je demandais l'âge des travailleurs domestiques à leurs employeurs pour s'enquérir de la composition du ménage, ils étaient beaucoup à me dire qu'ils ne le connaissaient pas. Ils me promettaient de me le renseigner après avoir consulté le « cahier de ménage ». Celui-ci a été instauré à la suite des problèmes sécuritaires intervenus avec la contestation du 3e mandat de feu Nkurunziza, ancien Président de la République du Burundi, pour contrôler le mouvement des populations. Ce cahier contient les noms et l'identité de chaque membre du ménage et les travailleurs domestiques doivent être enregistrés dans ce dernier.

travailleurs rencontrés indiquent en effet, que même lorsqu'il y a conflit, ils ne doivent jamais montrer qu'ils ont vu ou entendu ce qui s'est passé. Ils indiquent qu'ils font semblant de n'avoir rien vu, rien entendu. Lorsqu'ils estiment que la situation risque de s'aggraver, disent-ils, ils vont discrètement alerter les voisins. Quand leurs patrons leur demandent pourquoi il y a eu intervention de l'un ou de l'autre voisin, ces derniers leur rétorquent que ces voisins sont venus d'eux-mêmes et qu'ils ignorent comment ils ont été informés sur ce qui se passait.

Travail domestique et nécessité d'une révision épistémologique

L'essentiel de la littérature sur le travail domestique en fait une occupation essentiellement sinon majoritairement féminine dans laquelle une femme délègue une partie importante de ses charges domestiques à une autre femme. Cette dernière est considérée comme le prolongement et le substitut de la femme au foyer (Rollins, 1985). Mais cette façon de voir déjà elle-même discutable, pose un autre problème épistémologique dans certains contextes où de plus en plus d'hommes se font embaucher dans ce domaine. L'espace reste-t-il privé dès lors qu'il est régi par des mécanismes relevant de l'espace public par excellence. Quel genre doit-on attribuer aux uns et aux autres entre hommes et femmes exerçant dans ce domaine lorsqu'on leur réclame des compétences similaires ?

Séparation sphère publique/sphère privée

Le travail domestique représente un éventail d'activités difficilement identifiables. Sa seule particularité, selon la littérature existante et selon la définition du BIT, est de se dérouler au sein d'un ménage, du moins dans un espace privé. Les tentatives de légiférer en la matière vont dans le sens d'appliquer ce qui relève de la sphère publique à la sphère privée. En effet, dans le cadre du travail domestique, l'on se retrouve pro ou prou dans ce que le BIT qualifie de relation de travail. Celle-ci est ainsi définie : « *La relation de travail est une notion juridique largement utilisée dans des pays du monde entier pour désigner la relation entre une personne appelée « salarié » (souvent aussi appelée « travailleur » et un « employeur » pour lequel le « salarié » exécute un travail dans des conditions définies, contre rémunération* » (BIT, 2006, p.1) Cet éclairage normatif ne manque pas de résistance lorsqu'il doit s'appliquer dans le cadre domestique comme le font constater Eliane Gubin & Valérie Piette. Les deux expliquent leur prudence de cette manière : « *de nature publique mais se réalisant dans l'espace privé, ce travail subit l'influence de logiques qui sont celles de cet espace* (2001, p. 290-292). Ces logiques tiennent aussi bien à l'attitude de l'employeur qu'à celui de l'employé. De l'avis de Kambouri (2008) s'il est vrai que certains employeurs ne sachent ou ne veulent pas délimiter le travail demandé aux travailleurs domestiques, certains de ces travailleurs veulent à leur tour personnaliser leur travail, montrer la singularité de leur passage. L'auteure rapporte, dans son article, les récits de certaines femmes albanaises immigrées et travaillant

en Grèce qui revendiquent cet aspect comme essentiel dans leur travail. De plus, certains employés éprouvent le besoin de faire des tâches qui ne leur avaient pas été signifiées dans le contrat notamment lorsqu'il s'agit des personnes dépendantes tandis que certains employeurs de leur part sympathisent avec les travailleurs. D'un autre côté, la discussion sur le caractère privé ou public du travail domestique requiert de se placer du côté de la nature des compétences que requiert le métier et de leur caractère genré. Comme on le voit davantage dans la section suivante, le travail domestique requiert des compétences à la fois féminines du domaine privé et masculines du domaine public. Kambouri fait constater que dans ce cas, les frontières entre le privé et le public ne sont plus évidentes. *“Lorsque les attributs masculins généralement associés au public (tels que le travail rémunéré, le professionnalisme, la force ou les compétences) sont exécutés en privé, la signification et la fonction des « espaces privés » sont également transformées”* (Kambouri, 2008 : 13). Ce débat sur la rupture public/privé constitue une préoccupation légitime dans des contextes différents d'exercice du travail domestique.

Dans la littérature occidentale qui est présentée sur le sujet, la discussion sur le caractère privé ou public de ce travail domestique concerne davantage les femmes. D'un côté se présentent celles qui externalisent ce travail pour se consacrer à l'emploi dans le secteur public, d'un autre côté, se trouvent celles qui sortent de leur ménage et exercent ce travail dans des ménages d'autrui. Pour Dussuet (2016), cette dernière catégorie peut considérer qu'elle exerce le travail domestique dans un espace public.

Dans un de ses articles au titre évocateur, Dussuet (2016), se pose la question de savoir si, avec les emplois dits de « *proximité* », « *familiaux* » ou encore « *service à domicile* », l'on pourrait parler du travail domestique dans l'espace public ? Tout au long de sa réflexion, elle montre qu'on est loin de s'autoriser de parler d'espace public lorsque le travail se réalise au domicile de l'employeur. L'auteure fait remarquer des aspects de caractère public qui se glissent lentement dans l'espace domestique: le travail qui était jusque-là gratuit est désormais rémunéré. De plus, alors qu'il était exécuté par les personnes internes à la cellule familiale, il est exécuté par des personnes étrangères à cette cellule, etc. Mais constate-t-elle, ces rapports salariaux restent en quelque sorte privés (Dussuet, 2016, p.299). Pour que l'on puisse franchir cette transformation d'un espace privé en un espace public, fait-elle constater, deux pièges majeurs doivent d'abord être surmontés: à savoir l'invisibilité qui caractérise ce genre d'emplois et la logique du don que certains travailleurs revendiquent. L'auteure s'en explique de cette manière : « *Situer les emplois familiaux dans la sphère publique implique de mettre à distance les logiques caractéristiques de la sphère privée, l'invisibilité et la logique du don* ». (Dussuet, 2016, p. 300). Pour l'auteure, l'action des associations qui servent d'organes de médiation entre les employeurs et les travailleurs peut aider à renforcer le caractère public de ces emplois. Elle indique que ces associations participent à un exercice de mise en forme, de mise en mots qui permet d'objectiver le travail domestique et de l'extraire d'un cadre privé. De cette façon, ajoute-t-elle, le conflit entre « *travailleur* » et « *employeur* » cesse d'être un

conflit entre des « personnes » et devient un conflit public. A ce niveau, les normes qui le gèrent deviennent aussi publiques et par conséquent applicables, contrastant avec les négociations couvertes d'ombre qui ont lieu dans l'espace privé (Auvergnon, 2013).

Sur le terrain Burundais et ailleurs, cette publicisation est visible mais rencontre des résistances et des contraintes dont on peut comprendre en explorant les logiques d'actions qui guident les protagonistes impliqués. Les travailleurs domestiques rencontrés reconnaissent l'existence des associations qui revendiquent être leur porte-parole mais signalent leur instrumentalisation par ceux qui les initient et la quasi absence d'avantages liés à l'adhésion dans ces collectifs.

Travailleur/Travailleuse : catégories imparfaites pour saisir la réalité du travail domestique

En occident, une brève littérature renseigne sur la féminisation de ce métier notamment avec l'industrialisation (Todd, 2009) mais moins sur ce que faisaient les hommes en domesticité et les qualités qu'ils devraient démontrer avant de céder cette profession aux femmes. Pour certains analystes, ce travail présente une particularité de par les compétences qu'il exige de la personne qui l'exécute. Celui-ci requiert premièrement des aptitudes techniques dans l'accomplissement des tâches et deuxièmement des aptitudes corporelles consistant en une adoption réussie des attitudes appropriées comme par exemple l'humilité, l'attention, la déférence (Bujra, 2000, p. 77) ou encore la loyauté, l'honnêteté et la fiabilité (Gill 1990, p. 80). Au-delà des compétences techniques et des attitudes corporelles, indique Andersen (2003), certains employeurs recherchent chez leurs travailleurs des relations d'amitié, de soutien et même de thérapie.

Comme indiqué plus haut, ce n'est pas la personne du travailleur domestique qui importe, mais les activités qu'il fait. Ce qui fait que, malgré certaines préférences, il devient difficile pour certains employeurs d'expliquer pourquoi ils recrutent une fille ou un garçon en dehors de certains stéréotypes ou certaines craintes. Dans le contexte burundais en effet, en raison d'une grande occurrence de grossesses non-désirées chez les filles, certains employeurs ne veulent pas recruter des filles de peur qu'elles ne tombent enceinte sous leur toit et que la gestion de la grossesse ne leur pose problème. C'est ainsi que lorsque les enfants grandissent, la préférence est souvent celle d'embaucher un garçon. Cependant, lorsque les enfants sont encore petits, certains de mes interlocuteurs pensent que les garçons ne peuvent pas leur assurer certains soins et engagent systématiquement des filles. De plus en raison des cas de viols qui sont rapportés sur les mineurs, certains employeurs craignent pour la sécurité de leurs enfants et préfèrent les filles aux garçons. Dans le contexte Burundais, Deslauriers (2017) fait constater, que plus les domestiques font carrière, plus ils se spécialisent, ce qui rend la sectorisation moins genrée que générationnelle. Elle trouve que la préférence irait plutôt vers les filles et femmes en raison de leur polyvalence dans les tâches domestiques même

si les statistiques que dégagent les ONGs œuvrant dans ce secteur indiquent le contraire. Inès Pérez & Christiane Stallaert (2015) elles, considèrent que le fait que des hommes se retrouvent dans des métiers traditionnellement féminins tend plutôt à déplacer et renforcer les frontières de genre. Dans leur recherche sur les migrants latino-américains exerçant le métier de travailleurs domestiques à Bruxelles, les auteurs constatent que ces derniers cherchent à justifier différemment leur implication dans ce métier. Mais ceux-là se trouvent plus ou moins dans une position améliorée que leurs collègues obligés de se loger et de se nourrir chez leurs employeurs et en l'absence de cadre légal régissant le métier.

Mon questionnement de la pertinence de la catégorie de genre associée à un ou une travailleur-se domestique renouvelle celui de Francesca Scrinzi qui se pose elle-même la question suivante : « *Où est son genre ?* » La question découle de la recherche qu'elle mène auprès des « *hommes de ménage* » (Scrinzi, 2005, p. 8) comme elle les désigne. À l'origine de cette question, l'auteure constate que ces hommes doivent démontrer des compétences « féminines » pour satisfaire aux exigences du travail domestique tandis que les femmes considèrent l'« *être homme* » comme une compétence qu'on active au travail. L'auteure mentionne une série de stratégies mises en œuvre pour réussir à s'intégrer dans le travail domestique pour les hommes. Il s'agit dans un premier temps de dénaturiser les compétences féminines et de se les approprier et dans un second cas de les re-naturaliser. C'est dans ce sens que Kambouri trouve que l'espace domestique constitue un terrain propice pour l'émergence d'identités transgenres et transculturelles (Kambouri, 2008, p.19). Cela du fait qu'indistinctement, les employeurs recherchent chez les travailleuses et travailleurs les mêmes qualités.

En effet, alors que les hommes se perçoivent comme actifs et s'associent au pouvoir, à la protection, au courage et à la dureté, l'affirmation de soi, la rationalité et la force (Connell, 1995), ces attributs sont moins requis dans le cadre du travail domestique. Au contraire, l'homme fait recours à des attributs beaucoup plus féminins comme la patience, l'esprit de sacrifice (Scrinzi, 2005). Dans ces conditions, la dichotomie masculin-féminin paraît inadaptée pour appréhender correctement le travailleur domestique sous l'angle du genre, faut-il alors inventer un autre genre ?

En outre, comme indiqué plus haut en discutant de l'invisibilité du travailleur domestique, ce dont l'employeur a besoin, c'est aussi bien la force de travail elle-même que la personne toute entière. En dehors de servir d'une main d'œuvre disponible et en permanence en effet, ce dernier sert à une autre fin. Non seulement il participe sans le savoir à soigner l'image de la famille au service de laquelle il se trouve, mais joue aussi le rôle de « tampon ». Dans son travail sur la domesticité, Andersen rapporte les propos d'une femme interrogée à propos de la présence de ce personnage dans le ménage : « *Si elle devait abandonner le service, mon mari et moi allons divorcer dans six mois* » (Ehrenreich 2003, p.89). Plutôt que de désigner par-là exclusivement les tâches auxquelles il a été fait référence dans la présente discussion plus haut, l'allusion faite est d'une autre nature. À ce propos, Huaning Chan fait remarquer que « *Les travailleuses domestiques agissent comme un tampon pour*

les émotions négatives qui surviennent dans la vie quotidienne du couple » (Hau-ning Chan, 2005, p. 515). Dans des contextes dans lesquels le ménage abrite plusieurs personnes de statuts différents, on peut se dire que ce n'est pas seulement les adultes qui s'autorisent à gronder le domestique. Les enfants, les parents agissent parfois de même à son égard. Les travailleurs domestiques que j'ai rencontrés témoignent de cet état de fait et indiquent qu'ils n'ont d'autre choix que de se résigner. Ils se considèrent en effet, et à juste titre, comme les derniers dans la hiérarchie, les seuls à exécuter des ordres sans en donner leur tour à personne. La seule solution qui se présente à eux est de rompre le lien et partir avec le risque de se retrouver dans la même situation dans la prochaine famille. Ce qui ne signifie pas qu'ils développent aussi de leur part, des stratégies de résistances contre cette soumission comme le relève Sarah Lecomte (2001).

Conclusion

Envisager le travail domestique dans le perspectif genre n'a cessé de nourrir les réflexions scientifiques depuis qu'il a été dénoncé par les féministes comme indicateur d'inégalité hommes-femmes. Le même travail est perçu aussi comme un signe d'inégalité entre les classes sociales, entre les races et entre les femmes elles-mêmes d'autant plus que ce genre de contrat lierait les femmes entre elles. Cette image traditionnelle de la domesticité, qui la rend une occupation presque toujours et partout féminine se relativise davantage. En effet, en raison de la rareté des emplois et de l'extension du chômage, des hommes en nombre considérable se font embaucher dans ce secteur. En Occident, ces hommes sont souvent dans des situations déjà précarisées puisque ce travail concerne surtout les hommes issus de la migration. Mais, on rencontre aussi des hommes qui s'engagent dans ce type de travail dans des cadres nationaux comme l'article le montre.

Certes, la question de l'intégration des hommes dans les secteurs traditionnels féminins se posent ici comme ailleurs. Il semble cependant que les réponses à cette préoccupation ne soient pas satisfaisantes pour appréhender ce que cette indistinction appelle comme théorie pour cerner tous les contours de ce phénomène difficile par ailleurs à renseigner empiriquement. A l'évidence, des continuités existent dans les représentations que l'on peut avoir du travailleur domestique, mais l'article insiste sur les aspects qui bousculent un peu nos certitudes intellectuelles. Il plaide pour une analyse située de la pratique et défend deux principales idées. La première est que le travail domestique est loin d'être envisagé comme un travail ayant un caractère privé. Classiquement, on considère que la distinction entre sphère publique et sphère privée délimite pour les hommes et pour les femmes des espaces, des normes et des activités distincts qui hiérarchisent leurs positions sociales (Dussuet, 2016). Dès lors qu'hommes et femmes se retrouvent dans le même espace domestique, celui-ci reste-t-il féminin ? De plus, comme analysé plus haut, l'on constate que ce travail réclame à l'homme et à la femme qui le contractent le même

type de compétences ni totalement féminines ni totalement masculines.

La discussion menée dans le cadre de cet article est loin d'épuiser le débat. Si l'intérêt a porté sur la manière dont le travail domestique transforme l'espace traditionnellement considéré comme privé, les chercheurs en ce domaine devraient être aussi attentifs à la manière dont la domesticité s'infiltré progressivement dans l'espace public dans certains secteurs. De même, l'on devrait s'interroger sur le rôle que joue le travailleur domestique dans la négociation des rapports de genre. Ce dernier participe-t-il à l'établissement d'une répartition égalitaire ou équitable entre les partenaires du couple ? Ne risque-t-il pas de se poser en gardien de normes de genre et partant à leur renforcement ?

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Government-driven land and Agrarian Reform Programmes in Post-Apartheid South Africa – a Brief History (1994-2021).

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Abstract.

South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, a reality created by colonial and apartheid-era race-based property laws which transferred 80% of the land to whites who make up only 10% of the population, while blacks had to make do with the remaining 20% (Presidential Advisory Panel, 2019). After winning the country's first democratic elections in 1994, the African National Congress vowed to use land and agrarian reform to help reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment and roll back apartheid geography. Since 1997, a plethora of programmes have been implemented to advance this transformation agenda with little success. We review the major government-driven programmes implemented thus far and argue that the slow pace of reform is due mainly to underinvestment, constant chopping and changing of programmes between presidential terms and an overly-narrow focus on creating a class of black large-scale commercial farmers while neglecting millions of food-insecure blacks – especially women, many of whom already farm for subsistence – and as long as this persists, the clamour for land by blacks will only grow louder.

Keywords: *Land reform, agrarian reform, apartheid, transformation, large-scale commercial farmers, smallholders.*

Résumé

L'Afrique du Sud est l'un des pays les plus inégalitaires au monde, une réalité créée par les lois de propriété raciales de l'ère coloniale et de l'apartheid qui ont transféré 80 % des terres aux Blancs qui ne représentent que 10 % de la population, tandis que les Noirs devaient contenter-vous des 20 % restants (Présidential Advisory Panel, 2019). Après avoir remporté les premières élections démocratiques du pays en 1994, le Congrès national africain s'est engagé à utiliser la terre et la réforme agraire pour aider à réduire la pauvreté, les inégalités et le chômage et faire reculer la géographie de l'apartheid. Depuis 1997, une pléthore de programmes ont été mis en œuvre pour faire avancer ce programme de transformation avec peu de succès. Nous passons en revue les principaux programmes gouvernementaux mis en œuvre jusqu'à présent et affirmons que la lenteur des réformes

est principalement due au sous-investissement, au découpage et au changement constants des programmes entre les mandats présidentiels et à une focalisation trop étroite sur la création d'une classe de commerçants noirs à grande échelle. agriculteurs tout en négligeant des millions de Noirs en situation d'insécurité alimentaire – en particulier les femmes, dont beaucoup cultivent déjà pour leur subsistance – et tant que cela persistera, la clameur pour la terre par les Noirs ne fera que s'intensifier.

Mots-clés: *Réforme agraire, réforme agraire, apartheid, transformation, grands exploitants commerciaux, petits exploitants.*

1. Introduction: A legacy of race-based laws.

According to South Africa's Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR), the country's total land surface is 122 million hectares, of which 82 million hectares is prime agricultural land (DRDLR, 2019). Prior to the arrival of Europeans, land was held under customary tenure by a number of tribes, notably the Khoi, San, Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Venda and Tsonga among others. Land dispossession began when a disparate assortment of settler colony interests including the Dutch East India Company and what were decidedly the nuclei of future white republics established their presence in various parts of the country. The first piece of land confiscated from Africans was taken by Johan Anthoniszoon van Reinbeck's Dutch East India Company in 1652 to establish a trading post in the Cape territory (Presidential Advisory Panel, 2019: 23). This signalled his and other settler groups' intention to establish a long-term presence in the territory.

Over the next three centuries, deliberate race-based dispossession policies were enacted to replace African commonage customary tenure arrangements with European-style freehold tenure. Following the consolidation of settler South Africa into one republic, i.e. the Union of South Africa, in 1910, the *Natives Land Act Number 27 of 1913* was passed to push five million Africans onto only 7% of the territory. Following the release of the Beaumont Commission's report in 1916 which showed that blacks could not survive on just 7% of the land, a second Land Act, the *Native Trust and Land Act Number 18 of 1936* expanded the so-called 'black areas' from 8% to 13% in 1936 and placed them under a management organ known as the Southern African Development Trust. Race-based laws intensified after 1948 when Prime Minister Daniel Francois Malan's *Herenigde Nasionalie Party* won power on a platform of separate development (known as *apartness* or *apartheid* in Afrikaans). Over the next four decades, laws such as the *Group Areas Act* (1950), *Population Registration Act* (1950), *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act* (1949) and the *Black Homeland Citizenship Act* (1970) would compartmentalise the races (whites, blacks, Indians and coloured, i.e. mixed-race individuals) into separate communities around the country. The cumulative effect of these policies was to ultimately limit opportunities for Africans in general and African smallholders in particular, while white communities prospered (Amoateng & Richter, 2007: 3).

Apartheid era agriculture was dualistic. In white South Africa, there was a sophisticated base of more than 100,000 white commercial farmers working sprawling large-scale farms averaging about 1000 hectares each or more, i.e. 86% of the prime agricultural land or 68% of the country's total surface area (Lahiff, 2007). Their operations were highly mechanised, well-funded, had proper irrigation schemes, cheap black labour and supply contracts with major local and international buyers (Kassier & Groenewald, 1992; DRDLR, 2015). In the African homelands, farmers worked small plots with rudimentary tools, often only with own capital, own inputs, own financing and little or no connection with any commercial off-takers of note (STATSSA, 2007). Production was almost always destined for household consumption. Despite being confined to only 13% of the land, some black farmers still managed to create thriving farming operations in Bantustans (Presidential Advisory Panel, 2019: 15). Statistics South Africa (STATSSA, 2007) reports that by the end of the apartheid era, there were 943,000 farming operations in the overcrowded Bantustans. However, Apartheid policies had wiped out the class of prosperous black farmers and industrialists everywhere else.

2. Preparing for land and agrarian reform.

Land reform is “the redistribution of property rights in agricultural land” (Bernstein, 2010: 27). When President Nelson Mandela took his oath of office on May 10th 1994 to become the first democratically elected president of South Africa, he inherited a country where black property ownership was mainly concentrated in former Bantustan areas. Land reform was absolutely imperative for a number of reasons. Firstly, Apartheid-era laws had transferred the entire economy to whites and transformed Bantustans and reserves into pools of cheap labour. These laws “implied the strangulation of the commercial farming activities of black populations and their increasing exodus towards reserves and Bantustans” (Anseeuw, 2006: 78). Confined to tiny plots, they could not do much farming or business activities either and so, ironically and by design, they were forced to go back to South Africa as labourers. Many households were headed by single parents (i.e. women) because the men spent the majority of their time in mines, factories and farms in South Africa. They only travelled home at Easter, Christmas or on other special circumstances. There therefore existed in the first instance, a legal imperative to correct the consequences of these discriminatory practices.

Secondly, Apartheid-era exclusionary laws had explicitly prevented blacks from owning landed property or businesses in south Africa. Black presence was only allowed in South Africa for the purposes of selling labour or exchanging it for accommodation. For long-term right of residence, one required a pass which could only be issued following approval by a white property or business owner. If the job was terminated, the worker could suddenly be labelled a squatter and face fairly quick eviction. Following

the advent of democracy in 1994, white property owners fearful of attacks by black people were prepared to release their workers in order to protect their land. The threat of eviction therefore hung over the heads of more than one million black workers and their dependents and so the ANC had to move swiftly.

Importantly too, the constitution now gave blacks the right to finally own their own land anywhere in South Africa or to use the courts to go after the white individuals and concerns that had pushed them off their land after 19 June 1913. Land is not just a locus of residence and a means of production. It is also an anchor for families and a place where present generations meet and commune with departed ones. For too many black families, this opportunity for bonding and communion was missing and the government had to help fill that void. Promoting equity and restorative justice was important to help the country heal. Without this agenda, too many wounds would be allowed to fester with the potential to explode into open conflict down the road.

The African National Congress (ANC) had participated in the 1955 Congress of the People which adopted the Freedom Charter calling for land to be shared among all those who worked it, regardless of race and gender, but it was really in the 1994 *Reconstruction and Development* (RDP) programme document and the 1997 *White Paper on Land Reform* that it articulated just how it was going to roll out land reform in a democratic South Africa. The RDP policy was a comprehensive all-encompassing programme targeting reforms in all aspects of South African society with a view to creating a more financially, racially and gender-balanced country while growing an economy crumbling under the weight of sanctions and Apartheid policies. Its five key priorities were: meeting basic needs, developing human resources, building the economy, democratising the state and society and implementing RDP (Parliament of South Africa, 1994: 9). RDP identified land as a basic need and demanded more access to blacks for both *residential and production* purposes (DLA, 1997). It further called for the elimination of apartheid geography, the phenomenon of black rural Bantustans and urban shantytowns existing on the outskirts of major cities or adjacent to affluent white farming communities (Ntsebeza, 2013: 62). Within its mandate of transforming rural economies and the agriculture sector, RDP invested R282.7 million (1994-1997) to revamp rural water boards, R315.7 million (1994-1997) for land reform pilots (one pilot district per province), R62.4 million (1994-1997) for land restitution, R32.85 million for redistribution and R4 million for small-scale farmer development (Parliament of South Africa, 1994: 45). These were meant to be pilot projects in the build-up to more comprehensive, nationwide land and agrarian reform programmes.

