

Revue Africaine de Sociologie
Un périodique semestriel de Conseil pour le Développement de la Recherche
en Sciences Sociales en Afrique (CODESRIA)
(Incorporant le South African Sociological Review)

Rédacteurs en Chef:

Olajide Oloyede
Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology,
University of the Western Cape,
Private Bag X17, Bellville,
Cape Town, South Africa
Tel: +2721959 3346;
Cell: 0820541962
E-mail: ooloyede@uwc.ac.za

Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo
Université de Ouagadougou,
Burkina Faso
berno@yahoo.com

Elisio Macamo
Lehrstuhl für Entwicklungssoziologie
Universität Bayreuth
95440 Bayreuth, Deutschland
GWII, Zr. 2.24, Germany
Tel. +49 921 55 4207
Fax. +49 921 55 4118
E-mail: Elisio.Macamo@uni-bayreuth.de

Onalenna Selolwane
Tel: 267-355-2758
Fax: 267-318-5099
Mobile: 267-7155321
E-mail: selolwan@mopipi.ub.bw

Comité de Rédaction:

Slaheddine Ben Frej, Tunisienne des Sociologues (ATS), Tunisie
Ifi Amadiume, Dartmouth College, USA
Gbein Paul N'da , Ecole Normale Supérieure, Abijan, Côte d'Ivoire
Jimi O. Adesina, Rhodes University, Republic of South Africa.
Olayiwola Erinsho, Social Science Academy of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria
Rudebeck Lars Edward Axel, Uppsala University, Sweden
Ben Magubane, South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), Pretoria, South Africa
Adama Ba Konaré, Bureau de l'Ancien Président, Niaréla, Bamako / Mali
Ali El Kenz, Université de Nantes, France
Alfred Babatunde Zack-Williams, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, Lancashire,
Harri Englund, Free School Lane, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Dzodzi Tsikata (PhD), University of Ghana, Ghana
Jean-Ferdinand Mbah, Université Omar Bongo, Gabon
Alcinda Honwana , The Open University , United Kingdom
Elizabeth Annan Yao, Iford, Cameroun
Fred Hendricks, Rhodes University, South Africa
Winnie Mitullah, University of Nairobi, Kenya
Jean Copans, Université René Descartes, Paris V, France
Bawa Yamba, Diakonhjemmet College, Norway
Carlos Lopes, New York, USA

La Revue Africaine de Sociologie est une publication semestriel du CODESRIA à Dakar, au Sénégal. On accepte tout article des chercheurs africains et non-africains concernant la problématique des analyses sociales de ce continent et en général. La Revue existe d'abord comme support pour l'extension de la pensée sociologique et anthropologique entre les chercheurs en Afrique. Tout travail pertinent venant de l'extérieur du continent est néanmoins aussi considéré. Des contributions ou en français sont acceptées.

Toute contribution doit être envoyée au:

Olajide Oloyede
Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17, Bellville
Cape Town, South Africa
Tel: +27(21)959 2336
Fax: +27(21) 959 2830
E-mail: jide.oloyede@gmail.com

Abonnements:

Subscriptions
African Sociological Review
Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17, Bellville
Cape Town, South Africa

	De l'Afrique	D'Ailleurs
1. Individus	R50	\$50
2. Institutions africaines	R80	\$80

African Sociological Review Vol 16, no 2, 2012
Contents/Sommair

Editorial	1
General Issues	
Community Sites of Knowledge: Knowledge Creation and Application for Sustainable Peace in Africa <i>Moncef Ouannes</i>	2
Sociologie D'Une Revolte Armee: Le Cas de la Libye <i>Moncef Ouannes</i>	22
Sociology and Social Work in Nigeria: Characteristics, Collaborations and Differences <i>Ayodele Ogundipe and Patrick Edewor</i>	40
Research Papers	
Education et Cohésion Sociale en Tunisie <i>Ali Hammami</i>	56
The Representation of Self-Injury and Suicide on Emo Social Networking Groups <i>Carla Zdanow and Bianca Wright</i>	81
Theatre for Development: An Alternative Programme for Reproductive Health Communication in Nigeria <i>Charles Emeka Nwadiigwe</i>	102
Adolescent Sexuality and Culture: South African Mothers` Perspective <i>Pilot Mudhovozi, Mpho Ramarumo and Tholene Sodi</i>	119