In 1996, the Constitution of the new democratic republic repealed most race-based laws. Section 25, i.e. the property clause, called on the Government to ensure equitable access to land for all, including for people and communities with insecure tenure and people or communities dispossessed of their land after 19 June 1913. The first paragraph of Section 25 of the Constitution also stated that “[N]o one may be deprived of property

except in terms of law of general application, and no law may permit arbitrary deprivation of property". In other words, white-owned land could not simply be expropriated without compensation for the purposes of transformation. It had to be done within the confines of the law. The property clause only permitted expropriation "for a public purpose", "in the public interest" and "subject to compensation". A land/agrarian reform policy therefore had to be crafted either with all those criteria or something amending the constitution to craft a bolder plan.

The following year, in 1997, President Nelson Mandela's government adopted a three-pronged approach to land reform, i.e. *restitution*, *redistribution* and *tenure reform*, and set itself the ambition of transferring 30% of the land (i.e. 24.6 million hectares) to blacks by 2001 (DLA, 1997). These three pillars of land reform reflected the three categories outlined in Sections 5-7 of the property clause of the Constitution: restitution would restore land which had been seized from title holders back to their rightful owners; redistribution would acquire land from whites and transfer it to blacks for residential and/or agricultural production; and tenure reform was meant to review South Africa's land ownership policy, administration and legislation in order to expand security to diverse groups of people, notably longstanding farm dwellers as well as previously-disadvantaged people living in areas where customary tenure was still the norm.

The Government also started developing specific programmes to operationalise restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. The next sections present the main policies implemented over the past two decades, showing their content and implementation, as well as highlighting the key political agenda underpinning them. It should be noted that although they are presented as a neat periodisation of separate programmes, implementation is sometimes fluid at provincial level, with programmes often funded and managed either by the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform based on availability of money, personnel and resources (Hall, 2014: 30–35). Also, a small section has been added on agrarian reform simply because the South African government has tended to couple land and agrarian reform after 2000.

3. Government-driven land reform programmes.

3.1. The Settlement and Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG)

The first major land reform programme was the Settlement and Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) which was launched by President Nelson Mandela's government in 1997 and administered at national level by the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) in Pretoria. SLAG was built around a R15,000 grant which *households* could use to purchase land both for residential and agricultural purposes. Land was acquired from

whites on a market-based ‘willing buyer–willing seller’ arrangement. The SLAG grant package was offered on the following terms and conditions:

- A R15,000 capital grant to acquire land;
- The capital grant could also be spent on fencing, livestock and machinery; or home and infrastructure improvements;
- To qualify for the grant, households were required to submit a feasibility study with their applications.

The R15,000 amount was insufficient even for the economy of the 90s. For this reason, a majority of SLAG beneficiaries were likely to spend all their money on land acquisition and cautioned them against taking loans from financial institutions which could ultimately lead to default and the loss of their land (DLA, 1997). Soon after the SLAG launch, research by the Department of Agriculture revealed that after acquiring land, the average black South African household could not afford extra money beyond their initial contribution for any agricultural activity or home improvement projects. The grant amount was later raised to R16,000, but increase had little effect on post-settlement support.

SLAG was beset with challenges including a shortage of funds, payment of inflated prices for land of poor quality as well as an overreliance on the ‘willing buyer-willing seller’ approach to land acquisitions, which made acquiring land a protracted, arduous affair (Jacobs, Lahiff and Hall, 2003: 4). *The White Paper on Land Reform* noted that the budgetary allocation for land reform around this time was “less than one half of 1% of the national budget” (DLA, 1997: 11). The programme had very little impact on job creation or improvement of predominantly-black communities. Shortly after coming to power, President Thabo Mbeki decided to replace it with a more ambitious programme in 2001.

3.2. Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD)

The Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) programme was introduced in 2001 under President Mbeki to replace the faltering SLAG. It was a major departure from SLAG in a couple of ways. Firstly, LRAD focused on acquiring land specifically for production purposes. Land for settlement was managed under a different component known as the Land Redistribution for Settlement Grant (Bannister, 2003: 3). The Mbeki government also launched an aggressive social housing programme through which five million houses were built and transferred to blacks by 2010.

Secondly, there was a significant increase in the financial support package and further changes to the beneficiary profile. Whereas SLAG had gone to households, LRAD was offered to households as well as individuals (Jacobs et al, 2003: 4). This meant that several members of the same household could apply individually for the program and

then pool their grant amount. To qualify for land, beneficiaries were required to meet the following standards:

- Prove that they possessed the requisite skills to manage a farm operation.
- Make own contributions on a sliding scale according to objectives (e.g. the minimum grant of R20,000 could be accessed with own funds of R5000 and the maximum grant of R100,000 required own funds of R400,000 in cash or kind).
- Commit to using their land for agriculture including grazing, production for household consumption, production for markets, etc.

Thirdly, the Department of Land Affairs and the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries worked at national, provincial and local level to identify beneficiaries and support them. Just like SLAG, LRAD was run under a market-based ‘willing buyer–willing seller’ arrangement. Beneficiaries were not required to front their share of the investment in cash only. Groups of people, including farm workers could also pool their labour in order to apply for the grant for the purposes of developing the plot as a single unit or subdividing it into smaller production units, although this was discouraged. The programme was further used to advance some RDP priorities such as women’s empowerment with a concerted effort made to settle more women on farms.

LRAD as a whole was not funded to the scale of its ambitions. In fact, less than half a percentage point of GDP was allocated for this priority. By 2005, just under four million hectares had been transferred to blacks. The underinvestment characteristic of the SLAG years continued, although demand for land was high. A shortage of government capitalisation and proactiveness caused the goalpost of transferring 30% of South Africa’s farmland to blacks by 1999 to be shifted to 2015. The clamour for land grew louder towards the end of Mbeki’s first term in 2004. It dominated the entire campaign season and the African National Congress promised to be more ambitious if it was re-elected into office.

3.3. The Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS)

Thabo Mbeki was re-elected on April 27th 2004 and in 2005, a major *Land Conference* was held at the Nasrec Conference centre in Soweto from the 27th to the 31st of July to brainstorm on how to accelerate land reform. Delegates identified the market-led ‘willing buyer–willing seller’ approach as a major impediment to accelerated reform and called on Mbeki’s government to ditch it in favour of a more proactive solution with reluctant sellers.

The government’s answer to these calls was the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), developed between 2005 and 2006 and launched in 2007 to acquire “strategically located and well-resourced land” in ‘nodal areas’ and agricultural corridors (DRDLR, 2015: 2). The main priorities of PLAS were to:

- Fast-track land redistribution, especially in nodal areas and agricultural corridors.
- Improve identification, screening and selection of land reform beneficiaries in order to ensure maximum productive use of land acquired.
- Hedge against escalating land prices through proactive acquisition
- Acquire land for agricultural production and not for residential purposes.
- Lease acquired land to an emerging black farmer for a three-year period at a fixed rate of 6% of the value of the arable land, after which period the land could be sold to the same beneficiary.

(DRDLR, 2015: 2).

Although it was not explicitly stated, PLAS land was specifically purchased for agricultural purposes. PLAS used a five-step approach to support, as follows: 1) land acquisition; 2) project planning, i.e. identifying beneficiary and assessing project needs and financing; 3) trial lease period; 4) disposal of land (ideally, it would be sold to the beneficiary who had worked it during the 3-year trial period); and 5) continuing post-settlement support in the form of a completion report, ongoing monitoring and evaluation as well as extension services.

Within PLAS, the government no longer needed to wait to identify beneficiaries before acquiring land. Land was purchased proactively while a simultaneous process identified beneficiaries. Beneficiaries were required to sign a lease agreement with option to purchase before the plot of land was handed over to them. They could register businesses such as co-operatives, close corporation, sole proprietorships and management companies to run the operation. The government only turned over the land title to them once it had satisfied itself that they were willing and able to run the farm successfully. For the first time, capitalisation of land reform exceeded 0.5% of the national budget in 2005/2006 when R2.7 billion was allocated for restitution and R770 million for 'land reform' (Hall, 2007: 100). All the signs showed that land reform was finally getting the priority and investment it deserved.

However, Mbeki lost the ANC presidency at the December 2007 Polokwane elective conference. The attention given to PLAS dropped during Motlanthe's interim presidency (September 2008 to May 2009). Jacob Zuma became president in 2009 and the following year, his government suspended other grant-based programmes in order to focus exclusively on PLAS. The office of the Land Valuer General was created soon after to manage land valuations and help eliminate the phenomenon of reluctant landowners stalling land acquisitions. Ironically, land acquisitions stalled instead due to undercapitalisation of land reform by the tough-talking President Zuma. Although the government made the right statements in the public sphere advocating for land reform, budgetary allocations for land acquisitions showed that the government was not treating land reform as a priority (Aliber, 2013: 5). Over the next four years, Zuma's government invested a paltry R5.2 billion on 1348 PLAS projects spread across just one million hectares of land (DRDLR, 2015).

The NDP and the CRDP.

After a year of PLAS, two important initiatives were launched to rethink economic development in South Africa. The first one, the National Development Plan (NDP) called for a new rural development strategy which ensured that land and agrarian reform initiatives were creating more jobs in rural areas. This focus was necessary to eliminate rural poverty where the majority of the country's black people live. Some of the solutions it offered included linking small farmers to viable value chains, promoting more irrigated-agriculture in rural areas, making more specialised training more available, increasing irrigated land by at least 500,000 hectares, and putting communal lands to better use. Two priorities of the NDP included broadening of "ownership of assets to historically disadvantaged groups" and realising a "food trade surplus, with one-third produced by small-scale farmers or households" (National Planning Commission, 2008). The need to prioritise and invest more in supporting women, female-headed households and the girl-child was also highlighted, and for this the plan advocated for boosting smallholder agriculture in at least 300,000 households, creating 145,000 agriculture-sector jobs and improving living standards for 660,000 farm workers as part of the solutions.

Shortly after, and in response to the NDP, a Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) was developed within the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2009-2014) to help make rural households more resilient and food secure. Noting that between 10 and 15 million south Africans lived in conditions of extreme poverty and underdevelopment, the CRDP called for the fast-tracking of participatory land reform initiatives as well as more robust post-settlement support to land beneficiaries to advancing integrated development and social cohesion (DRDLR, 2009). It further called for massive investment in rural infrastructure, including roads, dams, post offices, fences and warehouses. The DRDLR was empowered to develop and roll out empowerment initiatives on its own, without the need for support from other government departments. It was within this mindset that the government started developing much smaller packages such as the Settlement and Production Land Acquisition Grant (SPLAG) and Land Acquisition for Sustainable Settlements (LASS) to increase the number of beneficiaries for greater impact.

3.4. The Settlement and Production Land Acquisition Grant (SPLAG) and Land Acquisition for Sustainable Settlements (LASS)

SPLAG was developed to make land available to rural people, farm workers and dwellers and help them start agricultural production (DRDLR, 2009). Concurrently with SPLAG, the Land Acquisition for Sustainable Settlements (LASS) instrument was developed to provide similar support to previously disadvantaged people living in urban areas and

commonages. SPLAG and LASS received very little government attention and cash investments, especially after the government decided to prioritise the Agri-Parks initiative shortly after, which we present in the next section. SPLAG and LASS have never had any meaningful visibility and it is fair to say that their impact has been minimal.

3.5. Summary

In 2019, the DRDLR (2019: 3) acknowledged that all land reform programmes had transferred just over 8.3 million hectares to blacks, i.e. 4.8 million through land distribution and 3.5 million through restitution. In other words, the government still has a lot more to do in order to transfer 16 million hectares of the initial target to black beneficiaries. The painfully slow process of land reform prompted Lungisile Ntsebeza (2013) to write that “the more things change, the more they remain the same”. Apartheid continues to cast its long shadow over the country’s present socioeconomic reality. This explains why land is still an emotive subject in the country and why political parties like the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Black First Land First are able to ratchet up public anxiety with slogans such as *‘expropriation without compensation from white monopoly capital’* around election time.

The first major impediment to accelerated land reform on the scope and scale that the ANC dreamed of when it took office in 1994 is the market-led “willing buyer-willing seller” approach. The decision to adopt this approach shelved the more radical state-led approach which some members of the party, notably the ANC Youth League, were calling for. State-led land reform gives national or state governments the power to expropriate land with or without compensation in the national interest. Market led approaches necessarily mean that land transactions are contingent on the owner of the land accepting to sell it and the buyer having the wherewithal to acquire it. If these two conditions do not align, the process cannot go on.

Secondly, political will has often been lacking because the ANC has pursued a neoliberal trickle-down agenda for much of the last quarter century. Progress in land reform programmes have generally coincided with changes at the helm of the ruling African National Congress party or as a prelude to national elections campaigns. Under President Mandela, investments in land reform within RDP were insignificant because the ANC simply did not have the financial resources to move with any urgency on this priority due to the collapsing economy that the ANC had inherited. International partners were not eager to invest in this agenda either.

However, post-2000, with GDP growth averaging 4.2% for 32 consecutive quarters, the ANC chose to prioritise jobs and RDP houses over land transfers. As Thabo Mbeki described it in his *Two Economies* speech in 2003, sustained reforms and investments in South Africa’s ‘third economy’ would eventually lift it to ‘first economy’ levels. Unfortunately,

the 2008 global recession and corruption during the Zuma presidency wiped out many of the economic gains recorded under President Mbeki. As unemployment had skyrocketed from 23% to 33% in the Covid-19 era, anger over the slow pace of land reform has again become the number one talking point for all political parties.

The private sector has also been very unhelpful since the advent of democracy. Vested interests view land reform as a threat (de Villiers 2003). Agriculture South Africa (Agri-SA), the major farmers' lobby group in the country, argued in 1994 that any attempts at land reform would be unconstitutional. After the Constitution was amended to give the government powers to reform property rights, it switched the argument to say that giving land to blacks could lead to food insecurity in the country, even as the number of white-owned large-scale commercial farms dropped with an uptick in consolidation within the farming sector. Agri-SA often points to failed government-sponsored projects on black-owned land as proof that land reform has to move even slower.

The government's zeal to use land reform as a vehicle to create a class of successful black-owned large-scale commercial farms gives Agri-SA the fodder it needs for its negative messaging. Large-scale agriculture requires many skills such as managing farm mechanisation, accounting, irrigation and marketing which new black landowners often lack. Retail supply chains are still dominated by members of Agri-SA, further making it virtually impossible for a sudden big influx of black commercial farmers to replace white ones. Provincial governments have so far showed themselves incapable of providing the kind of support that is required to help black project owners stand on their own feet or connect with markets and so the national government needs to think seriously about reopening land reform for more purposes than just agriculture.

Two important events that occurred in 2017 will probably have a major impact on land reform going forward. In the build-up to the 54th ANC elective conference, the EFF political party announced that it would adopt land expropriation without compensation if elected into office. This announcement forced the ANC's hand on the subject (Ntsebeza, 2018) and not to be outdone, it officially adopted a policy backing expropriation without compensation at the conference.

When Cyril Ramaphosa became acting president in 2018, he appointed a Presidential Advisory Panel to brainstorm new ideas on how to accelerate land reform. The panel submitted its report in May 2019. The report made clear that the ANC government needed to prioritise land and agrarian reform. Noting that 41.6% of rural South Africans have inadequate access to food, the panel (2019) suggested the following solutions:

1. Women should constitute 50% of all land reform beneficiaries.
2. The "willing buyer-willing seller" approach to land acquisition should be abandoned for a more "proactive and targeted commodity and area-based" approach.
3. Section 25 of the Constitution (the property clause) should be amended to offer expropriation with zero compensation in some cases.

4. Spaces should be identified in urban areas to resettle landless people.
5. Land reform beneficiaries should participate intensively in the financing, planning, and implementation of their projects.
6. Joint ventures between emerging black farmers and experienced white ones should be encouraged. Subsidised capital should be made available to such partnerships and the experienced partner should be awarded a certificate.
7. The Government of South Africa should compile a data portal for all land in the country and who it belongs to. This platform will then build into the e-cadastre.
8. The Government should adopt best practices for a consolidated approach to planning, funding and rolling out land reform programmes.
9. Different tenure systems should be approved and restitution claims should be fast-tracked.
10. A full range of financial and technical support should be offered to beneficiaries of land.
11. There should be a structural transformation and diversification of household and commercial food production in the country
12. Smallholder farmers need to receive greater support and rural-urban commodity chain linkages need to be strengthened.

The Presidential Advisory Panel's recommendations highlight the importance of greater investments, more attention to women and prioritising of already food-insecure smallholders in urban and rural areas as a pathway to better reform. Without these fixes, it is impossible to eradicate the sources of poverty, inequality and unemployment. This makes it all the more urgent to focus land reform on smallholders and poorer communities rather than on wealthy blacks who can manage large farms.

4. Post-settlement support programmes and policies for agricultural production.

The next section is important because as explained in the section on LRAD, the national government has tendentiously coupled land and agrarian reform programmes post-2000. After this date, land transfers have been made with the understanding that plots are not going to be used for residential purposes but rather for farms specifically. For residential accommodation, the government relies on RDP and other local government projects.

4.1. The Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme (CASP)

The CASP was developed under President Mbeki in 2004 within the framework of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) and the Integrated Food

Security Strategy (IFSS) to help land reform beneficiaries acquire agricultural production skills, inputs and finance as well as reduce the number of food-insecure households in South Africa by 50% before 2015 (DoA, 2004). The Department of Agriculture identified four categories of people it wanted to support: 1) the hungry and vulnerable; 2) subsistence farmers and household producers; 3) land reform farmers; and 4) the agricultural macro-system to provide a conducive environment for agricultural development and food safety. A support package was developed based on six pillars as follows:

1. Information and Knowledge Management;
2. Technical and Advisory Assistance, and Regulatory Services;
3. Training and Capacity building;
4. Marketing and Business Development;
5. On-Farm and off-farm Infrastructure and Production inputs;
6. Financial assistance.

Financial support came in the form of a “sunrise package” to be spent on a variety of needs such as irrigation systems, farm drainage, fencing, stock-water systems, drought assistance, marketing infrastructure. The technical component offered extension support, training and mentorship. An initiative known as Ilima/Letsema was built into the CASP programme in 2009/2010 to boost agricultural production for food security. Priority was given to women, youth, self-help groups and cooperatives, farm workers, land reform beneficiaries who can use their grant for mechanisation, livestock, irrigation schemes and inputs, i.e. anything that could help them boost agricultural production on their plot of land. The Ilima/Letsema initiative was funded to the tune of R1.8 billion in the 2004–2009 medium term expenditure framework period (MTEF) to support 145,000 subsistence, smallholder and commercial producers. The terms Ilima and Letsema refer more or less to the same concepts. Ilima is an isiZulu word which refers to a period when households in the village would come together to till each other’s fields while Letsema is a Sotho/Pedi word for the same cooperation arrangement. A financial institution known as MAFISA was also set up to offer small loans to land reform beneficiaries to invest in different things on their plot. MERECAS offered support for irrigation schemes and mechanisation equipment.

Although it started off with bold ambition, CASP has been plagued by coordination challenges and confusion. Coordination at provincial level has been a perennial problem. A study conducted in Limpopo Province between 2011–2012 revealed that many farmers went years without ever receiving any kind of support from the Provincial Department of agriculture or even visits from an extension officer (Ngam, 2012). Provincial Department of Agriculture staff themselves were confused about the status of the programme. Whereas the provincial CASP lead was adamant that CASP had been completely phased out in favour of the RADP programme, CASP was still in existence by 2018 when the programme was awarded R1,646 billion to be spent on extension services, infrastructure, inputs, training and capacity building, strengthening of colleges of agriculture and disaster relief (DAFF, 2019).

4.2. The Land and Agrarian Reform Project (LARP)

The Land and Agrarian Reform Project was conceptualised in 2007 as a response to disparate land and agrarian reform initiatives acting in silo, especially in rural areas. The intention was to create a faster, more collaborative, more responsive, better streamlined, coordinated and more impactful support scheme for land reform beneficiaries (DoA, 2008). LARP set itself the ambition of creating 65,000 new commercial farmers by 2014, although it was not made clear whether this would be large-scale commercial farmers, small-scale commercial farmers or smallholder farmers (DRDLR, 2009).

Projects were selected according to viability and the connection between land redistribution and agri-business development on the transferred plot was emphasized (DoA, 2008). LARP had a short-term deadline of March 2009 to achieve its goals, but the project life-cycle was built to last five years in order for beneficiaries to continue receiving support after the end of the execution phase. The Department of Agriculture also billed it as a trailblazer for a future faster, more proactive approach to be known as *Operation Gijima* (Gijima means run in isiZulu). The ambition of transferring five million hectares of land to ten thousand new agricultural producers within a short period of time required heavy investments. Unfortunately, when Mbeki was replaced by Jacob Zuma shortly after the programme's launch, the latter decided to go in a different direction, opting instead to focus on the Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP).

4.3. The Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP).

In 2009, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform undertook a major study to assess the performance of land reform beneficiaries who had set up agricultural projects on their plots. The study revealed that most LRAD projects had completely collapsed and some were about to be auctioned off to the public (DRDLR, 2013: 12). This was a major blow as it would mean that failed projects could end up right back in previous owner's hands, probably bought back by the same white farmer who had sold the plot in the first place, reversing the meagre gains of transformation. This realisation mobilised the DRDLR staff to come up with what they believed was a more fail-proof programme. The result was the RADP.

The RADP's mission statement indicated that its ambition was to rescue "distressed farms" and graduate them into thriving large commercial farms (especially SLAG, SPLAG, LRAD, PLAS beneficiaries who had not received any help from the government after acquiring reform land post-1994); increase food production; increase food security and create employment in the agriculture sector; as well as stem the flow of people and resources from rural areas to urban areas (DRDLR, 2013: 12). Beyond the lofty ambition of rekindling "the class of Black commercial farmers destroyed by the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts", RADP

made clear that its projects were going to be run like business entities, and that they were neither welfare programmes nor a replacement for other land/agrarian reform initiatives (DRDLR, 2013: 11). Beneficiaries had to develop a business plan in order to prove project viability. Successful applicants were then paired with a mentor in one of four types of chosen relationships (mentorship, co-management relationship, share equity partnership or contract farming and concessions). The first set of beneficiaries were chosen from the 23 poorest districts in the country, informed by the Spatial Development Framework. The maximum amount per enterprise was set at R500,000, although this cap was lifted shortly after.

Although the RADP has been in existence for less than a decade, it is plagued by the same problems that have affected other land and agrarian reform programmes, especially CASP. It is chronically underfunded and connected beneficiaries seem to be getting all the funding at the expense of poorer but equally deserving people (Hall, 2014). Some view the programme as an attempt by the national government to correct mistakes of provincial departments of agriculture (Hall, 2014: 33). The government has admitted that many business plans chosen for RADP support so far do not meet expected minimum requirements expected from applicants or have not been vetted at all (DPME, 2015: 4). In January 2020, DRDLR minister Thoko Didiza further admitted in parliament that 78% of land reform farms in Limpopo province were lying dormant. This reflects a wider requirement nationwide for a new definition of and structure to land reform.

4.4. Agri-Parks

The South African government defines an ‘Agri-Park’ as a “networked innovation system of agro-production, processing, logistics, marketing, training and extension located in district municipalities” (DAFF, 2019: 3). The Agri-Park initiative falls within the government’s NDP 2030 priorities of accelerating transformation of rural economies and land ownership (DRDLR, 2015). Agri-Parks are almost a second shot at LARP, but this time with more investment in creating viable value chains from farm to fork. Agri-Parks are villagisation communes and unified cooperative models rolled into one. The basic idea is to have a thriving ecosystem of integrated farms within a close radius grouped into primary cooperatives, which then join with others to form secondary cooperatives that manage common agro-processing units with processing, bulk handling and storage infrastructure, plus water, energy and transportation logistics to take commodities to the final consumers in an efficient manner (DRDLR, 2015). Thus, the Agri-Park have backwards linkages to farms and forward supply linkages to own retail outlets controlled by the Agri-Park (i.e. fresh produce markets, supermarkets, etc.) as well as other retail outlets managed by private or public stakeholders (DRDLR 2015).