EDITORIAL:

In this issue, we publish a study that can be described, reasonably, as an ‘impact’ study. This is the study by Carla Zdanow and Bianca Wright entitled *The Representation of Self-Injury and Suicide on Emo Social Networking Groups*. The study examines the effect of social networking site, Facebook on emo teenagers with the specific objective of establishing the correlation between the portrayal of suicide and self-harm among emo teenagers. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it is a baseline study of a social phenomenon that is yet to be taken seriously by academics in the country where the study was conducted, South Africa, and indeed in other parts of Africa. A critically significant theme with considerable bearing on the emo teenagers emerge from this study: the idea of Us versus Them which gives the teenagers a sense of solidarity generating the view that self-harm is a ‘normal’ and ‘cool’ part of their life. We could draw from the study that the emo teenager is the archetype of ironic living for irony is the ethos of our age. The emo youth ‘plucks’ virtual living with all its social awkwardness and self-consciousness. He or she lives in a virtual world disconnected from the real world in which they operate with a sense of self-consciousness, that of ‘being cool’, yet there is in him or her a sense of relative social displacement.

Olajide Oloyede
Managing Editor

Community Sites of Knowledge: Knowledge Creation and Application for Sustainable Peace in Africa

Andreas Velthuizen

Institute for Dispute Resolution in Africa (IDRA)

University of South Africa

E-mail: velthag@unisa.ac.za

Abstract

In this article the question is asked: What is relationship between knowledge creation and sustainable peace in Africa? The specific aim of this article is to identify specific principles of knowledge creation and sustainable peace that can serve as propositions for further research. The knowledge foundation of this discussion is a literature study, interpretative interaction and participation in focus-groups during field research in collaboration with the Community Sites of Knowledge (CSoK) and the Marcus Garvey Pan African Institute near and in Mbale, Eastern Uganda. It is that knowledge systems are converging towards a glocality of awareness and action. This convergence facilitates the complementarity of endogenous and modern institutions and the inclusive participation of the community as a building block for sustainable peace, transformation and progress. The finding is that relationship of knowledge creation and sustainable peace in Africa is characterized by glocal interconnectedness, the converging of knowledge and central value adding. Some important recommendations are offered to communities, conflict and dispute resolution practitioners, African Universities and state structures concerning the application of endogenous knowledge for sustainable peace.

Introduction

Successful conflict and dispute resolution requires knowledge, not only knowledge offered through formal learning but also knowledge that is embedded in real-world experiences of people. People who practice dispute and conflict resolution need to understand the causes and consequences of conflict and the skills to find creative and innovative solutions, as well as humanistic values to activate peaceful transformation of society. Practitioners need to develop the skills to reconcile, restore relationships, and promote non-dualism and equality as well as meaning making in cultural, cross-cultural and historical context to ensure sustainable peace in society. Such advanced understanding and skills require a specific way of knowing and sustainable action.

Against this background the question is asked: What is relationship between knowledge creation and sustainable peace in Africa? The relationship is probably multi-dimensional and cannot be covered in one article of limited scope. Therefore, the aim of

this article will be to identify specific principles of knowledge creation and sustainable peace that can serve as propositions for further research.

The knowledge foundation of this discussion is a literature study, interpretative interaction and participation in focus-groups during field research in collaboration with the Community Sites of Knowledge (CSoK) in Eastern Uganda, as well as participation in a symposium, a conference and a seminar that were dealing with the theme. The research involved specific community sites of knowledge in Uganda and modern learning institutions committed to these community sites of knowledge. The research was therefore focussed on the local level, but with the awareness that every local community forms part of a broader society and global humanity.

The research approach to the study was transdisciplinary, with awareness that conflict and disputes are multi-dimensional. The research therefore moved beyond the strict boundaries of disciplines to a space where all knowledge claims can be evaluated and validated in order to explain knowledge creation for sustainable peace. Such an approach required gathering of data and interpretation of information within a specific epistemology, in this case the way of knowing of the Iteso clan as part of east African society. The research furthermore required an iterative linkage with space studies, a trans-disciplinary field of study in its own right.