At the time of conceptualisation, the government determined that it would be ideal to have one Agri-Park per district, nationwide, funded by the government (who also offer

technical support) for a period of 10 years. In terms of transforming rural economies, the NDP and related priorities identified by the DRDLR (2015) set the following targets:

1. To create 1 million new jobs in the agriculture sector by 2030;
2. To increase the area under production by 1 million hectares;
3. To create 145,000 new jobs in agro-processing and set up 300,000 smallholders by 2020 within the medium-term;

The programme aimed to move very quickly from conceptualisation to setting up of beneficiaries. Consequently, it earmarked land that was already under government control for the initial phase, including state land, PLAS land, labourers' and farmworkers' lands and land obtained through restitution as well as commonage and communal lands. To provide scale, beneficiaries were to be drawn from rural communities and were required to register with a primary cooperative. The primary cooperative's role was to group produce and then transfer it to secondary cooperatives at district level, set up within a dense agricultural production zone where an Agri-Park would have been set up. The secondary cooperatives own 70% shares in the Agri-Parks. At a higher level, the secondary cooperatives are then required to create tertiary cooperatives to provide industry linkages and find big buyers for commodities.

The first Agri-Parks to be set up were West Rand (Gauteng), Springbokpan (North West), Witzenberg (Western Cape), Ncura (Eastern Cape) and Enkangala (Mpumalanga). It is still too early to determine if President Ramaphosa will continue with the Agri-Parks initiative and what their impact will be. The growth of this initiative is contingent on the setting up of thousands of smallholder producers to populate the ecosystem that Agri-Parks require for its growth and the One Household One Hectare programme answers part of that question.

4.5. One Household One Hectare programme (1HH1HA) in 2015.

Agri-Parks need to be populated with thousands of producers in order to get the kind of scale that makes them viable. An immediate solution to getting this critical scale is the One Household One Hectare programme. Thirteen million South Africans are vulnerable to hunger (inadequate access to food). Many black families still farm to provide some of their household needs but the number of active agricultural households has declined from 2.9 million in 2013 to 2.3 million in 2016 following an extended period of drought (DAFF, 2019). It is in this context that the DRDLR launched the One Household One Hectare programme (1HH1HA) in 2015. Beyond wanting to restore "the social capital and beauty of uBuntu as the glue that holds black communities together" and "the sanctity and dignity of life", the programme sought to:

1. Create viable rural small to medium agricultural enterprises and revive a group of highly productive Black Smallholder Farmers and food producers;

2. Build competencies and broaden the skills base for targeted households and communities;
3. Contribute to the reduction of poverty in rural areas;
4. Build a sense of security of tenure; access to land, increase the involvement of individual households in production activities and minimize controversies on CPI-led land projects;
5. Create sustainable employment in rural households;

The government set up each beneficiary household with inputs (Fertilizers, seeds, feed, trading stock, medication, pesticides), irrigation infrastructure, farm infrastructure such as fencing and sheds as well as operational costs (12 months' wages for participating in the programme). A second component known as the One Household 2 Dairy Cows was later added included in the 1HH1HA initiative. In 2015/2016 up to 5734 households across the country received programme starter packs (DRDLR 2017). Additionally, 6 new sites covering were awarded a total of R30.4 million as follows: Eastern Cape (3), KwaZulu-Natal (1) and Mpumalanga (2) with 689 households distributed as follows: Gorah (14), Krugerpost (221), Mantisini (373), Westwood (18), Kwa-Mashabalane (41) and Libhaba CPA (22). (DRDLR 2017). The One Household 2 Dairy cows also planned to award starter packs worth R268.9 million to 384 households in 2017/2018 with most of the beneficiaries being in the Northern Cape (62), KwaZulu Natal (24) and Limpopo (25). After just three years of implementation, it is still too early to gauge how successful the programme will be in creating a critical mass of self-reliant smallholder producers or whether President Ramaphosa will even continue with the programme.

Bringing in the private sector: Agri BEE.

The South African government cannot transform the entire apartheid socio-economic architecture all on its own and concurrently with public-sector initiatives, efforts were made to involve the private sector in land and agrarian reform. The Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is an affirmative action law adopted to make sure that every entity in the country is playing a role in advancing the transformation agenda. It was voted into law through the *Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No 53 of 2003* which called for the deracialisation of all sectors of South African society and for equitable participation of all the races, especially previously-disadvantaged people women and people with disabilities in all sectors of society. The BEE law has been adapted for the structural transformation of all areas of South African society.

The scope of AgriBEE includes inputs, production farms, beneficiation facilities, storage centres and transportation logistics and concerns mainly entities that generate above R5 million per year. Conformity is ensured through a complicated system of scorecards (every

organisation in the agriculture value chain is expected to register and get itself audited) as well as through procurement. Non-compliant companies are scored a low 0% while the very top contributors receive a 100 % compliance rating. The government (which is the number one purchaser of goods and services in the country), municipalities, hotels, universities and other major consumers are all expected to ensure participation in the system by purchasing goods and services only from organisations that can demonstrate their Agri-BEE compliance. That said, it is difficult to monitor BEE in general and AgriBEE in particular, if a company does not do business with the government. This highlights the importance of the government's role: it has to be the main driver of the reform process.

5. Way forward: rethinking government-led land reform.

To employ the words of Professor Sam Moyo (2007: 3), "land reform is a fundamental dimension of the agrarian question, and the agrarian question is a fundamental dimension of the national question". South Africa's socio-economic reality highlights the fact that leaving apartheid-era property ownership arrangements unchanged is untenable (Presidential Advisory Panel, 2019: 15). Ntsebeza (2018) has cautioned that "the unresolved land question in South Africa is a time bomb". Property rights must be transformed at a quicker pace if South Africa is to achieve its objective of building a non-racial, non-sexist society.

Bernstein (2007: 33) has noted that 'land to the tiller' type reforms seldom lead to comprehensive redistribution of land, except in dramatic cases of social revolution. However, a just and fairer distribution of resources can catalyse change and the creation of a more equal society. A number of countries, including China, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand have undertaken land reforms fairly quickly and efficiently, lifting previously-disadvantaged communities out of poverty, creating jobs, imbuing beneficiaries with a sense of dignity and making these more resilient (Van den Brink et al, 2007: 158). The idea ultimately, is for redistributive initiatives to improve livelihoods, employment and incomes (Bernstein, 2007: 51).

White farmers, who represent a strong political lobby, are strongly opposed to any major restructuring of property rights in South Africa's farm sector (van den Brink et al, 2006: 42). However, postponing reforms can become more expensive for the country down the road, especially if drought conditions continue to expand the number of families that suffer from severe acute food vulnerability. The spate of looting that occurred within level four Covid-19 lockdown restrictions following President Zuma's imprisonment for contempt of court in July 2021 revealed the underlying poverty issues that remain unresolved in the country.

The structure and implementation of South Africa's current land reform programmes are geared towards creating commercial farmers. This approach excludes the vast majority of blacks who need land and who still bear a disproportionate burden of unemployment, inequality and underdevelopment. Cousins posits that "[F]or land reform to fulfil a redistributive function at an economic, political and social level, an alternative vision and programme for agrarian reform in South Africa is urgently needed" (2007: 205). Such a new approach would have to fundamentally change property rights and agricultural production structures in rural areas especially – because that is where the majority of South Africa's poor live (Cousins, 2007: 206). It is in this respect that he advocates for a new approach that is deliberately pro-poor and participates alongside other production methods in helping the country achieve its self-sufficiency objectives (Cousins, 2007: 213). Significantly more mileage would be gained by supporting smallholders who already depend on the land, and practice mixed cropping. That is why it is so important that the Agri-Parks and 1HH1H initiatives get the kind of investments that they need. The single-minded and narrow objective of developing a class of large-scale commercial farmers, i.e. what Sam Moyo (2004: 3) refers to as "efforts to "buy out" black elites into large-scale farming through affirmative action programmes" has failed.

Land and agrarian reform efforts need stability and the chopping and changing that occurs whenever one president leaves office and another one comes in need to be managed in order to avoid disruptions. Reform programs also need to be streamlined into very clear, easily implementable plans. There is no reason for example why all land reform cannot be managed within the framework of PLAS while all post-settlement support is driven by CASP - one flexible programme for each side, with different components that can be collapsed or expanded according to beneficiaries' requirements. This would ensure that workers at the three levels of government have to deal with only one handbook for everybody. Instead of chopping and changing, what the programmes need is funding, and trained civil servants who know how to implement decisions on the ground.

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Fonds miniers volontaires et développement communautaire au Sénégal : quelle place et quels rôles pour la démocratie délibérative et participative ?

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Résumé

Cet article est élaboré à partir de l'exemple du Fonds d'investissement social et environnemental (FISE) de la société aurifère Petowal Mining Company (PMC SA) basée au Sénégal. Il aborde la question démocratique en analysant la place et les rôles des processus délibératifs et participatifs dans un contexte d'extractivisme minier et développement communautaire. Il montre les limites des fonds miniers volontaires pour impulser un développement effectif et durable au niveau local, du fait notamment des carences liées à l'application des processus délibératifs et participatifs dans la mise en place de ces fonds et des projets/actions qui en découlent.

Mots-clés : *fonds miniers, responsabilité sociale/sociétale de l'entreprise (RSE), démocratie participative, démocratie délibérative, développement communautaire, Sénégal.*

Abstract

This article focuses on the Social and Environmental Investment Fund (FISE) of the gold mining company Petowal Mining Company (PMC SA) based in Senegal. It addresses the democratic issue by analyzing the place and roles of deliberative and participatory processes in a context of mining extractivism and community development. It shows the limits of voluntary mining funds to stimulate effective and sustainable development at the local level, due in particular to the shortcomings related to the application of deliberative and participatory processes in the establishment of these funds and the resulting projects / actions.

Keywords : *mining funds, corporate social responsibility (CSR), participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, community development, Senegal.*

Introduction

A l'instar de nombreux pays d'Afrique, le Sénégal cherche à tirer profit de l'exploitation de ses ressources minières en vue d'impulser son développement socio-économique. L'Etat et les gouvernements successifs développent des stratégies visant à attirer le maximum d'investisseurs dans le secteur minier et à favoriser l'implantation des sociétés/entreprises minières dans les régions et les zones concernées telles que les régions côtières (Dakar, Thiès, Saint-Louis), le sud-est du Sénégal (Tambacounda, Kédougou), le nord du pays dans la région de Matam (Diallo 2017). En plus de l'Etat qui est chargé de mettre en place et de garantir un cadre réglementaire et juridique adapté à l'exploitation minière, de nombreux acteurs veillent au développement des activités minières et plaident pour l'implication active des différentes parties prenantes dans les processus décisionnels et de gouvernance : c'est le cas des organisations de la société civile dont les ONG, des collectivités territoriales (gouvernements locaux et élus), des organisations socioprofessionnelles locales et nationales, des leaders et représentants communautaires, etc.

Les entreprises minières, en tant que l'un des acteurs principaux du secteur extractif, sont soumises à des contributions obligatoires et des exigences légales définies dans la législation minière (dont le Code minier). En plus de leurs obligations légales, elles adhèrent généralement à des initiatives volontaristes. Elles contribuent à des actions et des financements dont l'une des finalités souvent exprimées est d'impulser le développement social et économique des communautés locales et des zones directement impactées par leurs activités (prospection, exploitation, transport, etc.). Ces initiatives volontaristes, inscrites en partie dans le cadre de la responsabilité sociale/sociétale de l'entreprise (RSE) (Capron & Quairel-Lanoizelée 2016 ; Fouda 2014 ; Gendron & Girard 2014 ; Gond & Igalens 2008 ; Rosé 2006), se réalisent à travers une diversité d'actions telles que la mise en place de fonds, non obligatoires et non imposés par la législation. Plusieurs questions émergent dès lors par rapport à ces fonds volontaires mis en place par les sociétés minières à savoir : qui décide de leur montant ? Qui décide de leur orientation et de leur utilisation ? Quelle place et quels rôles accorde-t-on aux différentes parties prenantes et particulièrement aux populations locales dans les processus décisionnels ? Aussi, à partir de ces questions souvent récurrentes dans l'analyse et l'évaluation de ces fonds, s'élabore et se construit une interrogation essentielle à savoir : dans un contexte d'extractivisme minier, de nécessité et de quête de développement local ou communautaire (Diallo 2017 ; Campbell & Laforce 2016 ; Darimani 2016 ; Goyotte-Côté 2016 ; Keita 2016 ; Acosta 2014), quelle importance est accordée à la démocratie participative et/ou délibérative dans la mise en place et la gestion des « fonds miniers » ? Le présent article est une contribution à la compréhension de cette problématique, en partant de l'exemple du Fonds d'investissement social et environnemental (FISE) de la

société aurifère Petowal Mining Company (PMC SA¹). Les fonds miniers s'entendent ici comme tous les fonds dont les financements sont exclusivement ou majoritairement assurés par les compagnies minières, que ce soit à titre obligatoire (c'est-à-dire imposé par la législation) ou volontaire (c'est-à-dire relevant de l'initiative propre de l'entreprise).

Dans le cas de l'élaboration de la stratégie globale du FISE et de la sélection des microprojets au titre du FISE 2018 en particulier, on relève au mieux une démarche de consultation des populations à travers des rencontres formelles ou informelles. Il manque à la fois une véritable démarche de concertation avec les populations en amont pour l'élaboration de la stratégie et une démarche de co-élaboration (ou de co-production) notamment dans le processus décisionnel conduisant au choix des microprojets.

Dans la suite de notre propos, nous définirons tout d'abord le cadre conceptuel et théorique de l'article en mettant en exergue les fondements et la pertinence de la question démocratique dans un double contexte d'extractivisme minier et de développement local/communautaire. Puis nous présenterons la méthodologie. Et, enfin, nous présenterons et analyserons les principaux résultats.

1. Fondements et pertinence de la question démocratique vis-à-vis des fonds miniers et du développement communautaire

En matière de démocratie, il existe encore un débat autour de l'interchangeabilité des notions de délibération et de participation (Bouvier 2007). Au moins deux postures assez nettes peuvent être identifiées : d'une part les auteurs associant les deux notions et d'autre part ceux qui les dissocient. On pourrait retenir de l'idée de démocratie délibérative la mise en avant du débat argumenté entre les citoyens menant à la prise de décision concernant le bien commun. Bouvier (2007 : 14) se démarque quelque peu de la notion de démocratie délibérative (Girard 2011 ; Gutmann & Thompson 2002), jugeant que l'idée de la délibération entre les citoyens relève de la métonymie puisque dit-il « ces derniers ne décident pas ». Pour lui, aussi bien en matière de démocratie délibérative (selon J. Habermas) ou de politique délibérative (selon J. Rawls), la délibération s'opère au niveau institutionnel dans la mesure où ce sont les représentants des citoyens qui décident. Il y a là l'idée que la délibération (entre les représentants des citoyens) est de nature juridico-politique, contrairement à la discussion informelle (entre citoyens). Le lieu de la délibération, à l'instar des assemblées (parlementaires et locales) ou des cours constitutionnelles, n'est pas le même que celui de la discussion informelle. Dès lors, Bouvier opte et suggère, à la place de la notion démocratie délibérative, celles de démocratie discursive ou de démocratie débattante. En outre, selon Bouvier (2007 : 15), il s'ajoute un manque de clarté dans le rapport de la notion de démocratie délibérative à l'idée de participation. Selon Chevallier (2006), la délibération ne saurait être ni

1 PMC SA est depuis le mois d'août 2019 une filiale du groupe australien Resolute Mining.

« l'apanage des seuls élus » ni « cantonnée aux assemblées », elle implique nécessairement « la possibilité pour les citoyens de faire entendre leurs voix ». Le « débat public », en tant que reposant sur un principe d'ouverture et la possibilité offerte aux citoyens (ou acteurs sociaux) de se faire entendre au-delà de la voix de leurs représentants-élus, « s'inscrit pleinement dans la logique du modèle délibératif » selon Chevallier (2006). Ce dernier le situe « en amont du processus décisionnel » soit avant même que les orientations ne soient arrêtées, le distingue des procédures de consultations (supposant l'existence d'un projet déjà élaboré) et le rapproche davantage des mécanismes de concertations. Pour autant, le débat public n'est pas synonyme d'une « authentique délibération » qui implique nécessairement au terme de la discussion la capacité de prendre une décision s'imposant à tous les participants. En l'absence de cette capacité de prise de décision, même les processus délibératifs seraient de « simples subterfuges » selon Chevallier (2006). Pour ce dernier, le modèle délibératif ne donne pas lieu au partage du pouvoir décisionnel qui reste principalement détenu par les représentants. À l'inverse considèret-il, le modèle participatif incite à octroyer aux citoyens à la fois un droit de regard sur la chose publique et une capacité à peser sur les processus de prise de décision.

Pour certains la question de fond en matière de participation demeure moins les formes de celle-ci que de savoir à quoi l'on participe. Ce qui conduit Gaudin (2010) à indiquer au moins trois facettes de la représentation : « participer à une consultation » dans le but d'accéder à l'information relative à un projet public et d'obtenir des justifications ; « participer à un débat public » dans le but confronter plusieurs points de vue ; « associer directement les citoyens aux prises de décision » dans le but de coproduire les choix publics entre les élus et les citoyens concernés. De ce fait, selon le degré d'implication de ces derniers, les processus participatifs peuvent prendre différentes formes : la consultation, la concertation et la co-élaboration.

Le principe de la démocratie participative consiste à ne pas réserver exclusivement le pouvoir décisionnel aux professionnels et aux experts (Bodart & Luneau 2020). Celle-ci, comme le suggère John Dewey², doit être conçue comme le vecteur d'une « citoyenneté active et informée » qui s'opère par la prise de parole individuelle des citoyens (ordinaires) sur des sujets différents. De ce fait, l'un des principaux enjeux des processus participatifs demeure territorial en ce sens qu'ils incitent à une gouvernance de proximité et surtout à une prise en compte des « savoirs pratiques » (Sintomer 2003) des habitants du territoire ou des citoyens ordinaires.

La démocratie, en dépit de ses nombreuses variantes (représentative, délibérative, participative, etc.), repose en priorité sur la prise en compte de la diversité des avis et des voix, sur l'implication directe ou indirecte (à travers des représentants élus) des différentes catégories d'acteurs sociaux et de populations dans la gouvernance des biens communs (ou de la chose publique) et les processus de prise de décision. Quant aux

2 In Bodart & Luneau 2020.

ressources naturelles en général, elles relèvent de l'ordre des biens communs/communaux et donc de la propriété de tous. Au Sénégal, il est même inscrit dans la Constitution que les ressources naturelles, y compris donc minières, appartiennent aux populations. À ce titre, la question de la démocratie en général occupe une place importante aussi bien dans la gestion de ces ressources que dans la définition des orientations et la prise des décisions relatives aux fonds et aux bénéfices pouvant découler de leur exploitation.

Au regard des particularités des deux processus, délibératif et participatif, nous les appréhenderons comme étant distincts mais complémentaires en matière de démocratie. De là, nous considérons que la construction d'un processus démocratique fort dans le cadre de la gouvernance des fonds miniers et de l'action publique nécessite de combiner à la fois des principes délibératifs et participatifs. C'est à travers cette combinaison qu'il est possible pour les entreprises minières et les collectivités territoriales, en particulier dans le cadre de la territorialisation des politiques publiques (Sané 2016), d'impulser au niveau local un développement répondant aux attentes des communautés/populations et s'inscrivant dans la durabilité. C'est également de cette combinaison des principes de la démocratie délibérative et participative que les orientations de développement traduites sous la forme de projets/microprojets et d'actions peuvent faire l'objet d'une plus grande appropriation par les populations bénéficiaires.

2. Sites et méthodes

Cet article repose sur une recherche conduite entre août 2019 et février 2020, et portant sur le FISE 2018 mis en place par PMC SA, une société disposant d'une licence d'exploitation d'un gisement aurifère situé dans la commune de Tomboronkoto (dans la région de Kédougou) au sud-est du Sénégal. La région de Kédougou est née du découpage de la région de Tambacounda et créée par la loi 2008-14 du 18 mars 2008. Elle s'étend sur une superficie de 16 896 Km². Elle est limitée à l'ouest et au nord par la région de Tambacounda, à l'est par la République du Mali et au sud par la République de Guinée. Elle est composée de 03 départements (Kédougou, Salémata et Saraya), de 06 arrondissements (Sabodola, Bembou, Fongolimbi, Bandafassi, Dar Salam et Dakatéli) et 19 communes (rurales et urbaines).



Figure 1 : Région de Kédougou

Le FISE 2018 porte sur le financement de 20 microprojets soumis et sélectionnés par les deux collectivités territoriales que sont la commune (rurale) de Tomboronkoto et le département de Kédougou concernées par les activités de PMC. La sélection des microprojets a été faite par les organes délibératifs respectifs de chaque collectivité territoriale, à savoir le conseil communal de Tomboronkoto d'une part et le conseil départemental de Kédougou d'autre part.

Les données exploitées proviennent à la fois des sources primaires et secondaires. Les sources primaires sont composées principalement des outils de collecte élaborés dans le cadre de la recherche en question, notamment les différents guides d'entretien pour les différentes catégories d'acteurs. Quant aux sources secondaires, elles comprennent essentiellement les différents documents fournis par les différentes catégories d'acteurs (dont le personnel de PMC SA) tels que : le document de stratégie du FISE, les conventions de financement entre PMC SA et les collectivités territoriales concernées (en l'occurrence le Conseil départemental de Kédougou et le Conseil municipal de Tomboronkoto), le document de suivi budgétaire des microprojets du FISE 2018. En outre, la collecte des données a porté sur l'ensemble des 20 microprojets financés dans le cadre du FISE 2018.

En l'absence d'une base de sondage, la démarche a consisté à constituer un échantillon « boule de neige » combiné avec un échantillon raisonné afin que toutes les catégories de parties prenantes soient représentées. Pour ce faire, la stratégie d'enquête a été de s'appuyer sur des personnes ressources ou des personnes déjà enquêtées pour identifier d'autres enquêtés répondant aux critères de constitution de l'échantillon. Les principaux

critères retenus pour la sélection des enquêtés (soit des unités d'enquête) en vue de la constitution de l'échantillon sont les suivants : (i) être identifié comme faisant partie des six catégories de parties prenantes³ et connaître l'existence du FISE et de ses microprojets (ii) veiller à la présence de femmes et d'hommes dans l'échantillon (iii) veiller à la présence des différentes classes d'âge si possible (jeunes/adultes/personnes âgées).

L'échantillon comprend 68 répondants, interrogés individuellement ou collectivement (entretien de groupe). Il est réparti comme suit selon le sexe : 8 femmes (11,8%) et 60 hommes (88,2%). Quant à la répartition selon le type de parties prenantes, elle se présente comme suit : 7 employés de PMC SA (10,29%), 10 élus et/ou agents des collectivités territoriales (14,71%), 23 bénéficiaires/membres communautaires (33,82%), 3 autorités administratives (4,41%), 15 agents des services techniques déconcentrés de l'Etat (22,06%), 10 prestataires de services ou fournisseurs (14,71%).

3. Résultats et analyse

3.1 contenu et orientations du FISE

Le FISE fait suite à la signature en 2016, entre l'Etat et PMC SA, d'un avenant à la convention minière visant à mettre en place un fonds destiné à appuyer le développement économique et social des collectivités territoriales situées dans la zone d'intervention du projet minier. La dotation de ce fonds, assurée exclusivement par PMC SA, a démarré en 2018 et doit être renouvelée chaque année jusqu'à la fin du projet minier prévue en 2025, soit pendant la durée de vie opérationnelle du projet minier estimée à huit (8) ans. D'un montant annuel minimal de 450.000 USD⁴, la dotation financière accordée par PMC dans le cadre du FISE demeure évolutive tant dans son montant global que dans la proportion revenant aux collectivités territoriales concernées. Ainsi, l'enveloppe financière totale pour l'année N est fonction du cours de l'or de l'année N(-1), mais avec un minimum de 450.000 USD. Quant à l'évolution de la répartition de l'enveloppe financière annuelle entre les deux collectivités territoriales concernées, à savoir la commune de Tomboronkoto et le département de Kédougou, elle est prévue comme suit : respectivement 70% pour Tomboronkoto et 30% pour Kédougou en 2018 et 2019, 60% et 40% en 2020 et 2021, 50% pour chacune des deux collectivités territoriales en 2022 et 2023 et, enfin, 40% et 60% respectivement pour Tomboronkoto et Kédougou en 2024 et 2025. Autrement dit, il est prévu une évolution dégressive de

3 Staff de PMC SA, élus et agents des Collectivités territoriales, représentants de l'administration territoriale, agents des services techniques de l'État, populations et groupes bénéficiaires, et enfin les prestataires de services.

4 Dollar américain (US).

la proportion allouée à la commune de Tomboronkoto entre 2018 et 2025, et à l'inverse une augmentation progressive de la proportion allouée au département de Kédougou dans l'enveloppe financière qui sera annuellement dégagée par PMC.

Le FISE de manière générale vise en priorité quatre (4) domaines d'intervention : (i) l'accès aux infrastructures de base (ii) la conservation de la biodiversité (iii) le renforcement des capacités locales et le développement institutionnel (iv) la promotion du développement économique local. L'appellation FISE 2018 désigne l'enveloppe financière destinée au financement des actions et des projets sélectionnés pour l'année 2018 qui correspond à la première année d'implémentation du fonds. Pour 2018, le montant alloué au FISE est de 427.733.040 FCFA⁵ dont : 299.413.128 FCFA pour la commune de Tomboronkoto et 128.319.912 FCFA pour le conseil départemental de Kédougou soit respectivement 70% et 30% pour chacune des deux collectivités territoriales. Il a servi au financement de 20 microprojets dont : 15 relevant du conseil communal de Tomboronkoto et 5 du conseil départemental de Kédougou. Ces microprojets concernent plusieurs secteurs dont : la jeunesse et le sport, l'éducation, l'agriculture, l'hydraulique, l'énergie, l'habitat, etc.

Pour la commune de Tomboronkoto, les microprojets financés au titre du FISE 2018 sont :

- l'aménagement d'un périmètre maraîcher de 10 hectares à Badian et Mako ;
- l'aménagement d'un espace apicole à Tenkoto ;
- l'appui en médicaments aux postes et cases de santé ;
- la réalisation d'études de faisabilité pour l'aménagement d'une aire de stationnement des gros porteurs à Mako ;
- l'appui aux activités sportives et culturelles de la commune de Tomboronkoto ;
- la construction d'un foyer des jeunes à Mako ;
- l'aménagement d'une aire de jeu à Bantata ;
- l'aménagement de 4 salles de classe au lycée de Mako ;
- l'aménagement du mur de clôture du lycée de Mako ;
- la construction de la case des tout-petits de Mako ;
- la dotation en fournitures et équipements scolaires ;
- l'adduction d'eau au niveau du poste de santé de Tomboronkoto ;
- la réalisation de lotissements à Niéménéké et Mako ;
- la réhabilitation d'un forage MFT à Ngari
- la réhabilitation du kit solaire de l'hôtel communautaire de Tomboronkoto ;

5 Le franc CFA est la devise des 8 pays qui forment l'Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine (UEMOA).

Pour ce qui est du département de Kédougou, les microprojets financés au titre du FISE 2018 sont les suivants :

- la location d'immeubles à Dakar pour le logement des étudiants ressortissants de Kédougou ;
- la réhabilitation du lycée Maciré BA de Kédougou ;
- l'achat d'un moteur pour le bus du lycée technique industriel et minier de Kédougou ;
- la finalisation du Plan départemental de développement (PDD) et du Schéma départemental d'aménagement du territoire (SDAT) du département de Kédougou ;
- l'électrification des collèges de Ségou et de Tomboronkoto.

3.2 Place des processus participatifs et délibératifs dans le FISE

La mise en place du FISE marque tout d'abord la volonté de PMC SA d'entreprendre au profit des populations locales des actions et des investissements allant au-delà des obligations légales de l'entreprise. Aucun principe démocratique ne prévaut donc à la mise en place de ce fonds. La question démocratique émergeant du FISE est un dérivé qui vient a posteriori dans la mesure où la mise en place de ce fonds est intrinsèquement liée à l'exploitation de ressources minières relevant du bien commun. Le FISE qui relève davantage de la politique et de la stratégie RSE de l'entreprise, peut être vu comme un moyen pour l'entreprise d'obtenir et d'asseoir sa licence sociale, marquant l'acceptation de l'entreprise par les populations et se traduisant par l'apaisement de ses relations avec les différents protagonistes locaux. L'obtention de la licence sociale ne dépend pas de l'obtention d'un permis minier (de prospection, d'exploration et d'exploitation) ni de l'établissement d'une convention minière qui relèvent exclusivement des prérogatives des autorités étatiques (administratives et gouvernementales). En tant que stratégie propre à l'entreprise pour assurer un bon déroulement de ses activités dans sa zone d'implantation, la conception et l'élaboration du FISE ne résultent pas a priori pas d'une préoccupation démocratique et ne peuvent être considérées directement comme le produit d'un quelconque mécanisme de démocratie, ni délibérative ni participative, à savoir un « débat public » impliquant les populations locales, une « consultation » de celles-ci, une participation à la prise de décision, etc. Le FISE est donc en premier lieu la manifestation d'une décision souveraine et stratégique de l'entreprise guidée par ses propres intérêts dont la volonté d'asseoir un environnement social favorable à ses activités. Concomitamment, pour la plupart des catégories de populations enquêtées dont les jeunes et les différents groupes socioprofessionnels, l'enveloppe financière allouée au FISE reste en deçà de leurs attentes et même des capacités de l'entreprise.

Nous pouvons dès lors, du point de vue du processus délibératif, relever le problème

lié au consensus par rapport au FISE en général et au montant qui lui est alloué en particulier, dans la mesure où la détermination de celle-ci relève en dernier de l'entreprise minière. Le montant alloué au FISE n'est pas le fruit d'un débat public, d'un vote des élus, encore moins d'un consensus. Or comme le dit Girard (2011 : 234), dans une procédure délibérative idéale, le consensus est :

« (...) le signe le plus sûr de la satisfaction des visées de l'autonomie, puisque nul n'est soumis à une loi qu'il ne veut pas, et du bien commun, puisque la loi acceptable par tous n'est perçue par personne comme à son intérêt ».

La notion de consensus permet de comprendre la désapprobation du montant alloué au FISE par les populations. D'autant que pour une grande partie de celles-ci, les bénéfices de l'entreprise rendent possible l'augmentation substantielle de ses investissements socioéconomiques et environnementaux au sein des communautés impactées. Pour sa part, Aguirre Unceta (2020) dans le cas de la République démocratique du Congo par exemple, relève la contribution décevante des revenus miniers dans l'action publique destinée à relever les défis dans des secteurs comme l'éducation, la santé et l'agriculture. Par ailleurs, la légitimité du consensus repose moins sur le vote que sur « un accord raisonné entre égaux » (Girard 2011 : 234). Or, la conception de la stratégie du FISE tout comme la détermination de son montant qui relèvent d'abord de PMC SA, montrent aussi de manière plus large les rapports souvent inégaux entre les sociétés minières et les populations locales.

Le rôle principal de PMC SA dans la mise en œuvre du FISE consiste à mettre les fonds à la disposition des deux collectivités territoriales que sont la commune de Tomborokoto et le Conseil départemental de Kédougou. Ainsi, la mise en œuvre opérationnelle des actions relève de la responsabilité de chacune des deux collectivités territoriales concernées qui ont en charge l'élaboration des politiques publiques locales. C'est donc à ce niveau que les collectivités territoriales en question, à travers leurs élus et leurs différentes instances, tentent d'adopter vis-à-vis du FISE des principes et des mécanismes démocratiques. On constate néanmoins dans le choix des microprojets financés dans le cadre du FISE, une application incomplète et inaboutie des principes de la délibération et de la participation (Bodart & Luneau 2020 ; Gaudin 2010). La part de la consultation des populations reste faible et peu formalisée ; le débat public quand il est organisé ne donne pas lieu à une délibération accordant un pouvoir décisionnel aux populations bénéficiaires. Au demeurant, la délibération pour le choix final des microprojets à financer reste la prérogative exclusive des élus, notamment par le biais de leurs différentes instances (conseil communal, conseil départemental, commission des marchés, etc.). Dans ce processus de délibération, la capacité des bénéficiaires à influencer la décision est marginale voire inexistante et leur position lors des sessions

de vote se limite à celle d'observateurs. Dans le cas des microprojets du FISE 2018, il existe néanmoins une adéquation entre une partie des décisions des élus et la volonté des populations bénéficiaires comme c'est le cas de certains microprojets relatifs aux domaines de l'éducation et de la santé. Mais on note également des avis discordants chez les bénéficiaires ainsi que les professionnels des secteurs concernés (infirmiers, responsables d'institutions scolaires) dont certains contestent le manque de pertinence et d'efficacité de certains choix opérés par les élus. Pour ces bénéficiaires et ces professionnels, le manque de pertinence et d'efficacité de certains microprojets est dû à leur faible implication dans les processus de prise de décision des élus.

3.3 FISE et territorialisation des politiques publiques : une opportunité de renforcement de la démocratie au niveau local

La stratégie de mise en œuvre du FISE élaborée par PMC SA vise à aligner les interventions du fonds aux priorités de développement définies par les collectivités territoriales dans le cadre des compétences transférées à celles-ci. Dans la démarche, les microprojets sélectionnés dans le cadre du FISE s'attachent à la satisfaction des priorités de développement déclinées dans les documents de planification annuelle et pluriannuelle des collectivités territoriales. À travers cette approche, il s'agit en théorie de favoriser la transparence et la participation des populations au processus décisionnel. De ce point de vue, on peut considérer que la stratégie d'intervention du FISE est conforme aux dispositions de la loi 2013-10 portant Code général des collectivités locales (CGCL) qui fait de celles-ci le réceptacle de la territorialisation des politiques publiques (Sané 2016).

Dans la sélection des microprojets du FISE 2018, le développement communautaire/local est appréhendé dans sa dimension systémique qui met en exergue l'interdépendance entre les différents secteurs socio-économiques ; d'où l'option de cibler simultanément plusieurs secteurs à travers les microprojets financés. Il y a toutefois un besoin de priorisation des investissements au niveau communautaire. À ce niveau, on relève auprès des différentes catégories d'acteurs deux logiques discursives. D'une part, il y a les discours qui tendent à considérer que la priorisation des investissements découlant du FISE 2018 relève en priorité de la compétence et de la responsabilité des populations bénéficiaires. Autrement dit, les élus ou les représentants doivent simplement se conformer à la volonté exprimée par les populations bénéficiaires lors du choix des microprojets. C'est une logique qui vise à accorder un pouvoir décisionnel aux populations bénéficiaires et non seulement un rôle consultatif. Or, dans la pratique effective du choix des microprojets financés dans le cadre du FISE 2018, ce sont les élus qui choisissent et valident en dernier ressort à travers leurs assemblées délibératives dont le conseil municipal pour

la commune de Tomboronkoto et le conseil départemental pour le département de Kédougou ou encore à travers d'autres organes internes à ces assemblées comme la commission des marchés. Aussi bien pour la commune de Tomboronkoto que pour le Conseil départemental de Kédougou, on relève dans les procédures de sélection des microprojets des carences en matière de processus démocratiques, tant délibératifs que participatifs. Les microprojets sélectionnés dans le cadre du FISE résultent directement ou indirectement de la planification des actions de développement des différentes collectivités territoriales. Certes le processus de planification tend généralement à favoriser des mécanismes de consultation et de participation visant à la fois le recueil des avis des citoyens/populations et l'identification de leurs besoins et de leurs priorités en matière de développement. Ces mécanismes s'opèrent à travers différents moyens dont les rencontres formelles ou informelles entre les élus et les différentes catégories de populations. Mais lors des assemblées délibératives au cours desquelles sont sélectionnés les microprojets constitutifs du FISE, les citoyens sont davantage confinés à des rôles de spectateurs/observateurs passifs et ne participent pas à la prise de décision qui revient exclusivement aux élus. On constate à l'instar de Chevallier (2006) que les rencontres (formelles ou informelles) et les séances de consultations organisées par les élus n'aboutissent guère au partage, à l'octroi, encore moins au transfert du pouvoir décisionnel aux populations et aux citoyens de base.

Malgré les faiblesses dans les procédures décisionnelles, le FISE offre cependant des opportunités d'implication des populations dans le processus de mise en œuvre opérationnelle des microprojets. C'est à ce niveau qu'il est possible de parler de participation effective des populations, voire de contribution du FISE à l'amélioration des mécanismes démocratiques. À titre d'exemple, suite à la réhabilitation du forage de Ngari dans le cadre du FISE 2018, la gestion de cette infrastructure a été confiée à un comité de gestion dont les membres font partie de la communauté villageoise et sont désignés par les habitants. Ce comité définit les règles de fonctionnement et d'utilisation du forage, dont les contributions financières des usagers pour l'entretien de l'infrastructure. Bien que l'essentiel des microprojets financés contribuent à satisfaire des besoins existants (comme la construction et l'électrification des infrastructures scolaires, l'aménagement de divers types d'espaces socio-économiques, sportifs, etc.), certains d'entre eux sont jugés moins pertinents et moins prioritaires par les bénéficiaires. Ainsi, dans le cas de l'achat de médicaments pour les structures sanitaires, les professionnels de santé tout comme certains bénéficiaires désapprouvent en partie l'achat de certains médicaments considérés comme non prioritaires. Il en est de même pour l'achat d'un moteur pour le bus du lycée technique industriel et minier de Kédougou d'une part et d'autre part la location d'immeubles à Dakar par PMC SA pour l'hébergement des étudiants ressortissants de la région de Kédougou. Pour ces deux derniers microprojets cités, les professionnels tout comme les bénéficiaires font remarquer le caractère peu durable de ces investissements et leur préfèrent des investissements plus structurants et

à plus long terme comme l'achat d'un bus neuf et l'achat des immeubles en question ; ce qui correspond davantage aux attentes des bénéficiaires et revêt un caractère plus durable.

Au niveau des collectivités territoriales concernées tout comme de PMC SA, il existe donc des carences en matière de délibération et de participation des populations notamment dans les processus de conception de la stratégie mais aussi de sélection des microprojets. Or dans la mesure où le FISE relève de financements privés (et non publics), il y a là une opportunité aussi bien pour les pouvoirs publics, les élus locaux et PMC de trouver les moyens d'accroître le pouvoir décisionnel des populations bénéficiaires pour le choix des microprojets. La recherche d'un consensus entre les acteurs détenant le pouvoir décisionnel, à savoir PMC SA sur le plan financier et les élus locaux sur le plan politique (choix des orientations et vote), peut permettre d'éviter certains obstacles éventuels liés au Code des collectivités locales concernant les procédures de délibération. Plutôt que de concentrer exclusivement le pouvoir de sélection des microprojets entre les mains des élus, le consensus au sein des assemblées locales (conseil communal de Tomborokoto et conseil départemental de Kédougou) peut favoriser l'adoption des choix exprimés par la majorité des citoyens consultés lors des séances consultatives et des différentes rencontres. Dans la mesure où la loi portant Code général des collectivités territoriales définit des dispositions générales applicables à toutes ces dernières, ce type de consensus au niveau des assemblées locales permet de contourner certains obstacles légaux en matière de procédures délibératives et favorise la prise en compte effective des avis et des besoins directement exprimés par les citoyens de base ou les populations locales en général.

Le consensus démocratique est d'autant plus nécessaire que les collectivités territoriales au Sénégal sont globalement confrontées à plusieurs difficultés : la faiblesse des transferts de l'État et leur incapacité à générer des ressources additionnelles propres (Sané 2016). Ces difficultés constituent des obstacles au plein exercice de leurs missions dans la mesure où elles entraînent un manque de personnel qualifié nécessaire au bon fonctionnement des collectivités territoriales et à une prise en charge optimale des différentes questions dont celle de participation des citoyens et des populations. Il en résulte une quasi impossibilité pour les collectivités territoriales d'assurer leurs missions primordiales, encore moins de mettre en place des mécanismes participatifs à l'égard des citoyens qui soient à la fois pertinents et efficaces. Dans le cadre du FISE, l'un des enjeux liés aux processus participatifs et à l'octroi d'un pouvoir décisionnel aux populations est surtout de favoriser l'appropriation des microprojets sélectionnés par les bénéficiaires et de leur garantir une certaine durabilité entendue comme la capacité des bénéficiaires à maintenir ou à poursuivre de manière autonome les microprojets réalisés avec ou sans l'appui de PMC SA.

Conclusion

L'insuffisance du montant alloué au FISE 2018 selon les populations, combinée au manque de pertinence et à l'absence de durabilité de certains microprojets sélectionnés par les représentants élus (et non par les citoyens de base et les bénéficiaires directs), réduit considérablement l'efficacité systémique de l'action publique en matière de développement local. Ce qui rend nécessaire le renforcement des processus démocratiques autour des fonds miniers pour réaliser les objectifs de développement au niveau local et communautaire. Pour asseoir et renforcer les processus délibératifs et participatifs, il y a une nécessité d'impliquer les populations ainsi que les autres parties prenantes dans la mise en place des fonds, l'identification des secteurs prioritaires d'intervention, le choix et la mise en œuvre des microprojets, l'évaluation de la gestion des fonds miniers, l'évaluation de la mise en œuvre et de l'efficacité des projets de développement initiés avec les fonds miniers. Mieux, les populations bénéficiaires doivent avoir un pouvoir décisionnel de l'élaboration des fonds comme le FISE à leur mise en œuvre, et obtenir la garantie d'une prise en compte effective de leurs avis et d'une application de leurs décisions lors de la tenue des assemblées locales.

En laissant le pouvoir décisionnel exclusivement aux seuls élus lors des assemblées locales, il y a toujours le risque d'un décalage ou d'une inadéquation entre les décisions des élus d'une part et, d'autre part les besoins exprimés et les attentes réelles des populations qu'ils représentent. Il faut dire que dans les assemblées représentatives locales, tous les participants ne disposent pas des mêmes ressources (informations, connaissances, expertise, etc.), des mêmes intérêts (politiques en particulier), ni des capacités d'influence identiques. À ce titre, d'une part, tous les élus locaux ne peuvent pas être mis sur un même pied d'égalité ; et d'autre part ; les décisions prises par les assemblées représentatives en matière de politique de développement communautaire reflètent en général les positions des élus disposant de ressources supérieures à celles des autres (en plus de leur légitimité électorale). Pour favoriser plus d'équité et d'égalité (de genre en l'occurrence) dans les choix effectués par les élus et éviter ainsi que certains groupes de citoyens ou certaines catégories de populations soient injustement défavorisés, il faudrait accorder un caractère délibératif aux choix émis par la majorité des citoyens (ordinaires) lors des procédures de concertations, de consultations, de débats publics argumentés. Ce caractère délibératif doit également s'appliquer aux consensus obtenus entre les acteurs sociaux.

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Homeownership Intention among Igbo Ethnic Group in Ilorin

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Abstract

The extant literature has previously shown that attitude towards homeownership and pressure from reference groups may significantly affect individual's homeownership intention especially in many western societies. The authors assumed that Nigerian citizens might also have similar experience especially for non-indigenes living and working in states in geo-political zones outside their own ethnic areas. The study surveyed 300 members of Igbo ethnic group residents in Ilorin metropolis. Simple random sampling method was adopted and data was gathered through structured questionnaire. The authors questioned participants about their attitude and intention towards owning personal home in the city. They also asked participants to relate to questions about the perceived easiness to acquire properties for personal use in the city and about the social (families' and relatives') pressure on their homeownership intention. Analytical techniques include simple frequency and percentage distributions, pearson chi-square and independent t-test. Research findings show that while many sampled participants have positive attitude towards homeownership in Ilorin, length of stay in the city, level of education and the perceived control affect homeownership intention among the participants. A surprising result was that subjective norms appear to exert little or no influence on participants' homeownership intention. Hence, the finding demonstrates the interactive nature of social influence/personal norms dimension in homeownership through availability of and access to information and sources of homeownership funding.

Key words: Homeownership, Igbo ethnic group, education, subjective norms, Ilorin

Résumé

La littérature existante a déjà montré que l'attitude envers l'accession à la propriété et la pression des groupes de référence peuvent affecter de manière significative l'intention d'accession à la propriété d'un individu, en particulier dans de nombreuses sociétés occidentales.

Les auteurs ont supposé que les citoyens nigériens pourraient également avoir une expérience similaire, en particulier pour les non-indigènes vivant et travaillant dans des États situés dans des zones géopolitiques en dehors de leurs propres zones ethniques. L'étude a interrogé 300 membres du groupe ethnique Igbo résidant dans la métropole d'Ilorin. Une méthode d'échantillonnage aléatoire simple a été adoptée et les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'un questionnaire structuré. Les auteurs ont interrogé les participants sur leur attitude et leur intention de posséder une maison personnelle dans la ville. Ils ont également demandé aux participants de se rapporter à des questions sur la facilité perçue d'acquérir des propriétés à usage personnel dans la ville et sur la pression sociale (familles et proches) sur leur intention d'accession à la propriété. Les techniques analytiques comprennent des distributions simples de fréquence et de pourcentage, le chi carré de Pearson et le test t indépendant. Les résultats de la recherche montrent que si de nombreux participants échantillonnés ont une attitude positive envers l'accession à la propriété à Ilorin, la durée du séjour dans la ville, le niveau d'éducation et le contrôle perçu affectent l'intention d'accession à la propriété chez les participants. Un résultat surprenant est que les normes subjectives semblent exercer peu ou pas d'influence sur l'intention des participants d'accéder à la propriété. Par conséquent, les résultats démontrent la nature interactive de la dimension influence sociale/normes personnelles dans l'accession à la propriété grâce à la disponibilité et à l'accès à l'information et aux sources de financement pour l'accession à la propriété.

Mots-clés : *Accession à la propriété, ethnie Igbo, éducation, normes subjectives, Ilorin*

Introduction

Investment in landed property is a complex, risky and major personal and familial decision-issue for many Nigerian citizens, especially for members of Igbo ethnic group living and working in states/regions outside their ethnic conclaves. Since the post-civil war years, and due to lack of infrastructure, livelihood devastation and poverty caused by the civil war, Igbo people have been largely diasporic (Muoh, 2017; Uduaku, 2002; Odi, 1999). Though many young Igbo have left their home-states/regions heading towards Europe and America, many more have moved into other regions/states across the country. However, the memory of the civil war, the indigene-settler contentions and largely the unfounded stereotypes against the Igbos make issues like homeownership in host states an important subject of concern. We view homeownership as outright buying of a house or an incremental construction of one either for the purpose of personal use or for rental. With the exception of Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, it is hard to find members of Igbo ethnic group constructing or buying houses in other states of the federation. This behaviour has been related to many inter-ethnic relational factors. Some authors also believe the issue is about a general mutual mistrust between members of Igbo ethnic group and people of other ethnic groups (Nwuba, Kalu and Umeh, 2015). It has also been linked to the seeming lack of confidence in the power of the state to

protect citizens from any discriminatory attitudes (Alumona, 2019). According to a Human Right Watch (HRW, 2006) report:

Discriminatory practices have become so widespread that many officials do not think of them as being in any way improper, let alone illegal or unconstitutional. Far from condemning discriminatory practices, state and local governments throughout Nigeria have enshrined the maltreatment of non-indigenes in official government policy.

The seeming impotency of the state to protect citizens against discriminations in spite of the constitutional provisions has importance in relation to broader issues of accessibility and fair market pricing of landed properties for non-indigenes. An identity marker of non-indigene may lead to higher price-differentials and low accessibility to formal/official information about landed properties for non-locals. Nevertheless, the existence of discrimination against non-indigenes tells us little about their homeowner intentions in their host environment, which in this study is, determined by attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms.

This article analyses homeownership intention among the Igbos living in Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria – a predominantly Yoruba city but grouped among states in North-central Nigeria. Generally, attitude and subjective norms may have important effect on individual homeownership decisions. Usman, Garba and Abdullahi (2017) have studied the psychosocial factors associated with financing personal home as variables of homeownership decision. They found subjective norms to be the most significant determinant of aspiring homeowners' intention, besides the influence of attitude towards mortgage financing, which might, in part, be understood as consequence of belief in mortgage financing system. Similarly, Cohen, Lindblad, Paik and Quercia (2009) have found that favourable attitude, subjective norms and greater perception of control were all associated with homeownership intention. Whereas there are large scholarly works in the field of homeownership on the role of subjective norms and attitude on intention to purchase, until now the intersectionality of ethnicity, subjective norms, attitude and homeownership intention has not been examined at a developing economy level. In this study, we therefore examined the attitude, perception and subjective norms of members of Igbo ethnic group residents in Ilorin towards acquisition of a permanent abode in a capital city in North-central, Nigeria.

Previous studies addressed mainly determinants of individual decisions concerning homeownership, while very few research have considered the influence of subjective norms (especially) in multi-ethnic societies such as Nigeria. Research on the belief of perceived benefits of homeownership have been shown to be a strong indicator of expectation to own a house (McCabe, 2018; Drew, 2014). As positive as the perceived benefit of homeownership may be for both social and economic wellbeing of owners,

the beliefs and opinions of close relatives and significant others have also been shown to exert significant influence on purchase intention of residential properties (Yoke, Mun, Peng and Yean, 2018) and on the decisions to migrate from “renting to owning” (Cohen et al., 2009; Dieleman and Everaers, 1994).

In both developed and emerging economies studies on behaviour towards homeownership have generated mixed results. In general, it has been found that purchase or rental intention tends (1) to be influenced by mandatory policies and regulatory pressures that promote such behavior (Zheng, Cheng and Ju, 2019); (2) that children, reference group and perceived behavioral control have greater influence on intention to acquire houses (Al-Nahdi et al., 2015), and (3) relevant others’ high value of homeownership is directly linked to subjective well-being associated with becoming a home-owner (Foye, Clapham and Gabrieli, 2018). Furthermore, the authors are aware of just one study based on Nigerian environment. In a research focused on investigating potential homeowners’ intention to use mortgage to finance homeownership, Usman et al. (2017) found significant association between subjective norms and homeownership financing through mortgage among aspiring homeowners in Bauchi, Nigeria. None to the best of our knowledge have analysed homeownership behavioural intention of a specific ethnic group in a state or region outside their ethnic domain.