The discussion will be deployed by offering the theoretical assumptions that underlie this discussion and will include the concepts of 'glocality', knowledge production and sustainable peace. The discussion will therefore depart from this conceptual framework to present the field research in the community sites of knowledge of knowledge near Mbale, Uganda. Finally the impact of the research on theory and practice of knowledge production for sustainable peace will be presented. By way of conclusion some principles of knowledge production for sustainable peace will be identified, followed by recommendations that may lead to solutions to causes of conflict that prevents sustainable peace in Africa.

Theoretical assumptions

This article asserts that sustainable peace in Africa if institutionalization of peace and political cooperation informed by a knowledge production system characterised by a holistic or 'glocal' consciousness in which sharing of knowledge learned from indigenous knowledge, exogenous knowledge and endogenous knowledge leads to reconciliation, participation, convergence, transformation, state building and renewal. These concepts will now be discussed in more detail.

According to Nonaka knowledge production is about making tacit knowledge explicit. Intangible knowledge assets are described as tacit knowledge, and include all intellectual capital, which is the collective education, skills, experience, energy and attitudes that influence production and services. It is owned by the individual and is renewable.

Explicit knowledge is tangible and is in written or recorded format. It includes books, manuals, magazine libraries, policies and procedures, which can be identified, articulated, captured, shared or applied. It may also include large databases that can be exploited through data mining to reveal trends and patterns in support of business processes. It is formalised, captured and leveraged to produce a higher value asset.¹

During the Fifth Annual International Conference on Knowledge, Culture and Change in Organisations, presented by the University of Agean in Rhodes during 2005², a general conclusion was that there is a movement away from controlling and making knowledge tangible to emphasis on cross-cultural sharing of tacit knowledge through word-of-mouth. A social framework, where knowledge can be created and transferred among cultures and disciplines', encouraging collaborative relationships and cultural sensitivity, is increasingly becoming a good practice.

In the context of this discussion the terms 'knowledge creation' will therefore be used, implying that to generate new knowledge involves both the activity of making tacit knowledge explicit as well as the transfer of knowledge among people as part of learning, decision-making or reflective discourse.

Knowledge production for sustainable peace departs from the assumption of 'glocalology' as an epistemology aiming at developing a holistic consciousness that can bring about a new moral and 'glocal' society. Such a society will be based on 'glocal citizenship' a new 'glocal economy' and a just society through restorative learning and understanding, founded on the recovery of the divine word from the divine source (the 'heart'). This means the recognition of the importance of dialogue between different traditions in a quest for the truth.³

For the purpose of this discussion, the first element of this 'truth' is indigenous knowledge, referred by Hoppers et al as knowledge relating to the technological, social, institutional, social, institutional, scientific and developmental, including those used in the liberation struggles. It is about excavating the technologies behind practices and artefacts, architecture, medicine and pharmacology, and recasting the potential in a context of democratic participation for community, national and global development in 'real time'.⁴

This indigenous knowledge develops into endogenous knowledge, when local lived experiences are engendered, produced, grown or found within, affected by contact with surrounding or other influences. The term 'endogenous' allows for the creation of knowledge by a specific social system and diffusion of that knowledge across cultures, assuming that knowledge is not static. Endogenous knowledge is visible in terms of the way people connect with each other and with the rest of the universe, centres and networks of knowledge sharing, processes, tools and impact on the lives of people.⁵

Ake asserts that unless we strive for endogenous development of science and knowledge we could not fully emancipate ourselves as Africans. Even though the principles of science are universal, its growth points, applications and the specific

problems that it solves are contingent on the historical circumstances of the society in which the science is produced.⁶

Endogenous knowledge is from the vantage point of the local people and not from Western trained elites. It is therefore Afrocentric knowledge that leads to the empowerment of African people, not dependent on development Eurocentric and Americanised rulers.⁷

‘Exogenous knowledge (from an African point of view), is knowledge accumulated throughout centuries on different aspects of life, shared with the people of Africa, and appropriation by African of the knowledge available elsewhere. Such appropriation should coincide with a critical re-appropriation of Africa’s own endogenous knowledge, and an African process of accumulating and producing knowledge, and capitalising on it.’⁸

Dia explains the iterative relationship between indigenous, exogenous and endogenous knowledge stating that the first requirement for knowledge production is the need for a new participatory process that focuses on building convergences between formal and informal institutions, empowering beneficiaries and local communities. Reconciliation between indigenous groups and formal institutions brings together dominant societal values of indigenous cultures as well as the technical and organizational philosophy that support modern institutions. Convergence begins when both formal and indigenous systems recognise the need for sustained interaction. Renewing, informal institutions need to create relationships with adaptive formal ones, revolving around programmes and projects, releasing synergy between the interacting institutions and achieving institutional convergence.⁹

Synergy and convergence of institutions for sustainable peace is emphasised by the assertion that peace-building is a multifaceted endeavour that includes building democratic governance, protecting human rights, strengthening the rule of law, and promoting sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security.¹⁰ Once actions (in this case knowledge development across societies and through the convergence of formal and informal knowledge) undertaken by international or national peace becomes institutionalized, it leads to the absence of armed conflict (‘negative peace’) and the involvement of a small number of participatory political actors (as a component of ‘positive peace’), seen as sustainable peace.¹¹

These theoretical assumptions highlights two propositions that will inform the reasoning in this discussion:

- Knowledge systems are converging towards a glocality of awareness and action, systematically forcing into the background the historical perception brought by colonialism that indigenous knowledge is subordinate and that Western knowledge is superior.

- The complementarity of endogenous and modern institutions and the inclusive participation of communities are building blocks for sustainable peace, transformation and progress.

These propositions will be scrutinized by discussing the observations and findings of limited field research done together with the Community Sites of Knowledge of the P'ikwe and Iwokudan clans of Eastern Uganda.¹²

The Community sites of Knowledge of P'ikwe and Iwokudan

Semi-structured interviews, briefings by community elders and interpretative interaction with the P'ikwe community revealed how, motivated by a concern about rising poverty, deepening inequity and inevitable conflict, the Iteso society of Uganda implemented the 'Community Sites of Knowledge' (CSoK).

P'ikwe

The CSok is a holistic concept following an intrinsic model that is used to cope with socio-economic and environmental conditions after the war when people returned from camps in 1992, putting knowledge into action. This paradigm follows a rural agenda, applying sustainability and resilience within a 'glocal community'. Human development takes place through recognition of a 'Creator' and the self in relation to nature and fellowship with other human beings. The CSoK is an approach to self-organization and cooperation by poor people in need towards self-transformation in view of persistent marginalisation by a central government.

Re-centralizing the rural agenda involves endogenous resource mobilization, data-narrative, community mapping and historical memory, dialogue and knowledge sharing to form the knowledge foundation for economic production, combining the spiritual principles of the community with analytical, scientific methodology.

Several platforms are used for rural innovation hatching, capability building and to offer lifelong learning and life skills to individuals. The local community (some very vulnerable people) is organised in Head, Hart, Head and Health clubs or '4H-Clubs', aligned with extended families as the smallest socio-economic unit. Leaders of change from the community, local schools, strategic partners, and agents from other stakeholders, also serve as important platforms of knowledge sharing and action.

The P'ikwe Community Initiative follows a methodology that brings together all knowledge from the community, academic and other partners in a Community Study Center (CSC). An old farmhouse is used for this purpose. In the CSC knowledge on indigenous and endogenous agricultural practices are gathered by Key Farmer Trainers

who captures it on script. At the CSC this knowledge is codified and stored on a computer system. At the same time knowledge workers at the CRC gathers information on pre-determined themes to supplement the knowledge from the community, periodically attending seminars or enter into discussions with the Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute in Mbale or representatives of the agricultural department of Makerere University in Kampala. The CRC therefore serves as a facility where all knowledge is integrated.

The knowledge is then used to train inter alia by Key Farmer Trainers who takes this value-added knowledge back to the community to train the households in the village on the best methodology to embark on agricultural ventures, using all possible knowledge in income-generating projects such as honey production. The key trainer fulfil the role as change manager, mentor, supervisor and knowledge manager, using the community as a 'living laboratory' to produce collective knowledge for projects. What is also significant here is the use of technology such as modern electronic recording and playback instruments by the Key Farmer Trainer to capture and distribute knowledge. In most cases training takes place under, for instance, under a mango tree in the village, indicating that effective learning is not dependent on modern facilities.