At present, what role close family members and friends play on the homeownership intention of members of Igbo ethnic groups is unknown. In other words, how subjective norms influence the attitude and action of members of Igbo ethnic group in their drive to acquire landed properties in states other than their own is yet to be sufficiently explored in Nigeria. Nigeria consists of 36 federated states and a federal capital territory. Out of these Igbo ethnic group occupy six out of the 36 states. However, every state of the federation has a large retinue of Igbo people that have migrated from the eastern region of Nigeria. The theory of planned behaviour offers a very useful theoretical framework to analyse homeownership intention and behaviour of the Igbo residents in Ilorin; since, as Hill, Mann and Wearing (1996:315) noted Theory of Planned Behaviour “is a theory for making prediction regarding the formulation of and execution of behavioral plan”.

Theory and Hypotheses

Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is one of the most frequently adopted theories to examine human actions about homeownership, such as young people’s green housing purchase intention (Zhang, Chen, Wu, Zhang and Song, 2018); old people’s senior housing intention (Huang, 2011) and moving from renting to owning houses (Cohen et al., 2009; Dieleman and Everaers, 1994). The theory, developed by Ajzen (1985) as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), states that an individual action or behaviour towards a particular object is a function of his/her

intention, and that intention on the other hands is caused by three determining variables: belief about the behaviour (attitude), pressure from referent groups (subjective norms) and perceived behavioural control. The theory predicts that an action will be performed if an individual positively evaluate the conduct, considers the opinion of specific people that are important to him positive about the action and how much control the individual believes s/he has over the intending behaviour. Many empirical analyses in advanced societies of Europe and America lend credence to this (Si, Shi, Tang, Wen, Miao & Duan, 2019; Ajzen, 2011; Carmark & Lewis-Moss, 2009; Goulet, Lampron, Marciel and Ross, 2003).

In this paper, the authors use three assumptions derived out of the theory of planned behaviour on which they form hypotheses: (1) positive evaluation of likely benefits of constructing/buying a house in Ilorin reinforces homeownership intentions among the Igbo residents. (2) If most friends and relatives considered important think positively about homeownership in Ilorin, this will encourage building/buying of houses among the Igbo residents. (3) Negative perception of easiness to buy or construct personal houses for members of the Igbo ethnic group working/living in Ilorin will induce low homeownership drives.

Attitude Hypothesis

In many social sciences works attitude is expected to predict behaviour. While sociological studies have noted low correlations between attitude and behaviour, empirical findings in psychological investigations ascribe stronger causal relationship between the two (Chaiklin, 2011). Attitude, as Cohen (1966) so nicely phrased it about six decades ago, is the disposition to view things in a particular way and act accordingly.

In our study, attitude of members of the Igbo ethnic group towards acquisition of personal houses in Ilorin is expected to influence homeownership intention. One, we expect older members of Igbo ethnic group who had stay longer (at least more than five years) in the city of Ilorin to have more confidence in the host community with the prospects of acquiring personal landed properties in the community. Two, longer staying Igbo individuals would have direct contacts with the indigenes; create more personal relationships and established contacts with the indigenes of Ilorin emirate. Therefore they are expected to have more understanding of the benefits and costs of buying/constructing houses in the city. These individuals have directly experienced the culture and the people of the city, a strong factor (in changing one's beliefs about others) that increases the chance of developing positive attitude towards homeownership in this context. We therefore hypothesized that *there is a significant difference in attitude towards homeownership between member of Igbo ethnic group that have stayed/lived longer in Ilorin than those that have only lived/stayed in the city for few years*

Having high school degrees is linked to becoming homeowners later in life (Goodman and Mayer, 2018). Loudenback (2018) observed a strong relationship between earning a college degree and buying a home for many citizens of the United States. Myers, Painter and Zissimopoulos' (2016) research found a distinctly different pattern of educational influence on homeownership among different racial groups in America. While education attainments were found to have no significant causal effect on homeownership among the Hispanic, high school education and college degree have 15.7% and 28.5%-point higher rate of homeownership than those without these levels of education. Similar results were found for highly educated African Americans with much higher impact for the lowly educated blacks. Thus, the findings from literature on homeownership confirmed that higher education predict likelihood of homeownership attainment. Nevertheless, because little or no attention has been placed on confirming or disproving this finding in Nigeria, it becomes imperative to investigate the relationship between education of the participants and homeownership intention. We therefore expect that highly educated members of Igbo groups in Ilorin would develop positive attitude towards homeownership in the city. Hence, this study presents the following proposition: *homeownership intention is significantly associated with educational attainment for Igbo residents in Ilorin.*

Subjective Norms Hypothesis

The normative belief dimension is important for this study because, theory of planned behavior assumes that individual's "normative beliefs regarding different social referents combine to produce an overall perceived social pressure or subjective norms" (Ajzen, 2011: 1123). In this regard a critical factor about a person's intention to perform an action is normative belief – a belief that one's significant others wants one to (or not to) perform a particular behavior. This belief is, nevertheless, counterbalanced by the individual's willingness to comply with the expectations of (or pressure from) these social referents. Many empirical researches suggest that there exists a significant relationship between subjective norms and performance of actions (Foye et al., 2018; Levy and Lee, 2004; Lam, Pine and Baum, 2003). A recent study has also shown that housing intention is encouraged by support from social circle of close relatives and friends (Zheng, Cheng & Ju, 2019). Nigeria is largely a collectivistic society with many individual decisions shaped and reshaped by family members and close associates. Consequently this study expects *subjective norms to be significantly associated with homeownership intention among Igbo residents in Ilorin.*

Perceived Behavioural Control

In theory of planned behaviour, perceived behavioural control is described as “the extent to which people believe they can perform a given behavior if they are inclined to do so” (Ajzen, 2011, p.1116). In Nigeria, numerous structural and unstructural challenges may constrain attempts by non-indigene resident outside their states of origin from buying/constructing their own houses. In this study, we focus on two: availability of information about process of homeownership and perceived easiness to own a house/home in Ilorin. Regarding the first, that is availability of and easy access to information about homeownership, people might feel more control about their ability to achieve homeownership in states where information about land and landed properties are easily available and accessible by indigenes and non-indigene residents alike. Therefore, we expect that *perceived availability of information about landed properties is significantly associated with homeownership intention for Igbo residents in Ilorin.*

The second indication of perceived behavioural control for the study is the perceived easiness to be a homeowner in Ilorin for non-indigenes (such as members of Igbo ethnic group) in the city. Generally, in Nigeria, the dichotomy between indigenes and non-indigenes-residents is emphasized in all spheres of lives but particularly reflect more in how indigenes relate with other groups (non-indigenes) with regards to land and landed properties. Though, the constitution of Nigeria allows all citizens freedom to live, work and own properties in any part of the country, in practice this is often limited by indigene-non-indigene contestations. These contestations to a large extent are implicated in the challenges faced by non-indigenes in the process of homeownership. We thus hypothesize that *perceived easiness to own landed properties is significantly associated with homeownership intention for Igbo residents in Ilorin.*

Data and Methods

In this study we examine the aforementioned hypotheses using primary data collected from randomly selected Igbo residents in Ilorin metropolis. Samples were randomly selected from registered members' names on the list of Igbo socio-cultural association in the city.

Procedure and Participants

We used primary data collected from a cross section of Igbo residents in Ilorin Metropolis for this study. Between October and November 2018 we made repeated calls to the heads of 3 Igbo socio-cultural associations in Ilorin to request the lists of registered members of the groups. The lists once obtained were turned to a sampling

frame where participants for the study were selected randomly. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. All participants responded to questions about attitude, intention, perceived easiness to build or buy personal homes, availability of information about homeownership as well as perceived influence of relative or friends on the decision to acquire a home in the city.

The sample used in the analysis comprised of 141 randomly selected members of Igbo ethnic group resident in the city. All participants were residents in the city. An individual was considered resident in the city if s/he has lived in the city for more than twelve calendar months and not just visiting a relative or friend. In terms of socio-demographic profile, the mean age, mean annual income and mean year of residence in the study area is 38.1 years, #293,758 and 14 years 4months respectively. Most (68.8%) respondents were male while only 31.2% were female. This statistics lend itself to public knowledge about Igbo travelers and business people. Most Igbo men are reputed for their knowledge and resolve to navigate difficult terrains in search of livelihood opportunities. Though Igbo women also migrate and settle in other environment for business purposes, fewer women are known for this. About forty six percent (46.1%) of the participants were educated up to senior secondary school certificate level; fewer (23.4%) hold either university degrees or higher national diploma. Some (15.6%) of the respondents have no education at all while fewer (3.5%) had only primary school education. Thus, added together most of the respondents can be considered literate. Over 77% engage in trading/business, 14.3% were civil servants and 8.6% were artisans.

Measures

Homeownership intention measures. Participants were asked to respond to a list of questions related to homeownership intention (for examples, "I own a home in Ilorin", "I have the intention to own (more) houses in Ilorin"). All items were measured with yes or no responses. The intention variable used in the study was computed by taking the frequency and percentage distributions of the responses.

Attitude towards the act of acquiring a home in Ilorin. Participants reported their attitude towards homeownership in the city of Ilorin using dispositional measure of owning a house in the city as "favourable or "unfavourable", "valueable" or "unvaluable", "good business" measured through yes or no responses. For the analysis, we calculated both the frequencies and percentages distributions of participant responses.

Perceived pressure from significant others, to assess the influence of subjective norms on the intention and actions of the Igbo members in Ilorin to acquire a home in the city, participants responded to both general and specific subjective norms measures. Samples

of questions participants responded to can be found below in table 1. For analysis, frequency and percentage distributions of these questions were computed.

Perceived behavioural control over homeownership. Participants responded to questions about perceived easiness to own a home (e.g. “I find it easy to own a house in Ilorin”) and the perceived easiness to access information about landed properties (e.g. Information about landed property in Ilorin is available and easy to access). Participants were provided with yes or no responses to indicate their views about perceived control over homeownership in the city. For analysis, we calculated both the frequencies and percentages distributions of participant responses.

Results I (Descriptive)

Homeownership Intention among Igbo Residents in Ilorin City

The total sample for the study is 141. Because of the nature of the questions/statements used to measure homeownership intention, not all participants responded to all questions/statements. Table 1 highlights the frequency and percentage distributions for the statements about homeownership intention of Igbo residents in Ilorin.

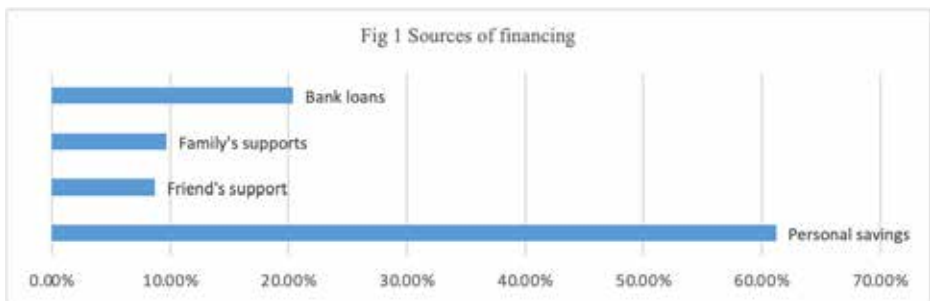


Table 1 Distributions of Homeownership intention among Igbo Residents in Ilorin

Items	Frequency	Percentage
I own a home in Ilorin		
Yes	86	61.0
No	55	39.0
Total	141	100.0
Have Intention to own (more) houses		
Yes	107	89.2
No	13	10.8
Total	120	100.0
Location of the Property		
Residential Area	53	58.9
Outskirt	29	32.2
Central Business District	8	8.9
Total	90	100.0
Source of Finance of Acquired Property		
Personal Savings	63	61.2
Friends Support	9	8.7
Family Support	10	9.7
Bank Loan	21	20.4
Total	103	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 2019

The result from table 1 shows majority Igbo residents (61.0%) own at least a house in Ilorin. Sources of homeownership financing available to and utilized by Igbo residents in Ilorin are diverse, and the most commonly mentioned source(s) are illustrated in fig 1. Most (58.9%) of the properties owned are located within residential area. In addition, table 1 also illustrates that an overwhelming majority (89.2%) of the sampled Igbo resident in Ilorin including those that already owned a home intend to acquire (more) in Ilorin.

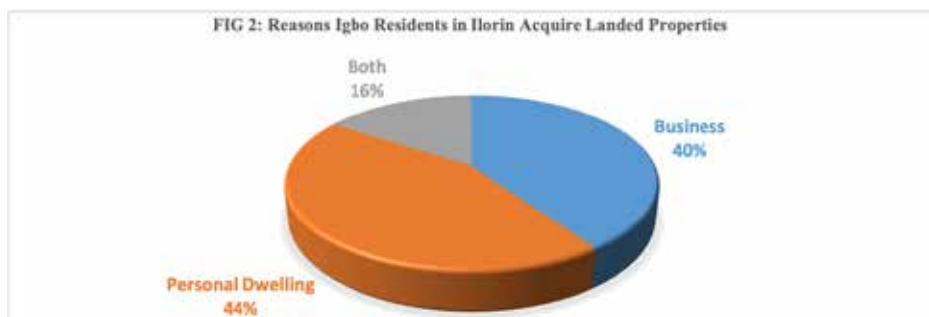


Fig 2 above shows the purpose behind the intention to own a building/house in Ilorin by Igbo residents.

The chart shows that while 40% of Igbo residents sampled owned a building for business purpose, more than 40% do so for dwelling reasons; and 16% owned landed properties for both residential and business reasons.

Attitude of Igbo towards Homeownership in Ilorin

Having found out that majority of Igbo residents in Ilorin have the intention to own a home and/or wish to add more, the study now analyze Igbo attitude towards homeownership in the city. The questions that guided this section of the analysis is do the Igbo residents have positive/negative attitude towards homeownership in Ilorin? Do they find landed property lucrative or otherwise? Is landed property perceived positively as a good business among the sample or not? Table 2 highlights the frequency and percentage distributions of responses elicited from (Igbo) participants in the study.

Table 2 Attitudes towards Homeownership among Igbo resident

Items	Frequency	Percentage
It is positive influence for me to own a home in Ilorin		
Yes	124	87.9
No	17	12.1
Total	141	100.0
I would like to own more houses in Ilorin		
Yes	108	76.6
No	33	23.4
Total	141	100.0
Owning a house in Ilorin is good business		
Yes	108	76.6
No	33	23.4
Total	141	100.0
I am favourably disposed to own more houses in Ilorin		
Yes	94	67.1
No	46	32.9
total	140	100.0
I think it is valuable to possess any type of landed properties in Ilorin		
Yes	108	77.1
No	32	22.9
Total	140	100.0
I think it is a trend to own a house in Ilorin among the Igbo people		
Yes	104	74.3
No	36	25.7
Total	140	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 2019

Most 87.9% (sampled) Igbo residents in Ilorin indicate that owning a house in the city has positive influence on them. Hence, a good majority (76.6%) indicated that they would like to acquire (more) landed property (ies) in the city. The exact numbers of respondents (76.6%) think that buying/constructing a house is a lucrative venture. Whereas 77.1% thinks it is valuable to own home in Ilorin, only 22.9% believe otherwise. Consequently, more than 74% of sampled Igbo think homeownership is trending for Igbo residents in the city. The above findings show that Igbo residents in Ilorin have positive attitude towards acquisition of landed properties in Ilorin. The influence of length of stay in the city and educational qualifications on attitude towards homeownership for the sampled participants is analysed later.

Perceived Control over Homeownership for the Igbo Residents

Perceived behavioral control was examined at two levels: (1) perceived easiness to own and control acquired landed properties and; (2) availability of and easy accessibility to information about homeownership for non-indigenes in Ilorin.

Perceived Easiness to acquire Houses in Ilorin

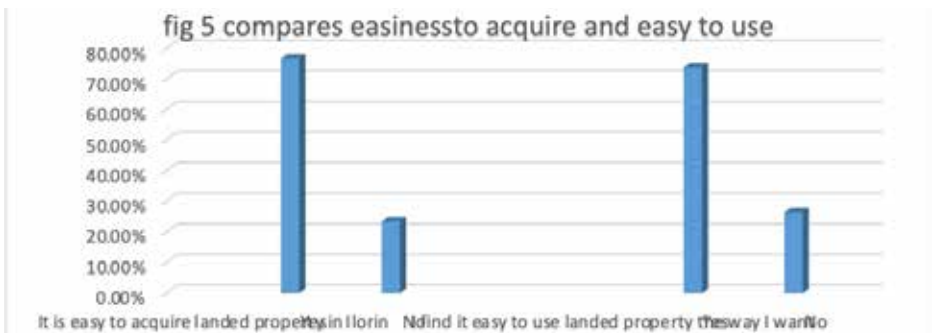
Table 3 presents data on the perceived easiness to acquire landed property in Ilorin for Igbo residents. Participants' (n=141) views were examined by looking at the frequency and percentage distributions of each of the four items/statement designed to measure perceived easiness to own a home.

Table 3 Perceived easiness to own a home in Ilorin for Igbo Residents

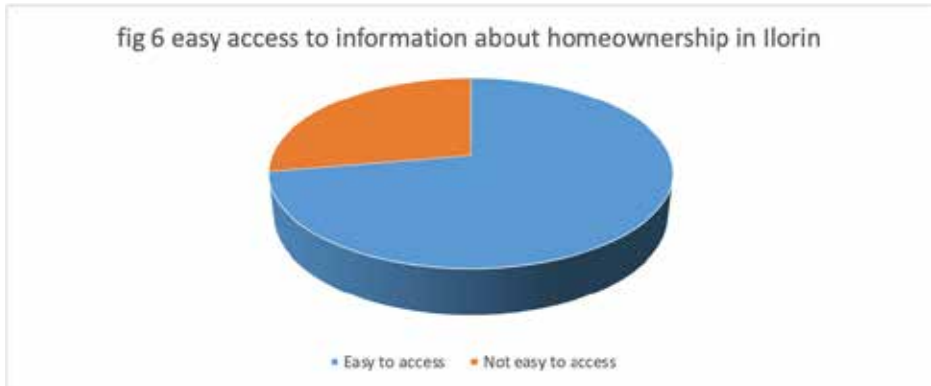
Items	Frequency	Percentage
I find it easy to own a house in Ilorin		
Yes	108	76.6
No	33	23.4
Total	141	100.0
I find it easy to use my house the way I want		
Yes	104	73.8
No	37	26.2
Total	141	100.0
Information about landed property in Ilorin is available and easy to access		
Yes	102	72.3
No	39	27.7
Total	141	100.0
Using own landed property is more flexible for business than renting		
Yes	123	87.2
No	18	12.8
Total	141	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 2019

Fig 5 juxtaposed two statements that intended to elicit response concerning easiness to own a home for the Igbo group in Ilorin. The first is the statement “it is easy to own a house in Ilorin” and the second “I find it easy to use my house the way I want”. Compared together the two set of data present a similar pattern of distributions. Out of the 141 sampled participants, just a little above 23% think it is difficult to own a house in Ilorin and 26% indicated that they may not be able to put their houses for whatever use they deemed fit.



In furtherance of the analysis on perceived easy to acquire, fig 6 and fig 7 show pie charts illustration of participants responses on easy access to important information about landed properties in Ilorin and the perceived control over usage for Igbo residents in Ilorin respectively.



As indicated above, fig 6 illustrates participants' views in response to the statement about access to information about landed properties in Ilorin. From the sample of 141 participants, 72.3% think information about landed properties in Ilorin is easily accessible. In contrast, just 27.7% stated that such information is difficult to access for them.

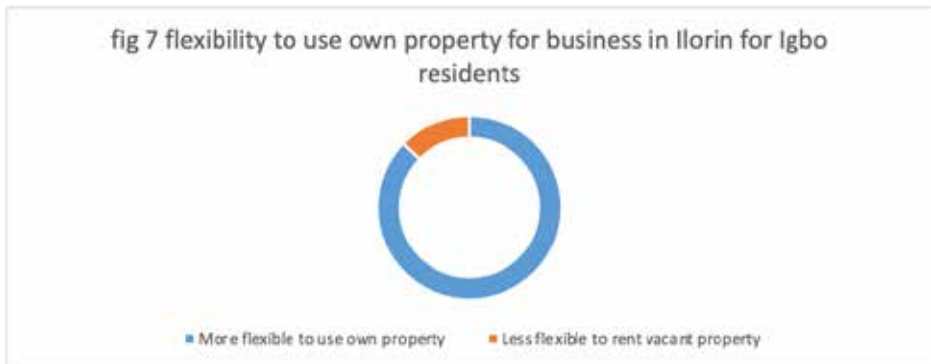


Fig 7 shows diagrammatic representation of participants' responses about whether usage of personal/acquired landed property is more flexible for business than renting an apartment for the same purpose in Ilorin. From the chart it is clear that the majority of participants think it is more flexible for Igbo business owners in Ilorin to use personal property for business with just about 13% who thought otherwise. Hence, most Igbo residents in Ilorin have perceived behavioral control on homeownership.

Subjective Norms and Homeownership among Igbo in Ilorin

Decision to acquire landed property anywhere is an important one that involves deep reflections and influence of people considered significant in individual's life. In spite of the seeming positive attitudes towards homeownership and the perceived behavioural control by the participants (Igbo residents in Ilorin), it is considered imperative to examine the influence of family members, friends and relatives on the decision to own a house/home in the city of Ilorin. In table 4, data is presented on influence of subjective norms on homeownership intention of Igbo residents in Ilorin.

Table 4 distributions of influence of subjective norms on homeownership among Igbo residents in Ilorin

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Important people to me do want me to own a house in Ilorin	107	76.4
Yes	22	22.9
No	140	100.0
Total		
Important people to me do think it is a good idea for own a house in Ilorin		
Yes	103	73.0
No	38	27.0
Total	141	100.0
I feel am under pressure to build a house in Ilorin		
Yes	56	39.7
No	85	60.3
Total	141	100.0
It is expected of me to build a house in Ilorin		
Yes	89	63.1
No	52	36.9
Total	141	100.0
It is expected of me to discuss my intention to build a house in Ilorin with my family		
Yes	109	77.3
No	32	22.7
Total	141	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

From a sample of 140, 76.4% indicated that they are encouraged to own a personal home/house in the city by closed relatives and friends. Only 23.4% stated that their significant others are against such behaviour. Similarly, 73% of the sample indicated that family and friends think acquisition of landed properties in Ilorin is good idea. However, only 39.7% feel social pressure from family and friends to build a house in Ilorin. More than 60% do not feel any kind of pressure from their significant others. This shows that the intention to acquire landed properties in Ilorin is solely based on personal decisions for most Igbo residents in the city. Furthermore, many (63.1%) Igbo residents in Ilorin stated that relatives and friends expected them to acquire landed property in Ilorin. Finally, majority (77.3%) indicated that their intention to acquire landed property in city is expected to be shared with family members. Consequently, subjective norms have a great influence on homeownership intention of members of Igbo ethnic group in Ilorin.

Result II (Hypotheses Testing)

Hypothesis 1a: *there is a significant difference in attitude towards homeownership between members of Igbo ethnic group that have stayed/lived longer in Ilorin than those that have only lived/stayed in the city for fewer years.*

Table 5 Summary of t-test results comparing long and short stay in Ilorin on homeownership intention/attitude

	Length of stay in Ilorin	N	X	SD	df	t	p
It is positive influence for me to own a home in Ilorin	5 years or more	97	6.01	0.78	110	-4.97	<.005
	Less than 5 years	44	3.76	0.95			
Owning a house in Ilorin is good business	5 years or more	97	8.11	1.22	110	7.28	<.005
	Less than 5 years	44	4.32	0.67			

To test hypothesis 1a an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between Igbo residents that have stayed long in Ilorin and those with short stay (less than 5years) in relation to their attitude towards homeownership. The test revealed a statistically significant difference between the group

with longer years of stay (more than five years) and those with shorter years ($t = -4.97$, $df = 110$, $p < .05$). Members of Igbo ethnic group that have stayed for more than five years ($M = 6.01$, $SD = .78$) showed significantly better positive attitude to homeownership intention than did those that have stayed for less than five years ($M = 3.76$, $SD = .95$). Similarly, the result show that Igbo residents who have spent more years and those with shorter stay differ significantly on the whether owning a house in Ilorin is a good business or not ($t = 7.28$, $df = 110$, $p < .05$). This means that Igbo residents with an average of 8.11 years living in Ilorin perceived homeownership in the city as a worthwhile business investment than their counterparts with an average of only 4.32 years residency.