Knowledge is placed directly into action at a Value Adding Centre where sunflower oil is produced for the open market, using modern equipment. The Value Adding Centre is a good example of a process that involves the selection of the right type of sunflower seed for the specific climatic conditions of the area that would produce the most and best quality oil, planting methodology, harvesting and eventually producing the sunflower oil. The seeds are supplied by the National Agricultural Research Organization. The Namalere Agricultural Research Institute designed animal traction, weeders and harvesters for the community, based on knowledge provided by the community on what the characteristics of implements should be to be applied successfully in the specific earth types of the region.

The case of the CSoK of P'Ikwe illustrates the fusion of indigenous, endogenous and modern or exogenous knowledge to apply restorative agriculture towards self-empowerment and the restoration of structures. In a broader sense it indicates a way of establishing institutions and improved interaction between marginalized communities and central governments in general, contributing to human development as a prerequisite for good governance, service delivery and a peaceful society.

Iwokudan

The aspect of using traditional structures to contribute to good governance is also illustrated by the focus group meetings and interpretative interaction with the traditional leaders of the Iwokudan community, an Iteso clan in Kamuge, Pallisa District, near the town of Mbali in North Eastern Uganda community. In this case the endogenous form

of governance and traditional ways of dispute resolution is of specific significance.

Prior to colonial rule the heterogeneous society of Uganda was organized along chiefdoms, and clans, later on described by Western anthropologists and their African converts as 'tribes' as discrete social entities. In this context, the political organization of the Iteso was clan-based, ruled by Elders, regulated by traditional customs which controlled social behaviour, harmony and stability.¹³

The clan is the basic social and political unit, administrative and judicial in character. The clan leader is called the *Apolon ka Aketer*, usually a person of courage, impartiality and wisdom, elected from the Elders. He acted as arbitrator in the event of disputes. In serious cases such as murder and debt, the traditional settlement of disputes was performed by the *Apolon ka Aketer* assisted by the *Airabis* or *Aurianet* (Council of Elders). Successful settlement involved compensation and ceremony.¹⁴

Today the Iwokodan Clan Community Site of Knowledge is structured in such a way that the Elders form their own 'Cabinet' consisting of several 'Ministries', thus based on indigenous structures, developed through colonial and modern influences that evolved into what may be called endogenous structures. This structure of governance serves as a mechanism of resolving conflict and disputes, in a way that has always been part of this community.

A focus group meeting in Iwokodan (Eastern Uganda) articulated how the community is empowered to dispense traditional restorative justice today, fusing modern and traditional approaches. After the modern court system in Uganda failed to dispense justice, the traditional justice system of communities such as Iwokodan proved to be the most accessible court system in comparison with the costly and slow state apparatus. The traditional courts have very few technicalities in comparison with the rigid procedures of a modern court that most rural people do not understand. Furthermore, these traditional courts are not punitive but reconciliatory.

In Iwokodan the elders of the extended family forms the 'court of original jurisdiction' or '*cooj*' (meaning 'bonfire'). The case is then escalated to village level ('*etem*') where the case is heard by the village chief, and then to county level ('*ebuku*'). Fusion with the modern system is then taking place when a case is taken to a formal Court of Appeal '*Napollon*', which falls under the Minister of Justice.

The focus group continued to explain how a twenty year old land dispute between two brothers were resolved on the level of the clan. The father, who passed on, did not leave clear instructions on who should own the land after his death. Consequently, the two brothers came into conflict on which the land belongs to and even divided the land that was under consideration. Recourse to the modern court system had no results, including the case dragging on in the High Court for more than a decade. Indications that this dispute may turn violent prompted the Elders of the clan to intervene and resolve the dispute once and for all.

Lengthy discussions, including narratives about the history of the conflict in which the

women in the clan had a prominent input, resulted in a decision that a Diviner should be called in to give guidance to the Elders. Without going into detail, it is understood that the Diviner made contact with the late father, who gave clear guidelines about what the father wants. The late father indicated his disappointment in their behaviour and insisted on shared ownership and joint decision-making on the land. Both brothers accepted the resulting verdict of the Elders and peace was restored in the community.