Hypothesis 1b: *Attitude towards homeownership is significantly associated with educational attainment for Igbo residents in Ilorin.*

Table 6 Association between Educational Qualification and Homeownership Intention

	Values	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)	Phi and Cramer V test of Association between educational qualifications and Homeownership Intentions		
Pearson Chi-Square	85.21	1	.000	Phi	Values	702
Likelihood Ration	60.13	1	.000		Approx. sig	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	47.19	1	.000	Cramer V	Values	346
No. of Valid Cases	141				Approx. sig	.000

0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.33

A Pearson chi-square test was conducted and shows that no cell has expected count less than 5 and the minimum expected count is 7.33. The overall results revealed that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and homeownership intention among the sample (Chi square value = 85.21, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). This means that a significantly larger proportion of educated members of Igbo ethnic group resident in Ilorin indicated that they intend to own one or more houses in the city. Moreover the values of Phi and Cramer V is $p < 0.001$ suggesting a strong associations between educational qualifications and homeownership intention

Hypothesis 2: homeownership intention is significantly associated with subjective norms among Igbo residents in Ilorin.

Table 7 Association between Subjective Norms and Homeownership Intention

	Values	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)	Phi and Cramer V test of Association between educational qualifications and Homeownership Intentions		
Pearson Chi-Square	.351	1	.350	Phi	Values	.089
Likelihood Ration	.351	1	.350		Approx. sig	.421
Linear-by-Linear Association	.411	1	.351	Cramer V	Values	.077
No. of Valid Cases	140				Approx. sig	.000

The second hypothesis which predicted an association between subjective norms and homeownership among the Igbo residents in Ilorin was tested and the result is reported above. The finding shows that subjective norms and homeownership intention for the participants are not statistically associated ($X = .351$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$). Phi and Cramer V values confirm a weak relationship between the two variables. Therefore, we conclude that homeownership intention of Igbo residents in Ilorin is not predicated on the influence of subjective norms. Hence, the decision to construct or buy a home for the sample is purely personal; likely predicated on investment or personal comfort motives.

Hypothesis 3a: perceived availability of information about landed properties is significantly associated with homeownership intention for Igbo residents in Ilorin.

Table 8 Association between availability of information and Homeownership Intention

	Values	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)	Phi and Cramer V test of Association between educational qualifications and Homeownership Intentions		
Pearson Chi-Square	70.1	1	.000	Phi	Values	.702
Likelihood Ration	50.11	1	.000		Approx. sig	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	47.43	1	.000	Cramer V	Values	.497
No. of Valid Cases	141				Approx. sig	.000

Hypothesis on behavioural control is tested at two levels. The first is hypothesis on the relationship between availability of information on landed properties and homeownership intention. This hypothesis was tested and the result is presented above. The table clearly shows that there is a significant association between availability of information and homeownership intention ($X = 70.1$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). This suggests that homeownership behavior/intention of members of Igbo ethnic group in Ilorin is subjected to availability of and access to information about homeownership. Findings indicate that necessary information about homeownership is not shrouded in secrecy. Information about homeownership is believed to be available for interested individuals residing in the state. The phi and Cramer V values support this claim of strong association between availability of information and homeownership intention among the Igbo residents in Ilorin.

Hypothesis 3b: perceived easiness to own landed properties is significantly associated with homeownership intention for Igbo residents in Ilorin.

Table 9 Association between perceived easiness to own a house and Homeownership Intention

	Values	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)	Phi and Cramer V test of Association between perceived easiness to own a house and Homeownership Intentions		
Pearson Chi-Square	75.21	1	.000	Phi	Values	628
Likelihood Ration	55.03	1	.000		Approx. sig	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.17	1	.000	Cramer V	Values	546
No. of Valid Cases	140				Approx. sig	.000

Finally, it was hypothesized that perceived easiness to own a house is significantly associated with homeownership intention. This hypothesis was tested and the result is presented in the above table. The result ($X = 75.21$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) shows that there is a significant relationship between perceived easiness to own a house and homeownership intention of the Igbo people in Ilorin. The less cumbersome people believed homeownership involved the more likely they feel self-assured (or empowered) that they can be homeowners.

Discussion

In this paper, we attempted an understanding of homeownership intention of one of the most diasporic groups in Nigeria: the Igbo people of Southeastern region of Nigeria. Using a combination of three assumptions derived out of the theory of planned behaviour we hypothesized that: (1) positive evaluation of likely benefits of constructing/buying a house in Ilorin reinforces homeownership intentions among the Igbo residents. (2) Subjective norm is significantly associated with homeownership intention among Igbo residents in Ilorin. (3) Negative perception of easiness to buy or construct personal houses for members of the Igbo ethnic group working/living in Ilorin will induce low homeownership drives.

The first hypothesis was based on attitude construct of the theory of planned behavior. We hypothesized that members of Igbo ethnic group's attitude towards homeownership in Ilorin vary by both the number of years of residence in the city and level of formal education. Thus we tested the hypothesis in two ways. First, we compared the effect of participants' length of stay (number of years of residence) in Ilorin on attitude towards homeownership. We find that increased number of years of residence in the city (>5years) have significant effect on attitude towards homeownership. That suggests attitudinal differences towards homeownership between the group of Igbo residents that have more years of stay in the city and the group that recently chose to live in the city. Members of Igbo groups that have spent more than five years in Ilorin tended to have positive intention towards homeownership in the city than those that recently relocated to the city. The second hypothesis about attitude concerns whether attitude towards homeownership was associated with educational qualifications of the sample. We found that attitude towards homeownership of members of Igbo ethnic group in the city is associated with levels of education. Participants with low formal education appear to be less likely to have positive attitude towards homeownership in the city. This greatly contrasts homeownership intention/attitude of participants with a higher educational qualification. Nevertheless, similar to general notion that attitude has positive effects on performance of behaviours (Al-Mamun, Mohiuddin, Bin Ahmad, Thursany & Fazal, 2018; Mei, Ling, & Piew, 2012), our research shows that in housing behavior, attitude has positive influence on homeownership intentions.

Numerous other explanatory variables, apart from individual personal attitude, can influence homeownership intentions in less economically advanced societies like Nigeria. One of such is pressures from family members and close associates who are generally regarded as significant others – subjective norms. Individual's decision making and behavioural tendencies are highly subjected to the beliefs and supports of family and other persons considered significant (Utami, 2017). In consonance with the theory of planned behaviour, our data affords us to explore the effects of subjective norms on

homeownership intentions of the participants. We hypothesized that homeownership intention is significantly associated with subjective norms among Igbo residents in Ilorin. Surprisingly, our findings did not support this hypothesis and, it is a direct opposite of Zheng, Cheng and Ju's (2019) conclusion on young Chinese intention and behaviour on renting houses. Subjective norms among our participant are interceded by what Sia and Jose (2019) called personal norms. We suspect that this is due to at least two factors: (1) most Igbo are highly republican in nature (Onuoha, 2008). When individual member of Igbo residents in Ilorin wishes to own a house in the city the decision is hardly predicated on social pressures from significant others. The second reason may be due to source of financing. On investigating sources of finance for homeownership among the participants, we observed less involvement/contributions of family and friends. Rather, greater percentages of funds for homeownership among the Igbo residents in Ilorin were from personal savings and financial institutions, giving rise to individual decisions on homeownership intentions. The implication of this is that the influence of subjective norms on individual behavior may be mediated by personal experiences or norms (Sia and Jose, 2019).

Finally, does behavioural control affect homeownership intention for the Igbo residents in Ilorin? Our findings tended to lead us to conclude in the affirmative. The hypothesis on perceived behavioural control was analysed through (a) availability of information about homeownership and (b) the perceived easiness to own a home for residents of the state. Findings on both *h3a* and *h3b* are supported. Homeownership intention and perceived behavioural control are not independent for the participants in the study. In general, members of Igbo with a strong perceived control are more likely to have positive intention towards owning a house in Ilorin. This finding is consistent with previous researches which were interested in understanding housing behaviours. For example, Zheng et al (2019) show that perceived behavioural control of young people have significant effect on their renting behavior. Along the same line, Judge, Warren-Myers and Paladino (2019) find perceived behavioural control as significantly predicting intention to purchase sustainable housing among homebuyers in Australia.

Overall most Igbo people sampled in the study have positive intention to homeownership in Ilorin. The study offers important insight to homeownership behavior of one of the three major ethnic nationals in Nigeria outside their ethnic southeast region. It shows that, unlike the popular narratives in the media about anti-Igbo sentiments and marginalization (BBC, 2017), Nigerians of the Igbo extractions feel at home even in the so called Fulani/Yoruba city of Ilorin. Ethnic cleavage is one of the fault lines of the Nigerian society. It influence is easily discerned with how citizens relate with one another particularly at the level of politics, resource allocations, access to quality education and acquisition of landed properties like houses. In the context of homeownership behavior of members of Igbo ethnic group living in a north central state, our findings differ. Most participants show little ethnic considerations in favouring to

build home in the city. There even little consideration for normative beliefs which may or may not wish them to own a home in the city. Thus, in terms of contributions our study offers an empirical evidence of homeownership intention and behavior of the people of southeast Nigeria in a state outside their region – which has been severely understudied. Based on the findings, government policies that enhance safety, prosperity and the right of citizens to homeownership in every state of the federation can be stimulated.

Nevertheless, the study is limited in a number of ways. One, the study essentially focus on homeownership intention of an end-user with little attention to the institutional frames that enable or constraint citizens to achieve homeownership aspirations irrespective of gender, ethnic and religious colourations. Studies designed to understand the relations between both legal and financial frameworks that empower citizens to take up homeownership opportunities anywhere they live in Nigeria will fill important gap in knowledge. In addition, the study only focused on the Igbo groups in Ilorin. This limits the generalizability of the study to the other ethnic people in the country. Future study can include other members of ethnic groups to understand variability of homeownership intentions of Nigerians and to also general findings that offer wider/nationwide applications.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding any aspect of the study

Data availability

Data for the study are within the paper.

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Reflection on student drop-out against the backdrop of COVID-19 in the South African Educational context amongst marginalised groups of students

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Abstract

This paper aims to engage the issue of student drop-out in light of COVID-19 which has disrupted schooling at all levels and impacts heavily on students from deprived background who do not have access to technology that have become the dominant means of teaching. In engaging the issue, the paper reviews the literature on student drop-out generally to highlight the factors that have been shown to be significant in student dropping out of school at primary, secondary and university levels.

Keywords: social challenges, dropout, marginalized/impooverished communities

Résumé

Cet article vise à aborder la question du décrochage scolaire à la lumière de COVID-19 qui a perturbé la scolarisation à tous les niveaux et a un impact important sur les étudiants issus de milieux défavorisés qui n'ont pas accès à la technologie qui est devenue le moyen d'enseignement

dominant. En abordant la question, le document passe en revue la littérature sur le décrochage scolaire en général pour mettre en évidence les facteurs qui se sont avérés importants dans le décrochage scolaire aux niveaux primaire, secondaire et universitaire.

Mots-clés: défis sociaux, abandon, communautés marginalisées/appauvries

Introduction

This paper addresses current hinderances within the South African education sector that various communities and academics continue to grapple with on daily basis. Despite the mechanism, and strategies implemented by the Department of Basic Education, universities and the Department of Higher Education there is increasingly high students' dropout at an alarming rate. The existing situation is worsened due to the emergence of several social ills including the Covid-19 pandemic that has engulfed the entire world. The focus of this study is about reflection on student drop-out against the backdrop of COVID-19 in the South African Educational context amongst marginalised groups of students

that is threatening to trigger students' dropout mainly experienced by students from impoverished communities. Given the South African government interventions to keep the education sector alive, the emergence of COVID-19 has exacerbated the challenge as online classes had to be adopted across the board. The paper shows how students coming from historically marginalized communities are affected by the institutional systems, coupled with COVID-19. It also identifies support interventions at in-order to reduce the probability of dropout at both schools and universities alike.

Student dropouts continue to persist. Supporting this notion further, Tinto (1993; 2012) model identified students retention as primary drivers of student dropout. The model further adds that inability of individual to adjust to social demands and expectations within the academic climate are some of the focal point of the problems. Other notable interrelated factors influencing university students' adjustments include: students' expectations, academic staff and parents (Smith, 2004; Yorke and Longden, 2008; Palmer et al., 2009; James et al., 2010; Briggs et al., 2012; McEwan, 2015; Neeves and Hillman, 2017); the degree to which students are prepared for university-level study (Harvey et al., 2006; James et al., 2010; Briggs et al., 2012; HEPI/Unite students, 2017); and a sense of "fitting in" or belongingness (Harvey et al., 2006; Palmer et al., 2009; HEPI/Unite Students 2017). Similar remark by Kori (2015) suggests that relations with other students as well as several institutions play critical role in student dropout. For instance, students with higher level of academic or social integration are at lower risk of dropout (Chen, 2012). Similarly, school and campus environment is also cited as one of the factors that could cause stress and therefore influences dropout (Johnson et al., 2014). According to McGhie (2012)

and Kori (2015), social integration of students and other social factors are known to influence individual social psychology while integrating students add to the social embeddedness of learning. Stress levels in the college environment and emotional exhaustion, part of the burnout syndrome, could further influence dropout. Equally, students' satisfaction is also influenced by the perceived quality of education and prior individual expectations (Kori 2015:444). The cited scholars' assertions may be correct as this paper addresses the same observations. The study discussed the Vroom's Expectancy Theory (VET) to further highlight students' dropout at institutions of higher learning. Justifications for using VET stems from the fact that school attendance is linked to increasingly high students' expectations. This paper is presented in three sections namely the introductory section which presents the main conceptual frame of discussion. The key factors of the section that leads to student's dropout amongst previously marginalized students are discussed. This leads to the second section with deeper discussion of the reasons for students' dropout and the consequences thereof to the community and society at large. The discussion highlights that students' personal experiences from the time they enter school or university up until they decide to depart educational institutions; a repetitive historical occurrence that has seen academically capable student leaving higher education due to marginalizations emanating from the apartheid regime. Next, the authors examine the impact of dropout on students as well as the dire consequences on the country's economy, followed by concluding remarks. Lastly the concluding remarks were outlined based on the recommendations.

Reasons and factors causing student dropout

According to Hartnack (2017) literature suggest that from the USA, there is high dropout rates for people from poor neighbourhoods where social amenities are limited, housing is run-down and rented rather than owned, crime is high. (De Witte, Gabus, Thyssen, Groot and van den Brink 2013) positive or negative influences of peers groups (high achieving and motivated peers versus peers involved with crime, drugs and violence) (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack and Rock; 1986; Hammond 2007); the pull of early employment opportunities (especially in poor households where the opportunity cost of schooling is high) (De Witte et al. 2013; Rumberger 2004); and social discrimination and prejudice, especially that aimed at minority or underprivileged learners (Herbert and Reis 1999).

In South Africa, being characterised by colonial/apartheid legacy of "separate development", labour migration, "Bantu education", family and social disarticulation, coupled with continued spatial injustice and extreme levels of inequality post-1994 (see Beinart 2001; Bond 2005), exacerbated the dropout challenge, community-related factors of school dropout are particularly profound, and are linked to individual, family

and school-related factors. Moses et al. (2017) show in detail how the structure of South Africa's economy perpetuates poverty along racial and spatial lines, with black South Africans living in former "Homelands" remaining the most poor, while black and coloured communities living in townships remain similarly marginalised. They argue, along similar lines to Spaul (2015), that most black and coloured South Africans are trapped in a spatial and structural position in which access to a quality education is nearly impossible, exacerbates their poverty and inability to be progress academically. For many black South Africans living in poor rural and urban communities, teenage pregnancy is a particular risk factor, and according to Spaul (2015: 37) it "accounts for 33% of drop-out amongst female learners". Linked to high levels of teenage pregnancy is the role of negative peer pressure, pulling young people into drug/alcohol abuse, anti-social or delinquent behaviour and negative attitudes towards remaining in school. While De Witte et al. (2013) found that positive pressure from high-achieving peers can have a beneficial effect, the opposite is true where negative peer influences prevail, as they have been found to do particularly in poor urban communities in South Africa (Mnguni 2014).

In the context of growing unemployment and the knowledge that the education on offer is highly unlikely to translate into opportunities for social and economic advancement, young people are facing a crisis of expectations, which can cause many to leave school early (Spaul 2015: 37; Moses et al. 2017:3). As cited above, VET argues that individuals are expected to display specific behaviours in the learning environment based on outcomes that depicts expectations of individuals. The theory further argues that personal beliefs depend on individual's effort as an essential stimulus for good performance that spur individuals to reach the desired outcomes. VET further states that participative decisions and dropout from learning institutions by students are critical. Justification for using Vroom's Expectancy Theory for this study is that school attendance is linked to individual student's expectations and personal readiness to meet prime requirements, hence, where the learning environment is unable to support and stimulate active learning, students become demotivated and consequently decisions are made to dropout from the learning environment. This theory also maintain that the level of motivation is often determined by the value and meaning a student places on the outcome (Bergh 2011; Lunenburg 2011).

With pressure on households to earn enough for survival and other household requirements, young people renounce from school activities very early in search of income-generation opportunities (Gustafsson 2011: 23; Sabates et al. 2010: 13). In South African townships, particularly in the Cape Province, other social drawbacks including drugs and gangsterism poses a very powerful withdrawal factor for school-going youth. The crisis of "expectations", where teenagers (and whole communities) lose faith in the school value system fail to envision a healthy life and career path, not only pushes many into drug use, but also provides fertile grounds where gangsters exploit

younger generation with alternative source of belonging, self-esteem, and livelihood (Steinberg 2004; Pinnock 2016). The activities and culture established by these gangsters also have insightful negative impacts on individuals, families, and schools, reinforcing the risk of dropout on many levels. Even where gangsterism may not be ubiquitous, high levels of alcohol and substance abuse have also been linked to high rates of school dropout, for example in farming districts of the Western Cape (Fleisch et al. 2009: 41). Hartnack (2017) further asserts that family dynamics also provide several “pull-out” factors in relation to school dropout. For example, families of low socio-economic status, especially those with limited social capital, in socially and geographically marginalised positions, and where key adult members are unemployed (De Witte et al. 2013: 10), certainly struggle the most to keep their children in school. Family structure is important when it comes to staying-in or dropping out of school (Branson, Hofmeyr and Lam 2013: 13): children living in a home “where the head of the household is a parent or grandparent are much more likely to attend school than those living in other types of homes”. In international literature, it has been found that dropout is lowest amongst children growing up with two biological parents (Rumberger 1983). Learners with large numbers of siblings, however, have been found to be more at risk of dropping out (Hammond 2007: 4).

South Africa is a country which for years experienced one of the highest rates of HIV infection, and AIDS related deaths in the world. This disease, along with other related illnesses such as tuberculosis, impact severely on families – both in terms of the deaths of breadwinners and the burden this has placed on young people. Richter (2004: 26) found HIV/AIDS to have placed a burden on children to care for sick family members, and to become breadwinners in their households. Orphanhood is a major risk factor: as Fleisch et al. (2009: 44) found, 32% of children out of school have one or both parents’ dead (Case and Ardington (2006). Child-headed households are likely to be out of school, or drop out of school, than counterparts living with close adult relatives (Fleisch et al. 2009: 44). “Shocks” at family level, such as illness, death and loss of employment can play a major role in the decision to dropout (Branson et al. 2013: 12). Compounded by the Covid-19, the “shocks” becomes excessive as students are compelled to depart from education.

The educational levels of parents also plays a key factor related to the risk of student dropout (De Witte et al. 2013: 10), with studies showing that girls with more educated mothers received more schooling than those whose mothers were poorly educated (Sabates et al. 2010: 13). Likewise, Rumberger (1983) asserts that more reading material in the house resulted in less dropout (quoted in November 2010: 8). For marginalised communities in South Africa, with their multi-generation legacy of low quality “Bantu Education”, low levels of education among older generations poses a very clear risk relating to school dropout. Another important family factor is the family’s stress levels, the warmth and supportive environment. Furthermore, the level of parental support

and involvement with a student's education and life in general, as well as the "emotional climate" of the parent-child relationship has an impact school dropout, either positively or negatively depending on the nature of the relationship (De Witte et al. 2013: 11; Duchesne et al. 2009). Kori's (2015) report suggests that relations with other students and that of the institution has a role to play in student dropout, that is: students with a higher level of academic or social integration have a lower risk of dropout (Chen, 2012).

The campus environment for university students is also cited as one of the factors that could cause stress and therefore influences dropout (Johnson et al., 2014). The social integration of students in an institution is important because it refers back to the social embeddedness of learning (McGhie, 2012:27). Social risk issues refers to demographic factors associated with higher likelihood of school failure such as minority-language status, family income, parents' education and family structure. The family has been recognized as one of the contributors to children's education (Baumrind, 1971; Rumberger, 1995; Steinberg, 2001, Blondal 2014, Lowe and Dotterer (2013) also attests to the same notion that families play a crucial role in supporting adolescents' academic outcomes. Parenting practices namely parental monitoring bears sufficient positive linkages to academic findings among the minority of youth groups (Gonzalez et al. 1996; Henry et al. 2011).

Recent studies reveal varying association between high poverty rates and students' dropout (Dieltiens and Meny-Gilbert, 2008/09). Equally, several factors such as race, gender and poverty, among others are contributors to students dropping out from the Higher Education Sector (Klein, 2010). Students' dropout can be caused by three broad factors, namely, personal, family, social based and macro or general according to (Cunningham, McGinnis, Gacia-Verdu, Tesliu and Verner, 2008). As Majumder (2016:91) put it parental role in children's education represents one of the primary issues that are of utmost significance to researchers in the field of education and child development. Education researchers and policy makers have been claiming over the years that parental involvement helps children to ascertain better education outcomes (Stacer and Perrucci 2013). Similar sentiment is shared by researchers Winding and Andersen (2015:02) suggest that one of the strongest risk factors of students' dropout is parental socio-economic position. The study further add that the depth of parental educational status, occupational prestige, and family income point to growing indirect relationships with the youths' later educational outcomes. Previous studies have shown that parental involvement in their offspring's schooling is an important determinant of both later academic achievement and dropout. Previous studies revealed that heavy and chronic use of drugs, has psychoactive effects that impair the cognitive development and functioning of humans (Fried, Watkinson, James and Gray 2002; Pope and Yurgelu-Todd, 1996; Rosselli and Ardila, 1996; Henry, Knight and Thornberry (2012). Henley et al. 2012 further suggest that drug use may also lead to dropout by speeding up the transition to adult roles and responsibilities, such as pregnancy, parenting and work. According to

Newcomb and Bentler (1988), “drug users tend to bypass or circumvent the typical maturational sequence of school, work, and marriage and become engaged in adult roles of job and family prematurely, without the necessary growth and development to enhance success with these roles” (1988: 35-36). Adolescent drug use is associated with the early assumption of adult roles, including teenage pregnancy and parenthood, marriage, and living independently of parents or guardians prematurely (Krohn, Lizotte, and Perez, 1997; Newcomb and Bentler, 1988). According to Blue (2010) early entry into parenthood is associated with increased school dropout rates and decreased educational achievement (Somers, 2006). Hasnain and Krantz (2011) suggest that dropping out of school or college does not only impede economic prosperity but also add to the acquisition of poor knowledge and awareness about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Although it is common for boys and girls in many low-income countries to drop out of school, mainly for economic reasons. Early marriage and childbirth, especially teenage pregnancies, are further related to school dropout among girls.

Dropping out of school may lead to poor life skills which may manifest as behavioral problems, such as conduct disorders, or unhealthy behaviours, such as intravenous drug use. Letseka (2008:93) states that on average, 70% of the surveyed students came from family backgrounds of low socio-economic status (SES). Their parents'/guardians' level of education ranged between 'no formal education' to 'some secondary education', and their monthly income ranged from 'no income' to between R1-R400 and R801- R1 600 per month. Altman (2007) argues that in South Africa earnings from employment and self-employment are low relative to the cost of living. Despite the projected 6% economic growth rate, 6.5% of working people still earn less than R2 500 per month, the same as a decade ago. In a study conducted by Thomas (2002) it is pointed out that the relationship between financial issues and withdrawal is currently receiving considerable attention in the United Kingdom since the abolition of student grants, total reliance on student loans and the introduction of tuition fees. (Ozga and Sukhmandan 1997). Kori 2014 also suggest that students who received aids or grants have the lower probability of dropping out and dropout is higher for those receiving loans. Social risk factors have been shown to negatively impact a students' academic performance and thus linked to student dropout (McKee and Caldarella (2016). Thabethe (2017) also asserts that socio-economic experiences may leave students feeling disempowered as a result of being discriminated against and lack of support could lead to failure as students (Karimi, 2015).