The Iwokodan Clan Community shows how traditional structures can still serve the purpose of good governance in a modern context, including using the traditional way of dispute resolution complementary to modern court systems. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the collective knowledge of a community, including not only formal education or what became home grown through experience, but also what can be called the reality of beliefs, can empower the community to resolve their own problems the way traditional communities have been coping for centuries. Moreover, it shows that endogenous structures of rural communities provide the fabric for critical local governance infrastructure and broader participative democratization, which may be very valuable for the prevention and resolving of conflict.

Evaluation

The CSoK of P'Ikwe and Iwokodan are good examples of glocality in action. In the CSoKs of P'Ikwe and Iwokodan we find not only the use of endogenous knowledge for the physical production of agricultural products and applying endogenous techniques and tools for such production, but also a living example of the convergence of knowledge for conflict prevention and dispute resolution. A local knowledge foundation that involves original customary ideas, putting the ideas into the context of a holistic cosmology of interconnectedness between human beings and nature, manifests visibly in the form of knowledge centres within community sites of knowledge, linked to modern learning institutions. In this way the fusion and validation of all knowledge in this specific cultural environment can be achieved with the key trainers as epistemological expert and important agents of transformation and self-emancipation of society.

What made the communities of P'Ikwe and Iwokodan special is that, through the initiatives of community leadership, they succeeded in reviving their own traditional household and village structures, successfully inquired and mapped the 'memory archives' of key indigenous knowledge holders from the community. Moreover, they succeeded in linking with 'modern knowledge' to create and apply endogenous knowledge towards self-empowerment and production to break out of a situation of extreme destitution and poverty.

Impact on knowledge creation practices in Africa

Kwesi Kwaa Prah highlighted the need for a convergence of knowledge and institutions by reminding us that since colonialism in Africa, the process of the production and reproduction of knowledge illustrates the idea of a 'civilizing' mission, through which Africans were Christianized and taught to read and write in an attempt to produce Africans who would be of service to colonialism. This pattern of education and knowledge production was inherited with only minor revisions by the post-colonial state. Africa's development should be premised on the culture embedded in the social life of Africans, to be accessed through African languages as the basis of social identification and access the knowledge of the people. Western ideas must melt into African culture and become African cultural adaptations of Western or universal modes of thought and social practice. This approach should avoid the conventions, values and attitudes of archaic traditionalism while absorbing the practices and innovations that strengthen the cultural basis of what African societies. Institutions that have taken thousands of years to evolve should not be cast aside but reformed to remain significant in the individual and collective life of societies.¹⁵

The CSoK practice heeds to these recommendations by first of all emancipate the communities involved from colonial practices to what is relevant and applicable in the contemporary context. The users of the knowledge is now also involved in creating new knowledge, actively participating in gathering, supply, evaluation, validation, analysis and meaning making towards the creation of a new and useful body of knowledge that can be used for decision-making, learning or just to critically reflect on possible solutions.

The involvement of people in new knowledge creation reminds us of the understanding of the United Nations that all people are creative beings and carriers of tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge in a 'knowledge society' that involves all members of a community in knowledge creation and utilization and supports the goal of high quality and safety of life for all people everywhere. To be a 'Smart Knowledge Society' (as distinct from a 'Nominal or Warped Knowledge Society') requires a new sense of direction in development and a commitment to converting knowledge into products and services. Private business enterprises and the market economy combine the capacities of modern Information, Communication Technology (ICT) with information and group thinking organized in shared spaces for knowledge creation. Institutions and organizations enable people and information to develop without limits to be mass-produced and mass-utilized knowledge throughout the society as a whole.¹⁶

This explanation reflects the reality in many communities of practice in the modern world. However, achieving this ideal in a rural, developing context takes a special kind of commitment to achieve. The CSoKs under discussion demonstrates this commitment and shows that the involvement of community members is a crucial point of departure

towards successful knowledge production for sustainable solutions, and in this case, lasting peace. The sense of direction is already there, and the fledgling state of production is a sound platform to build upon, taking cognisance of the crude reminder that without reliable connectivity through the use of ICT infrastructure the knowledge production process will be slow and cumbersome. It is therefore crucial that the interconnectedness among a 'glocal' community is enabled and enhanced by modern technology.

The field research confirms earlier findings by Velthuisen that knowledge production in Africa implies a process of value adding during which all knowledge claims are included towards holistic or global knowledge, achieved through a culture of learning. That implies the adjustment of practices in the community to enable sharing and networking as an imperative for self-emancipation, to participate in a globalised world and to compete if necessary. It furthermore implies interactive communication to share divergent worldviews and transfer knowledge about a dynamic 'glocal' environment during which cultural diversity is recognized, both in response and in the creation of new knowledge. Processes should be in place to make tacit knowledge (what is in the minds of people, sometimes only articulated through narrative) visible and useful.¹⁷

The establishment of Community Study Center (CSC) correlates with the findings of Velthuisen that the establishment of a knowledge centre is a good practice for knowledge production. According to these findings, knowledge centres involves community members and practitioners or scholars with a new vision for the future, to deliver better understanding of the causes and consequences of conflict and changed behaviour.

An ideal knowledge centre is:

- Representing broad society, accommodating the intellectual capital of the community and intra-linking with other stakeholders who chose to promote understanding of a situation or to contribute to solutions.
- Under joint control of the community and other mandated actors;
- An intra-active, cohesive, joint working group involving all stake-holders in equal relationships;
- A trans-disciplinary information-processing unit where research, joint knowledge products, and early warning of things that may go wrong are generated.
- A producer of knowledge products that presents innovative ideas for the formulation of solutions;
- Empowering communities to find solutions for challenges on their own or collectively but equally with other actors;
- Guided by regulatory instruments to guide aspects such as confidentiality, intellectual property and responsibility.

- Part of an intra-connected, collective, trans-disciplinary community of practice and learning network (including the modern university system).¹⁸

Although the Community Study Center (CSC) in P'Ikwe is focussed on agricultural knowledge production, similar centres can produce knowledge in other spheres to serve the needs of the community, for example, to provide early warning and create foresight of the probability of incidents that might occur in the short term (such as genocide and disputes), or in the long-term, the probability of conflict in and among societies.

In this regards Faris point out that, in the African context, the theory and practice of informal process should be explored as a means of social transformation and as an instrument for sustainable development, particularly in the area of governance. Within a holistic system of dispute resolution, disputes are not divorced from the socio-economic conditions and culture of disputants and related communities.¹⁹

Malan explains it further by saying that understanding and addressing conflicts in their social context where they are emerging or have emerged, means that values and beliefs, fears and suspicions, interests and needs, attitudes and actions, relationships and networks are taken into consideration in exploring the root causes of a conflict. This understanding will enable timely precautions against conflict, and conciliation. A shared understanding of the past and the present is developed, restoring, maintaining and building relationships. The interest and involvement of the people around the disputants is almost always implied or incorporated and returns to the foreground when the community takes part in affirming an agreement and monitoring its implementation.²⁰

The assertions of Faris and Malan indicate that knowledge creation on community level holds the key to prevent, monitor, and resolve conflicts as well of restoration of relationships as the most important outcome of conflict resolution and community participation.

Implications of the CSoK for the Modern Learning Institution

If the creation of knowledge on community level can be enhanced by mostly the exogenous knowledge brought by modern learning institutions, the CSoK venture indicates that boundaries that used to exist between academic and non-academic learning are becoming blurred, as the 'excluded middle' (in this case modern learning institutions) is increasingly included. Knowledge is necessary for production and communities seek interlocking networks of economic and social relationships globally as Africa moves into a 'learning economy'. Nowadays business, communities and several non-academic settings, where groups of people from different disciplines and institutions come together, are centres of learning.²¹

In this regards the CSoKs realises the vision of the late Professor Nabudere that a

Pan-Afrikan university must be a new kind of university, not only in the approach to teaching and research, but in its strategic conception and its placement at the base of African and human emancipation and liberation. For the Pan-African University to set a path in the search for knowledge and truth, it must be built on a sound spiritual basis of African spiritual life that has enabled the African people to survive as a human community throughout the centuries.²²

The achievements of the CSOKs in question respond to this reminder by closing the distance between the community and the state, by incorporating the culture of the community in learning and by facilitating the participation of the remote community in the global world of learning. In this case, the strategic placement of the Marcus Garvey Pan Afrikan Institute as part of a CSOK enabled the modern learning institution to serve as catalyst for self-emancipation and self-empowerment of the communities in question. Furthermore, it rests on a specific epistemology that is African, but also modern and exogenous.