Conceptualising student dropout

The dropout of a student is defined as when an individual who is out of the academic system, prior to the end of a specific academic programme for which he or she is registered (McWhitter et al., 2007). According to Letseka (2007), the dropout rate of students can

also be seen as a situation within the academic climate where individuals are out of the academic programmes either on a temporary or permanent bases prior to the final academic period for which they are enrolled. In sum therefore, students' dropout can be defined as inability of individuals to complete a learning programme that creates a path towards successful graduation (Daniel, Walsch, Goldston, Arnold, Reboussion and Wood 2006). Drawing from these definitions, the term "student dropout rate" in this study refers to individual students who are registered for specific academic programmes but are unable to successfully complete the programme owing to some challenges.

Cain (2013) suggests that the most basic definition of student dropout is leaving an institution for any reason before completing the programme of study. According to Tinto (1993), the term 'dropout' implies failure. However, because students leave institutions for various reasons, the term dropout cannot be applied to all students. For the purpose of this paper, the concept of dropout is defined as any student who does not complete his or her chosen programme of studies at the institution of enrolment within minimum timeframe. According to Meens, Bakx, Klimstra and Dennisen (2018), two main reasons for high student dropout in education is lack of motivation and making erroneous educational choices (Wartenbergh and Van den Broek; Watenbergh, Bending-Jacobs, Braam, and Nooij, 2015). These high rates lead to a drain on public finances and also a deterioration in wellbeing of these students and their failure experience. Agherdien, Mey and Poisat (2018:57) posit that motivation plays an essential role in student success. In their study, different theories of motivation were used in relation to readiness and success. These included cognitive evaluation, self-efficacy and expectancy theories. Theories of motivation are significant in understanding student performance, as well as understanding how these students can be motivated. Motivation affords students the necessary drive to overcome any obstacles they may encounter (Eysenck, 2004). The problem of student dropout is disturbing because it is perceived to reflect inadequacies in the education system in terms of both quality and quantity (Letseka 2007; Sibanda 2004). Daniel (2006:507) defines a dropout as an individual who does not complete a learning programme or who takes a path that does not lead him or her to graduate successfully with the associated qualification.

Impact of COVID-19 to South African students and dropout

According to Schleicher (2020) the COVID-19 pandemic has also had a severe impact on higher education as universities closed their premises and countries shut their borders in response to lockdown measures. Although higher education institutions were quick to replace face-to-face lectures with online learning, these closures affected learning and examinations as well as the safety and legal status of international students in their host country. Importantly, the crisis raised questions about the value offered by universities

which among others include networking and social opportunities as well as educational content. Reopening of schools and universities brought about unquestionable benefits to students and the wider economy. In addition, reopening of schools and universities brought economic benefits to families by enabling some parents to return to work. With those benefits, however, caution had to be taken against the health risks and the requirement to mitigate the toll of the pandemic. The need for such trade-offs called for sustained and effective coordination between education and public health authorities at different levels of government, enhanced by local participation and autonomy, tailoring responses to the local context. Several steps had to be taken to manage the risks and trade-offs, including physical distancing measures, establishing hygiene protocols, revising personnel and attendance policies, and investing in staff training on appropriate measures to cope with the virus. Despite government protocols, access to computers and the internet in South African homes was very low. Whilst it is true that 90% of South African households is perceived to have access to mobile phones, only 60% have access to the internet via their mobile phone. It should further be emphasised that these rates are for adults in the household. It cannot be assumed that during lockdown, children in a household would have full or unlimited access to the cell phone to access educational content. There is also the issue of multiple children in the same household needing to share a mobile phone, and the elevated cost of data, although there are now some free educational sites (Duncan-Williams 2020). Spaul and van der Berg (2020) posits, that 4.5 million individuals lost all labour-market income as a result of job loss or furlough. This has profound impacts on household welfare and hunger in particular. From the news and media, it became evident that household had run out of money to buy food.

Some families indicated that someone in the household went hungry in the last 7 days, and 15 reported that a child went hungry in the last seven days (Spaul et al. 2020). Increased financial stress during economic recessions is also associated with increase in domestic violence. The added complications of the lockdown and permanent presence of children in the home increases the likelihood of children falling victim to such behaviour. As Fegert a Vitiello, Plener, and Clemens (2020). The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and a University of Johannesburg team analysed the mental health consequences of the lockdown for adults in South Africa, based on an online survey. They derived two latent variables from the responses they obtained about the emotions people felt. The one they termed psychological distress (including stress, being scared, irritability, feeling depressed, sadness, anger) and the other isolation (boredom and loneliness). Further the components of psychological distress are higher amongst individuals that reported feeling hunger.

Hill and Fitzgerald 2020 postulates that there was consistent learning material available via Blackboard and sufficient technological networks for students to collaborate and remain interactive online, it is impossible to deny the feeling of isolation that COVID-19 exerted in the final semester of our studies. Utilising an online platform for learning, while facilitating other personal commitments such as family life, working full time and striving to complete the mandatory teaching hours for the course made it difficult to stay motivated at times. Students felt confused, unsure of how to proceed but rarely sought clarification from academic staff due to the absence of face-to-face interaction and continued to the best of their abilities. With online learning, it was difficult to achieve this 'sense of belonging' as time spent with peers online was limited, as some students were less engaged due to other commitments as they tried to juggle life in lockdown with learning. Engagement between students and lecturers was significantly hindered by moving the workshops online, as the face-to-face time allowed relationships to be built with each of the lecturers. Building relationships between students and lecturers can be beneficial for active engagement in classes (Dismore et al., 2019; Bramble et al., 2018). However, it was challenging to continue to build these relationships with lack of contact, and therefore achieve full engagement within the online learning environment. With online learning, it was difficult to achieve this 'sense of belonging' as time spent with peers online was limited, as some students were less engaged due to other commitments as they tried to manage their lives in lockdown with learning. This lack of engagement during online learning between students and between lecturers and students was challenging (Bowcock and Peters, 2016).

Several credible studies have shown that to motivate and engage students including lecturer/teacher enthusiasm, interactive classes, engaging students through group activities and using effective teaching methods promote active learning climate (Collaço, 2017; Race, 2007). These conditions promote potential difficulties in maintaining when teaching is restricted to online sessions. This was particularly so for many of the classes, which previously would have been delivered face-to-face and included interactive elements, where the content was uploaded to Blackboard for students to read individually at their own pace. As engagement between lecturers and students is noted to be crucial to learning (Zepke et al., 2014), this was significantly lacking using this method. Agormeda, Henaku, Ayite, and Ansah (2020) posits that the shift to emergency remote learning/teaching in Ghana presented a number of concerns for student learning, issues of equity, internet connection, personal learning devices, student data accessibility, and the digital divide. Thus, the shift to emergency remote teaching has illuminated and exacerbated the digital divide (Trust, 2020). Likewise, according to TaylorGuy and Chase (2020), emergency remote learning hinders student cohesiveness, peer-to-peer and student-lecturer interaction beyond the real-time video or chat interactions. According to Motala and Menon (2020), several issues became evident, both in terms of access to learning and the broader societal context. Reflecting

on the university's response, factors that compromised student learning included: No access to a device inclusive of a laptop or smartphone (impacts on how to learn if the medium or means to learn is absent); either no network coverage or limited coverage; cost of data; limited bandwidth; living conditions not conducive to studying; other psychosocial factors. Issues of social capital, access, and vulnerability were also evident. These factors included poor living conditions, environments not conducive to learning, student hunger and, while not necessarily quantifiable, a possible worsening of economic conditions during the Covid-19 lockdown that would impact on the students.

Academics, staff working with students and students themselves drew attention to the problems with the universities' devising responses. Equity and access are goals that have been pursued by government as far back as the National Commission on Higher Education (1996) as set out in the White Paper 3 (Department of Education 1997). The agenda for the transformation of higher education outlined the need to 'redress inequalities of access, participation and success' and 'expand SA's competitive participation in the global context' (Council on Higher Education 2004:24). One could argue that Covid-19 has worsened social exclusion and the accompanying inequities. The lack of student access in the transition to remote learning has further cemented exclusion and created barriers to learning. 'Quality and equality' of provision is a central tenet for the university as is evident from the lessons from China; these have to be factored into this unusual shift to remote learning (Wu 2020). The sudden total lockdown left little time for the universities to lay the groundwork for both academics and students to effect teaching and learning remotely. Some academics perceived online teaching as an incredibly steep learning curve. The rapid translation of modules from traditional face-to-face to online learning surfaced a new level of under-preparedness in students. Through the multiple committee structures and frequent meetings, academics could express difficulties as well as new ways of teaching and reaching their students. This was particularly important because many students wrote and communicated with academics about their difficulties and experiences with the transition to remote teaching and learning. The inequitable resourcing of students in terms of the required technology was a peripheral factor to the universities' strategy, but one that took centre stage. This led to the provision of devices and data to staff and students on a monthly basis. Equity and inequality issues surfaced repeatedly. Some students had uncapped access to Wi-Fi, and sophisticated devices, others lived in areas where network connectivity was poor and worked off a simple smartphone. Some, who lived in remote areas, received devices only after delays. Despite this, and as data and device access improved, the level of participation on the online platforms especially for undergraduates increased to about 90%, up from an average of 50% in the first week of the lockdown. Weekly reports from deans on progress fed discussions on fine-grained issues like students' vulnerabilities; reports from academics provided insights into difficulties that students and academics were experiencing such as incidence of inconsistent performance or participation on

Blackboard, Moodle and Microsoft Teams. Additionally, academics having to cope with families, young children and care responsibilities. The gap between social equity and education equity (Motala 2014) was very evident, as were the vast social disparities that enabled or disadvantaged students.

Major issue that emerged was the psychosocial issues in an environment without human contact and touch, and the real distress that some students and staff felt with isolation, physical and social distancing. The universities had responded in various ways, but the human cost of the Covid-19 period is yet to be seen. Caring and support had to be normalised, recognising that the emotional impact of the pandemic was pervasive. The only choice for the universities was Hobson's choice – 'business as usual' – while recognising that it was 'business unusual.' Academics reflected on sessions with students and spent time 'counselling' and allaying the fears of students, often deriving comfort from the contact via online platforms. Adedoyin and Soyka (2020) posits, as a result of inequality in the socio-economic status of students, some rely on the computer and free internet in school (Demirbilek, 2014), and due to closure of schools, the migration process of these set of students was expected to be slow. It became undeniable that students with low socioeconomic background found it difficult to migrate as early as expected since the start of the pandemic. Fishbane and Tomer (2020) postulates that as the level of poverty increases in the community, the rate of internet accessibilities declined rapidly and by implications, students with no or low socio-economic power to afford broadband connection were most vulnerable to fall behind or confront additional challenges to meet up with others in online learning.

Human intrusion by family members caused the disruption or digression of online learning participants' attention during the online teaching and learning process. Students and instructors with low digital competence are liable to lack behind in online learning. According to a video file by AlkaPwnige (2020), there are situations whereby online learning participants go naked unconsciously by being in the comfort of their workstation or dressing up for the online class, and this can be linked to unconscious use of the platform as a result unethical use of digital devices that can be avoided through digital competence. Due to digital transformation of instructional activities during this pandemic, libraries had to follow the trend in order to deliver effective service faculty, student and other stakeholders through digital library might find it difficult to make optimal utilization of the digital library.

Intervention Strategies to curb student dropout

Dube (2020:149) asserts that one of strategies to enhancing online teaching and learning in rural schools in the context of COVID-19 is social inclusive learning approach as it concerns quality in the distribution of an education service, and also

concerns the nature of the service itself and the consequences for society through time (Connel, 2012:681). An inclusive approach would be the best, desirable and doable in the fight against COVID-19, and would also ensure that no child is left behind due to this global pandemic. Oloruntegbe and Collins (2011) posits that successful reforms are initiated from grassroots (bottom-up), particularly by teachers and learners who have first-hand experience of the realities of online learning in the context of COVID 19. Through such an inclusive approach, the preservation of an oppressive status quo is challenged, and social transformation that values social justice can be achieved (Ngwenyama:1991). Furthermore, there is an urgent need for the Department of Basic Education to cease assuming that all teachers are able to execute online learning. Workshops should be conducted online to equip teachers on the way to handle online learning. In addition, the education system management should be aware of their teachers' ability levels, and must set expectations accordingly (David, Pellini, Jordan and Phillips, 2020). The Department of Basic Education in South African needs to take into account where the country is, in terms of the current breadth and depth of the curriculum, learners' achievement levels, the quality of teachers and the range and effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment processes. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education can invest in technology that connects teachers and learners using tailor-made subjects in a language a student/pupil can understand and be able to relate to.

On the Higher Education front, in the South African context, online counseling is an important consideration as it can potentially affect student counselor therapeutic engagement, productivity, work satisfaction, and overall wellness. Student counselors can also expand students' access to generic mental health self-help materials via YouTube videos, webinars, and podcasts. SMS call-back options and toll-free Student Counseling hotlines also need to be explored for all students who, due to financial challenges, are unable to call Student Counseling Services for support. Transmission of online self-help student counseling resources via zero-rated data E-learning platforms, i.e., Blackboard and Moodle, further ensures that Student Counseling support remains available to students irrespective of physical and financial circumstances. Student counselor innovation and partnerships are also recommended in cases where students may have access to data bundles or Wi-Fi, but reside in remote geographical locations or university residences where internet connectivity and signal is poor. This necessitates partnership-building and collaboration between Student Counseling Services, government departments such as the Department of Health (Psychology and Psychiatry clinics), Department of Social Development, and community-based organizations. Paper-based delivery of student counseling resource packs as well as academic material to students via postal and courier services, also help bridge the gap between students in remote areas. Such packs could comprise a range of self- help materials, as well as information on community-based service providers in the student's area, whom they could contact for emergencies and continuity of care. Follow-up communications between Student

Counseling and community-based service providers listed in the resource pack, as well as continuous contact with lecturers can then be facilitated via online, multi-disciplinary “communities of practice” using videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom, Skype or MS Teams platforms (Naidoo and Cartwright, 2020).

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the surge in Gender Based Violence-related incidents across South African represents a national crisis under which students live in. Given that student experiences are indelibly connected to broader social systems, the Gender Based Violence scourge highlights the important role that South African student counsellors in partnership with lecturers can assume to support and empower the student community. Multi-disciplinary partnerships between Student Counseling, student leadership, university management, external law enforcement and the justice system, is essential. Priority areas need to include GBV awareness on campus and in residences (especially for those students that are allowed to be on campus during this period), having and improving institutional reporting protocol and response mechanisms such as a user- friendly SMS callback option and GBV reporting application that is directly linked to campus security and can be downloaded onto students’ cellphones (e.g. Campus Communications, University of Cape Town, 2019). On the academic front, Moore (1993:23) postulates that there is a need for active, purposeful and constructive communication between lecturers and students; the degree to which the programme responds to the needs of each student (the constructs of the structure) as well as the degree to which students are able to set goals, learn from experience and evaluate decisions.

In a study conducted by Netanda, Mamabolo and Themane (2017:11), on student interventions, academic support was the most crucial intervention required to improving student academic performance standard and success rate. Furthermore, module coordinators also identified library services, such as research articles and online books, as essential. According to the participants, the online library system should provide more details on how to search for and request books and other learning materials online. The technology should be user-friendly and workshops focused on skills transfer should be organised for students who are less competent in the use of technology. Another recommendation is that lecturers must be available to answer calls and respond to e-mail, and participate in online forums. University should give them access to the Internet outside of the office so that they can respond to students’ queries anywhere, including at home.

Concluding Remarks

The phenomenon that schools, universities and students alike face as we enter the Fourth Industrial Revolution is to acquire knowledge in keeping with (4IR). This suggests that new skills in the use of nanotechnology, robotics and artificial intelligence will be introduced. Students coming from the marginalized communities are going to

be further disadvantaged as these new advances pose another digital challenge, leading to dropout. According to Gleason (2018:01), the automation economy, resulting from technologies of the 4IR is changing the way we live and work. Higher education, especially, is changing around the world already because of the fast shifting global economy and the types of employees and thinkers it demands (Gleason, 2018:02). It can be argued that if such disparities still exist, particularly in South Africa, student dropout will always remain a challenge. Penprase (2018:207) explains that recent papers describe how 4IR will shape the future of education, gender and work” and how the 4IR will require an augmented workforce re-skilling. The authors further alludes to the fact that the World Economic Forum has set tipping points at which technologies of 4IR will become widespread to bring societal change. These societal changes will include the spread of 4IR technologies that will make significant impacts on the lives and require a shifts in education, generally, and employment.

A considerable amount of change to the science and technology curriculum will be required to allow students to adjust rapidly to the emerging areas of genomics, data science, Artificial Intelligence, robotics and nanomaterials (Penprase, 2018:215-217). To this end, it can therefore be concluded that 4IR, together with the societal issues, coupled with the COVID-19 alluded to, in this paper, presents the education sector with a challenge of equipping pupils and students with skills to create problem-solving ecosystems that can combine the cognitive processing of many ordinary contributions with machine-based computing to establish faithful models of the complicated, interdependent systems that underlie the world's most demanding tasks. It can also be concluded that other factors such as social, household and cultural challenges, and the emergence of COVID-19 are yet to be explored further in the 4IR era as there is no clear-cut guideline yet on how they can be overcome. Finally, it may be noteworthy to mention that the potential of social networking such as WhatsApp in fostering connectedness within online student cohorts has played a pivotal role in students success in the 2020 academic year. As the pandemic still exist in 2021, and, is expected to be around for a much longer time, especially in South Africa, as no vaccine has been secured as yet. Student dropout is expected to remain high as students from the marginalised groups are still going to be at a disadvantaged. WhatsApp had been referred to as a ‘lifeline’ where the interactions were described as being central to student engagement and completion of the course (Stone and Logan 2018). It remains to be seen as to whether or not Whatsapp will still remain the students’ ‘lifeline’ as it wants all users to share their data with Facebook. There has been a huge migration of Whatsapp customers to either Telegram or Signal.

The contribution this paper has made is that it has reflected on student drop-out against the backdrop of COVID-19 in the South African educational context amongst marginalised groups of students leading them to dropout. The contribution for this study was therefore to investigate how students coming from historically marginalised communities were affected by backdrop of COVID-19 in the South African context in

the midst of COVID-19. The paper also identified support interventions for both school pupil and university students that could be used to reduce the probability of dropout as it cuts across levels of education. Other South African schools and universities can draw from these challenges and understand the underpinning reasons for student dropout, without focusing only on the curriculum being the primary factor leading to student dropout. By doing so, a better understanding will lay a foundation for the education sector to be able to cater and better understand the circumstances surrounding factors that led or could lead to dropout, especially during the COVID-19 times and be able to respond to these challenges in a manner that will benefit students in the future.”

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Lessons from an ethnographic encounter with young women in a South African Township

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Abstract

This paper discusses lessons from the researcher's experiences of her ethnographic approach that employed a sociological study on the lived experiences of young women in Ngangelizwe Township, Mthatha to uncover the various ways in which the young women negotiated their lifestyles. The ethnographic research approach is underpinned by the desire to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants lived experiences. Such understanding is intended to go beyond the participant's explicit identifications of their realities, unearthing the hidden meanings shaping the production of their social action. However, gaining access into the lives of participants is not a straightforward process and should be recognised in its difference from gaining access into the area of study. Gaining access into the social lives of participants and engaging in ethnographic observations is a complex process in which the researcher participates in multiple overlapping roles that are shaped by unforeseen on-field occurrences. This paper sheds light on some of the field occurrences in how they informed the data collection process through which the objective of examining the realities of young women in Ngangelizwe Township was achieved.

Keywords: *Ethnography, Lived experiences, Realities.*

Résumé

Cet article discute des leçons tirées des expériences de la chercheuse de son approche ethnographique qui a utilisé une étude sociologique sur les expériences vécues des jeunes femmes dans le canton de Ngangelizwe, Mthatha pour découvrir les différentes manières dont les jeunes femmes ont négocié leur mode de vie. L'approche de la recherche ethnographique est sous-tendue par le désir d'acquérir une compréhension approfondie des expériences vécues par les participants. Une telle compréhension est destinée à aller au-delà des identifications explicites des participants à leurs réalités, en exhumant les significations cachées qui façonnent la production de leur action sociale. Cependant, accéder à la vie des participants n'est pas un processus simple et devrait être reconnu dans sa différence par rapport à l'accès au domaine d'étude. Accéder à la vie sociale des participants et s'engager dans des observations ethnographiques est un processus complexe dans lequel le chercheur participe à de multiples rôles qui se chevauchent et sont façonnés par des

événements imprévus sur le terrain. Ce document met en lumière certaines des occurrences de terrain dans la façon dont elles ont informé le processus de collecte de données à travers lequel l'objectif d'examiner les réalités des jeunes femmes dans le canton de Ngangelizwe a été atteint.

Mots clés: *Ethnographie, Expériences vécues, Réalités.*

Introduction

This paper provides a discussion of how the ethnographic research approach can be used in qualitative research to provide better understanding of the research participants. By sharing field-based experiences, the researcher unpacks some of the challenges faced when ethnographers seek to gain access into the field of study. The study explores the significance of successfully gaining access as well as acceptance in to the social worlds of research participants in an ethnographic study (England, 1994: 243; Fossey et al., 2002: 720 and Sandewolski, 2000: 334). The above objective is met by answering how the researcher gained access into Ngangelizwe Township, Mthatha as a field of study and uncovering how she forged relationships with potential participants. It unearths how she engaged in in-depth discussions that shed light on the ways in which young women in Ngangelizwe negotiate their lifestyle choices. The discussion begins with a brief focus on the area of study, giving the setting and the socio-demographic profile of the area of study.

Characterising the Field

The Eastern Cape is the third-highest populated province after Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Review and Outlook, 2017:41; OR Tambo District Municipality Socio Economic Review and Outlook, 2017: 13 StatsSA, 2016: 2). The majority of its population is located in the OR Tambo district comprising Mthatha, Mqanduli and surrounding rural areas. The King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD) local municipality, which is in OR Tambo district is more densely populated in comparison to other municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province (OR Tambo District Municipality Socio Economic Review and Outlook, 2017: 72). Peri-urban areas such as Ngangelizwe Township experience extreme in-urban migration that results from the in migration of job-seekers. The population that is drawn into this township is predominantly young and reflects the overall population of the Province (where in EC roughly 34.8% of the overall population between the ages of 0–14 years). There are more females in all the age categories (similarly to the EC province in which women over the age of 30 comprising approximately 56.8% of the total provincial population) (OR Tambo District Municipality Socio Economic Review and Outlook, 2017: 72).

Lessons from entering the Field

The researcher was born and raised in Ngangelizwe. The field of study presented as a familiar social space – she is an insider. However, caution was exercised regarding this position; specifically, the researcher's long separation from the social space coupled with the social, economic and cultural transformations that have occurred within the social space. This presented the field of study as a potentially unfamiliar setting in which the researcher was both an insider and an outsider. The outsider experience was shaped by spatial mobility which resulted in many familiar people migrating from this space, while many unfamiliar people occupied the area. The first field experience was then aimed at reintroducing the researcher to Ngangelizwe Township.

Declined invites into the study

Upon receiving ethical clearance, the researcher went to the field where she spent the first few days visiting family members who are scattered in Ngangelizwe Township and Norwood suburb in Mthatha. These visits were opportunities to observe potential research participants in the area. During the second week, the researcher identified five young women, two of whom were friends who came to the researcher's family home to deliver a message. The researcher took the opportunity to introduce herself, told them about the study and asked them if they would be interested in becoming participants. They politely declined.

Three other young women were identified as they stood at the street corner on a Saturday afternoon chatting. The researcher introduced herself, her study and requested the women to participate, but they declined. The researcher turned to family members asking them if they knew any young women whom she could request to participate in the study. Two young women were identified. The women agreed. This seemed like a breakthrough. However, when the researcher approached one of the women to seek consent to interview her, the woman stated that she was shy and was uncomfortable talking about her life. The second young woman who had agreed to take part in the study kept postponing her meeting with the researcher.

The first experience of not being able to connect with potential participants and forge relationships through which ethnographic encounters could be done indicated the challenge of entering the field of study. It also made it clear that being present and living in the area of study does not mean having access to the field of study because it is the social space in which realities of participants are negotiated. Although, having gained access to Ngangelizwe Township, the researcher had not gained entry into her field of study (Bucerius, 2013: 691; Dunlap and Johnson, 1998: 129).

Hence, the researcher planned a new way to gain entry into the social lives of potential participants.

Scouting for participants through a semi-insider

The researcher contacted a sociology honours student at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) main campus in Mthatha whom the researcher knew. The student was selected based on her age, familiarity with sociological research principles, social science research methods and familiarity with Mthatha, even though she did not live in Ngangelizwe Township. The researcher hoped that the assistance could acquaint her with young women in Ngangelizwe since she was in the same age group and that through her, the researcher would gain access to the young women's lives.

This research assistant visited Ngangelizwe between 1:00p.m. and 3:00 p.m. depending on her study schedule and that she commuted by taxi. She would be dropped off in different streets, walk and identify young women whom she would approach introducing herself and stating the reason why she was there, asking if they would be willing to partake in the study and adhering to the ethical standards of qualitative research (Genzuk, 2003: 8 and McNamara, 2009: 173).

The assistant's involvement was cut short. On a Saturday afternoon, as she walked down the streets in Ngangelizwe, she was robbed by two young men who pointed knives at her while demanding her cell phone. She gave it to them and they quickly disappeared. The researcher discontinued the assistant's involvement for fear of exposing her to further vulnerabilities. The contacts gained during the research assistant's trips were lost as they were stored in the stolen cell phone. This experience was a lesson that the researcher was a learner in a potentially complex field of study in which she was susceptible to physical risks (through vulnerability to crime) in addition to social barriers (difficulty of gaining entry into young women's social worlds).

The researcher had to rethink her positionality and take the place of a learner in Ngangelizwe Township. The unfamiliar position enabled the researcher to be cautious and to be open to guidance (Chughtai and Myers, 2016: 1 and Jones and Smith, 2017: 99). While the researcher planned her third field encounter, a death in her family occurred. This unforeseen event influenced her third encounter in the field.

Thrownness into the field of study

The premature death of the researcher's cousin threw¹ the researcher back into the field before she could plan how to approach the third encounter. This experience proved

1 The concept of thrownness was coined by Heidegger (1927) in his suggestion that human beings are thrown in world in which they are faced with many 'not at home feelings' such as anxiety. However, as they engage with daily activities and gain understandings of the world in which they live, they may choose to throw themselves out of their thrown condition, thus gaining an 'at-home feeling'. In this study, this concept is used to indicate how the researcher entered unfamiliar social activities and social spaces in the field through which the researcher met and acquainted with potential research participants.

that researcher's lived experiences interconnect with their subjective experiences in ways that may influence the direction of one's research approach. The funeral became significant for the study because the event centred on a young woman who embodied all the features of the potential research participants (Chughtai and Myers, 2016: 2). These features were class, race, gender, age, location and culture. The researcher had to deliver a speech at the funeral. This moment introduced her to the young women at the funeral as one of the societal members who belonged in the area, even though many of the young women were not familiar with her. This introduction directed a spotlight onto the researcher in ways that made her face familiar to the young women who attended the funeral. The researcher took this as an opportunity familiarize herself with young women at the funeral and this became the first milestone in her attempt to enter the field. Drawing from Henry (2012: 535) that funerals provide opportunities in which researchers engage empathically with those in the field thus drawing on shared feelings to convey meaning, forge, as well as sustain relations.

The researcher opened her eyes to other potential opportunities in which she could throw herself into the social experiences of young women (Fine and Hallett, 2013: 190). One of the opportunities that the researcher used was during this funeral. There she asked a group of young women if she could travel with them in their car as they were travelling from the graveyard to the deceased home for refreshment. On the journey, after being silent for a while, one of the young women (early twenties) said 'Uxolo sisi wam, besicela ukudlala iingoma sisele, sonwabe njengoba besisenza nomhlobo wethu. Simamele ingoma zakhe' (Excuse me, my sister, may we please kindly play our choice of music and indulge in alcoholic beverages like we would normally do with our late friend and listen to her favourite songs). The researcher agreed and laughed; she watched and listened to them converse about their friend. The researcher interpreted the young women's request, not as the young women asking permission per se. Instead, they were making her aware that they were about to unmask themselves so that they could at that moment be who they are in the absence of unknowers (strangers or people who do not know them too well or may not have seen them in a certain way e.g., singing and dancing). The moment was significant in how it opened 'the curtain' into the real social behaviour of the women within their social world, thus throwing the researcher into the field as an observer. This granted her an opportunity to learn how to communicate with young women in ways that may make them agree to partake in the study. It gave the researcher entrance to observe, orient herself, and test her behaviour as well as position herself in ways that did not cause discomfort among the social agents.

The young women were chatting in the car, singing along and sharing plans for the evening to host a party after the funeral (also casually known as after-tears) in celebration of their friend's life. This information provided yet another opportunity to ask to go with the young women to the party, which would be hosted in a nightclub (loosely referred to as club). To the researcher, requesting to go to the nightclub was a first experience. This

experience was important as it introduced her to the young women's social world. As the researcher asked permission to go with the young women to the club, they laughed and asked if the researcher was serious but agreed. This was important in drawing the researcher closer to them. These scenarios became significant in how the researcher found herself partially accepted into the social space of the young women in ways the researcher was unable to in her initial approaches.

These field encounters reflect the importance of alertness in ethnographic research. It is constant alertness to potential opportunities that allowed the researcher to identify moments to throw herself into field meaningful encounters. The thrownness experience however has to be done in a very cautious way so that the researcher is aware of when to maintain an absence of the present. This is important to ensure that the researcher's presence does not become a burden that pushes potential participants away. When invited into unfamiliar research experiences, an ethnographic researcher needs to be mindful of their movements, expression as well as reactions to events so that these are not misinterpreted in offensive ways, pushing away participants (England, 1994; Hathaway, 1995 and Neumann, 2014). Having gained entry in to the field of study, the next step was to seek permission to observe and record conversations with participants.

Gaining consent for in-depth conversations and first-hand observations

The next step is for the researcher to validate that the identified participants meet the sample criteria, request their informed consent and begin data collection. It is important for the participants to know that their relationship with the researcher is underlined by a purpose to learn from them, record the information obtained and publish it. This ensures that participants make an informed decision as they open up their truths to the researcher. This was the process followed by the researcher as she identified approximately twenty young women who fitted her sample, which was age approximately 21 to 29 years and present- and long-term residences of Ngangelizwe Township.

All the identified participants spoke isiXhosa and English interchangeably with some using local terminology/slang. The researcher who is fluent in isiXhosa and English engaged with the participants in both languages while relying on the participants' explanation for the local terminology that they sometimes used. The conversations were held in both English and isiXhosa and then translated and later transcribed by the researcher into English. The participants were primarily identified based on observations made during the social activities; observations that suggested that these young women carried rich information that could be valuable for the study.

Once the identifying characteristics were validated and consent to participate in the study was given, the same procedure was followed to identify eighteen more participants

with some declining to take part and others willingly signing the consent. Six young women declined to take part in the study. One research participant invited her friend to take part in the study to which she consented. All fifteen young women were long-term residents of Ngangelizwe Township but resided in different sections of the township. Gaining consent from the fifteen young women meant they were allowing the researcher to be part of their daily routines, chatting to them, going to social functions with them, asking them detailed questions about their lives and about their socio-economic environment (Creswell, 2013; Etikan et al., 2016; Gentles et al., 2015; Neuman, 2014 and Polkinghorne, 2005).

The researcher chose not to have a planned approach to the first in-depth discussions and observations, rather letting the discussions unfold based on the encounters with the participants who had granted consent. This means that no formal interviews were scheduled with the participants (however, the researcher had an interview schedule that she reflected on after engaging with participants, in order to make sure that the conversations with participants were guided by the research aim and objectives). This was done in order to avoid creating a formal arrangement that could potentially make the participants uncomfortable being themselves during the conversations. This was also done to freely allow the conversations to occur as led by the participants. It is within this view that the following observation experiences occurred, as discussed below, and were used as an introduction to in-depth conversations about the lifestyle choices and lived experiences of participants in Ngangelizwe Township.

Observing Busi²

The first evening of the observation occurred when the researcher visited Busi (participant) at her home. When the researcher arrived at Busi's house, she noted a red car parked not too far from Busi's home. Inside the house, Busi's grandmother was cooking dinner and Busi's children were playing. The researcher greeted and asked how Busi's grandmother was keeping, introduced herself and engaged in a conversation about the ailments of growing old. During the conversation, Busi appeared from the bedroom to check who was talking to her grandmother. Greetings, laughter and the exchanging of pleasantries ensued. It was at this point that the researcher excused herself from the kitchen, moving to the lounge with Busi. Busi's friend, a young woman like herself, was in the lounge. They were both dressed in mini-skirts, pumps (shoes) and high-waist jackets wearing weaves and were putting on make-up. The researcher saw that they were dressed similarly and getting ready for some occasion and made a joke, saying that it is afternoon and the ladies should be preparing to sleep; it is not morning. Both Busi and her friend laughed at the researcher's joke.

2 Pseudonyms are used for all the participants

Busi introduced her friend and the researcher to each other, saying that her friend was a student at Walter Sisulu University (WSU). Busi then mentioned that they were getting ready to go somewhere. The researcher asked if she could take them to where they were going and not have to worry about catching a taxi. After some thought, they agreed. Busi said that the person they were going with was panicking anyway since they were taking long to get ready. The researcher then asked about the red car that was parked not far from Busi's home. This turned out to be the person with whom Busi and her friend were going to travel with. Busi then made a quick call to the person in the red car to alert the person that they would meet later. When Busi and her friend were ready, they picked up their black Channel shoulder bags. The researcher left with them, leaving behind Busi's grandmother and the children. As they entered the researcher's car, the researcher noticed that the red car had left.

On the way to town (Mthatha CBD) where Busi and her friend were going, the researcher maintained the absence of the present, allowing Busi and her friend to chat among themselves and discuss their upcoming evening. It was easy for the researcher to maintain an absence of the present as both women were seating at the backseat while the researcher was sitting alone in the front seat driving. Thus, drawing from Hoepfl (1997: 52) and Reeves et al. (2013: 1368) who maintain that observation is a common form of data collection in field research in which the researcher maintains a passive presence, being as discreet as possible and not interacting with participants.

The short trip was useful in giving the researcher ideas to begin in-depth conversations with Busi as a form of a catching up on the conversations that occurred during the observation. Busi and her friend's conversation was cut short as they arrived at the hotel and bar. Busi asked the researcher to take photos of them with her cell phone and send them to her before the researcher drove off. Once the researcher had sent the photos to Busi, she and her friend went into the bar waving goodbye. A man was standing outside the hotel and bar casually watching as the pictures were being taken. He approached the researcher as Busi and her friend were leaving. He asked the researcher about the school she attended and if the researcher was coming inside for drinks. Before the researcher could answer, Busi returned, hugged the researcher and whispered, bye, thus signalling that the researcher was not permitted to enter Busi's social world beyond the experiences shared. The man did not wait for a response as he went into the hotel and bar. This marked the end of the evening for the researcher.

One of the lessons that the researcher learned from the above scenario was that the participants are constantly present and observant during their interactions as indicated by how Busi noticed the man talking to the researcher and reacted to his attempts by coming to interrupt his conversations with the researcher. The manner in which Busi approached and dismissed the researcher revealed that she was not ready to open this social reality to the researcher while also redirecting the attention of the man. The observation was important in reminding the researcher to approach the young women

as active agents who carefully participate in the negotiation of their realities even though the products of their efforts may not always yield their desired outcomes.

Observing Akhona

A second observation experience that opened the way to in-depth conversations was with Akhona. The researcher sent a message to Akhona on a Saturday to find out if she was at home and available for a social time. Akhona shared that she had plans to go to an event in her neighbourhood during the day. She invited the researcher to accompany her since it was not far from the researcher's family home. The researcher accepted the invitation. The researcher walked to Akhona's home, and upon entering, greeted the older sister and the two young children. Akhona was dressed in tightfitting Guess jeans, a denim jacket and Nike sneakers. Akhona was wearing her weave and make-up. She was occasionally brushing her weave while talking to the children who were asking to go with her.

The researcher greeted and introduced herself to Akhona's sister while playing with the children. This gave Akhona time to check where she had placed her Apple cell phone while thinking of a way to leave without the children noticing so they do not cry. The researcher took out some money (coins) from her pocket and gave it to the children to buy themselves some snacks during the day. Suddenly their attention shifted from Akhona to the money. They thanked the researcher, calling the researcher, aunty. Akhona indicated that she was ready to leave as she took her Aldo handbag, kissed the children and said goodbye to her sister. The researcher followed Akhona's lead, and they left.

Akhona and the researcher were chatting while occasionally exchanging greetings with neighbours. Some of them asked Akhona for R2 to buy a cigarette (commonly known as a loose/feg/entjie). Others would ask Akhona for a beer, which costs roughly R20.00 stating how thirsty they were. Akhona often responded with laughter, sometimes signalling that she would see them later. During these encounters, Akhona would turn to the researcher and give a description of the people who were greeting them, what they did for a living and how their lives had changed over time.

As Akhona and the researcher walked towards the house where the social event was, a man standing next to a black BMW car, seemingly attending the same function, called on Akhona. The researcher continued walking slowly towards the gate, and Akhona ran to catch up with the researcher upon which Akhona immediately pointed at the man she was talking to with her head and stated the following: 'Yambona ke lo, uyatsisa qha uthanda amacherry ingxaki yakhe. Kudala endifuna qha soze ndimvume. Ndingaba yintoni zizlay queen zase lokishini ngomntu wazo' (you see this one, he gives out money to his woman, but he likes women too much, that's his problem. He has been asking

us to date for a while now, but I will never date him. What would I be, with township slays queens fighting me for their man)? A statement to which they both laughed as they went into the house. A statement that the researcher took note of as the researcher planned to get more details on during her conversations with Akhona.

A similar approach was used in engaging with the other research participants thus drawing from Mulhall (2008: 308) who maintains that observation is valuable in that it captures the social setting in which people function. It is through observation that it is possible to ascertain whether what people say they do and what they do in reality correspond. This theorist is suggesting that observation is significant in how it can be used by the researcher to corroborate information by observing how people act matches with the narratives that they share. However, this should be done while recognising that what people do and what they say are both valid in their own right and may simply represent different perspectives on the data. None of the techniques, observation and conversations, is better than the other, but they work together to provide in-depth information on socially produced realities Mulhall (2008: 308) and Neuman (2014: 454).

The ethnographic observations in this study were in the form of participant and non-participant observations. Some of the gazes were silent while others were interrupted by questions from the researcher who punctuated the observations with the young women's voices and perspectives. The researcher engaged in social activities with the participants, such as accompanying the young women when they went to local nightclubs. In other instances, the researcher would go to the local clubs without the participants to observe social activities within these clubs. The aim was to observe how they engaged in social activities and to understand how their notions of fun were framed. These observations gave base for discussions that provided deeper understandings about the realities within Ngangelizwe Township. It is with the above understanding of the complementary role of observations and in-depth conversations that the following discussions consider ways in which the researcher engaged in in-depth conversations with the participants.

Engaging in in-depth conversation with participants

The researcher often used weekends to meet with the participants who were students and those who were employed. During the week, the researcher often engaged in in-depth conversations with the unemployed participants, thus also having the opportunity to observe what they usually do during this time. Contact during the week with the employed participants and/or students was often limited to visiting them for observation in the evenings when they had returned from work and/or university. The visits were done to maintain the researcher and participant relationship, finding out if there was any way in which the researcher could be of assistance to them. For example, if the

participants needed transport to town because the researcher noticed that sometimes taxis were hard to find. Taxis were more available in the morning and the afternoon. Contact with the participants also occurred through telephone conversations which meant that even without seeing the participants, the researcher kept communication with them. It was within this consistent communication process that the researcher called Snazo arranging that they meet if Snazo was not busy during the day. A request to which Snazo responded:

Researcher: Hi Snazo, you good? Was just calling to check up on you and see if you are free to meet sometime today.

Snazo: Hi. Thanks for calling. So kind of you. Just cleaning, doing the whole house chore thing. Dragging my feet cause, ndidiniwe [I am tired]. But we can definitely meet after lunch. I should be done by then.

Researcher: Okay, then, must I come over to your place? It would be nice if we can get a nice spot where there's not much interruptions, if you know what I mean?

Snazo: Let me come to you instead. I think that's better besides sometimes my gran's church people come here unannounced, and I have to make tea and all that so it might be difficult to chat. Hope that's okay with you?

Researcher: Sounds great. We may just have to watch the time though so you aren't away from home for long in case your gran needs your help.

Snazo: Plus you know how they are. She'd be acting like I went to a man and end up giving me a lecture for days [laughing]. Cool then, let's chat when we meet. Thanks again for the call.

After approximately three hours following the telephonic conversation, Snazo arrived at the researcher's family home wearing skinny jeans, Levis T-shirt and pumps with cornrows (hairstyle). The researcher and Snazo picked up communication from their morning call thus:

Researcher: Yewethu [Hey you, in an endearing manner]. I hope you told gran you are coming here, so she doesn't spend the morning worried about your whereabouts. Semhle ntombi! [looking good, girl!]

Snazo: [laughing] As if I had a choice. She'd scream the minute she sees me opening the door and ask, 'iyaphi loondlela nathi silandele?' [where's that road going so we too can follow?].

Researcher: I sometimes miss those sarcastic remarks though. Grandmothers can be such an energy. But I see many things haven't really changed in Ngangelizwe since the time I lived here.

- Snazo: A lot has changed to be honest, but a lot has remained the same. Remember Bra Jones? [pseudonym] He's still here drinking from morning until late. He is the life of the township that one. People come and go, die and are buried, but he's still hanging on. Sbu [pseudonym] and his crew are still here in and out of jail, but many boys have moved in from Ngeleleni [rural area near Mthatha], and they are the ones doing most crime here, so it's like that now.
- Researcher: I heard Mzo [pseudonym] died. What happened to his dealings [drugs]? That man was really scary.
- Snazo: Yep, wafa lowo yhu [that one died], he would stand there as if he is scanning every woman who walks up and down the streets, but I guess he was just making sure his boys were not using his stuff [drugs] instead of selling it. The family is still carrying on with the dealings though. There are also some boys working here, but I am not sure whether they are working alone or working for his family, but the business is still on. A lot of people died here, but some moved so there are many new faces.
- Researcher: And how have you and your family been keeping up? How has life been?
- Snazo: Life's hectic, you know, but good. Gran has been good. Busy with her church engagements. She is hardly ever home during the day because they visit people, funerals, weddings and all that, so church really keeps her busy. Then school for me. You know how frustrating school can be. Assignments, tests, classes and all that.
- Researcher: Hayi sundibroswer tshi [give me details, girl].
- Snazo: Yhu! Where do I start? With me, it's everything ndikxelele [I tell you]. The course content at school is challenging, assignments and exams. Ukufunda akululanga tshi [studying is not easy]. Then there's life, relationships. Ngumgowo ke nalowo [that's another challenge]. Sometimes you think all is well kanti u guy akekholapho [only to find the boyfriend is not thinking the same way]. So, nje ugowishe ke ngalondlela [then you go through the relationship frustrations]. Ngapha yimali, yesana mandithi! [on the one hand its finance, girl!]. Nje [just].
- Researcher: You seem to be going through the most, mntase [family/sis/sister are endearing words that are used interchangeably among women who share friendship ties]. Let's get some snacks so we can hear about u [the] guy. Then we can talk about your studies and family and life in general [both researcher and Snazo laughed as they went to fetch some snacks from the kitchen].

This conversation between the researcher and the participant Snazo reflects how the researcher approached in-depth conversations by starting conversations using mutually shared experiences. The researcher did this as it helped to establish a common ground between the researcher and the research participants. It created a friendly atmosphere within which sensitive information could more easily be explored (Neuman, 2014: 462 and Gill et al. 2008: 291).

The ethnographic approach to the study meant that the researcher had time to have follow up conversation with the young women (Naidoo, 2015). This advantage of ethnography is important because the researcher did not have to rush conversations with research participants thus allowing moments of laughter, jokes and the unforeseen interruptions such as young women being called by parent or siblings to go and attend to their duties in their households. These disturbances were subsequently meaningful in how they reflected some of the young women's realities that were not captured during discussions, therefore giving more detail to the context in which the young women negotiated their realities.

The researcher was also able to have conversations with groups of young women in Ngangelizwe Township. Some of the group discussions were unplanned, but the researcher used the opportunity in which the researcher found one of the participants sitting with friends and joined. After joining, the researcher would listen to the discussions while identifying a way to introduce a subject to be discussed. Other discussions were planned based on current events that the researcher relied on to get the participant's views as indicated in the following scenarios. One is from a session that occurred on a Saturday outside Nomhle's (pseudonym) home where Nomhle was sitting with two young women on a bench chatting and laughing. The other is from a group session that the researcher organised with the intentions of hearing from participants about the prevalence of gender-based violence in young women's relationships Ngangelizwe Township, Mthatha.

Group conversations with participants and friends

Interacting with Nomhle and her two friends

- Researcher: Hi, ladies. You good? I was just taking a walk, and I thought let me come see how you are doing Nomhle since I haven't seen you lately.
- Nomhle: Hay wethu ntombi [Hey girl] I'm good. Sihleli nje akhonto [We are just chilling, nothing much].
- Researcher: Is it fine if I join you? Nam akhonto [There is nothing] that I'm rushing to do endlini [at home].
- Nomhle: Not at all. This is Sethu [pseudonym], and this is Pinky [pseudonym]. We stay together in this neighbourhood.

- Researcher: Molweni bethuna nam ndihlala apha [Hi ladies, I am one of your neighbours].
- Nomhle: Sethu, Pinky, this is Sne. I'm sure you have seen her around.
- Sethu: Not really but kuhlukwazi [it's nice to meet you].
- Pinky: I think I saw you at espaza [spaza shop]. Not sure if it was you. You were with two kids.
- Researcher: It might have been me and my cousins. It's really hot today. Any plans for the weekend ladies?
- Nomhle: Yhu, singaplana ntoni sana umntu engenamali kangaka? [What plans can we make when we are so broke?]
- Researcher: Hay wethu [No girl]. Nomhle, speak for yourself [everyone laughing].
- Nomhle: Ndinyanisile njena yayazi nawe, umntu akasebenzi [It's true, you know] moss! [that it is!] unemployment.
- Researcher: So how bad is unemployment here in the township ladies? Makhe sincokoleni [Let's chat]. Nomhle mntase [family] please may we send a child to get us drinks from the spaza safa lilanga? [We are dying of heat]. Which drink do guys prefer? [Taking out money for fizzy drinks].

Planning a group session with Sasa

- Researcher: Hi girl, you good? [telephoning Sasa].
- Sasa: Hey sis, good thanks. Wena? [You?].
- Researcher: I'm good thanks. Ye sana [girl], have you been following the news lately? The killings of young women?
- Sasa: I have, hey, and it's really so scary and makes me so angry.
- Researcher: I was just watching the news and reading online, and I realised it's such a growing trend. I thought let me call you and see if we can discuss how things are since some of these women are varsity students. Imagine how young they are, Karabo Mokoena, Akhona, Njokana and the others.
- Sasa: Ey sis [Hi sister], don't even list them. It's bad. I did an interview on campus some time ago, where I was asking men why are we being punished for being women? Is it a sin that we are female?
- Researcher: I would really love to listen to the interview. Do you think it's a big thing in young women's relationships here elokshini? [in the township?].
- Sasa: Yho, ndikxelele [gosh, let me tell you] it's a problem elokshini [in the township] and on campus. Girls aren't free. Kubi, mntase

- [it is bad family].
- Researcher: Eish [colloquial expression of surprise/disapproval] now that you putting it that way, maybe we should just sit and chat about it. Is it possible for us to meet with others and discuss just sharing our experiences or what we have seen?
- Sasa: Yes sis, no problem. That'd be nice. Maybe we can even give each other tips of what to do, you know.
- Researcher: Let's invite two or more girls please and sit and chat about these experiences. Thanks for availing yourself. I hope your studies are going well and the family is good too.

Some young women were unwilling to share information at the beginning of the discussions, mostly using third-person examples to illustrate cases. However, they slowly engaged more as the discussions progressed. They tended to use the third person more when referring to activities that they felt would not be received favourably among the community as these could potentially produce judgemental attitudes.

Conclusions

The above discussion aimed at sharing lessons learned through an ethnographic study among young women in Ngangelizwe Township. The researcher's experiences unearthed the ethnographic research experience whose success depended on constant negotiations to enter the social lives of participants. Some of the negotiations were explicit as the researcher requested access to become part of the participant's experiences. Other forms of negotiation were symbolic through gestures such as visiting the participants to find out they needed transportation. All these gestures were aimed at building and maintaining trust and friendship that would create a conducive environment for ethnographic observations and conversations between the researcher and participants.

The researcher's field experience showed that although theory may provide researchers with information that guides the ethnographic experience, being in the field opens the researcher to the unexpected encounters. Some of these encounters occur as researchers struggle to connect with potential participants or when unforeseen events such as crime in the case of the research assistant. These encounters, ethnographic researchers can use as lessons to improve their field experience. This means that a researcher needs to be prepared for a challenging unforeseen experience and (re)adapt their research approach accordingly.

The above discussion indicates the importance of flexibility as ethnographic researchers constantly shift between an expert and a learner. In the young women's social worlds such as clubs, the researcher had to take the position of a learner and let the young women lead

their conversations and engagements. However, this role was not fixed as the researcher would also play the role of a transporter, a sister when some of the young women wanted to talk to someone other than their friends. Ethnographers need to be constantly aware of the roles that they play and where those roles fit in their research. This awareness is important in maintaining trust as some of the young women would share experiences that were not intended for the study but to offload their pains and frustrations. It was very important for the researcher to recognise the shifting roles in order not to respond in ways that would compromise trust between the researcher and participants.

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