It therefore also satisfy the need for dialogues and communication between civilizations to create a better understanding of human action and an ethos that involves the recapturing of the moral and spiritual dimensions of 'holistic justice'.²³ In this regard the complementarity of modern courts and traditional institutions are demonstrated by the practices of the Iwokudan clan in the context and in conjunction with modern state structures.

The dialogue and knowledge sharing between the key trainers, community knowledge centres and the Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute and with bigger universities all over Africa and beyond creates the window of opportunity for the community to successful utilize global learning and what the state of Uganda and other states has to offer in terms of early warning and solution to conflicts. The closeness to society achieved by this initiative creates the opportunity for modern learning institutions to implement similar initiatives elsewhere, taking in consideration that the success of the CSOK of Mbale rests on the people achieving access to knowledge for all (in which use of local language is essential), enriching learning content with endogenous African knowledge and using methodologies that rural people are comfortable with. It is especially the recognition of the spiritual and moral foundation of the communities involved that enables culture-driven creativity and innovation.

These cases also provide a good point of departure for Makhanya's call that a modern university in Africa should promote knowledge systems in all their diversities, including, ensuring that African endogenous knowledge systems are central to the core business of the university. Endogenous knowledge should be visible in curriculum development, teaching and learning, research development and innovation and community engagement.²⁴

Although modern universities may in many cases still have a long way to go towards this ideal end-state, the involvement of several research institutes and universities such as

Makerere in the CSOKs, indicates that bringing indigenous and endogenous knowledge into the modern curriculum and then bringing that new enriched curriculum back to the people is achievable. What is specifically significant is the knowledge contribution of Africa for sustainable solutions, not relying on solutions imposed on Africa.

The experience of the CSOK guides us towards a unionised and endogenous way of knowledge creation that involves the community as the guiding actor, the modern university as main instrument of dialogue and mutual penetration between local knowledge, the broader world of learning and modern state systems. In this paradigm, however, the centre of knowledge production is not the modern university or state, but the local community, with the realization that empowerment of communities, understanding of challenges, and early warning of dysfunctions such as disputes can only be addressed effectively as a multi-stakeholder venture driven by the community in question.

Implications for sustainable peace

The CSOK concept is directly related to the concern of Paris, that the rapid introduction of democracy and capitalism in the absence of effective institutions increased rather than decrease the danger of renewed violence. An alternative strategy for post-conflict peace building emphasizes the reconstruction of effective security, police and judicial institutions as the first step in the transformation of war-torn states into stable market democracies.²⁵

The CSOK not only brings a specific perspective on dispute resolution methodology, but also solutions to good governance in the broader sense, addressing more than one 'pillar' of democratic governance for peace. The CSOK is a manifestation of democratic governance in reality, economic –self empowerment, social development, technological innovation, environmental management and justice for all.

After the Cold War this vision of 'peace building' in post-conflict contexts, brought some success, e.g. stability in Mozambique but also failures, such as the DRC and the Sudan, where violence broke out after the peace building initiatives. It was clear to observers that more sustainable peace building required an increased emphasis on building political institutions for transformation of post-conflict states. State building has emerged as a global policy priority and new paradigm for building peace in post-conflict societies. However, the practice of state building is full of dilemmas for which there are no simple solutions. A first step is to realize that state formation is primarily an endogenous process, over which international actors have only limited control.²⁶

The use of endogenous knowledge to build societal structures that can enhance the formal structures of governance adheres to the requirement of institutional building, as an imperative for peace, involving as many as possible political actors. Institutions such as knowledge centres and 4-H Clubs may not have the inclination to be political

structures, but it serves as instruments of mobilization for good governance and socio-economic development.

A further critical element of peace building, is to prevent the reoccurrence and relapse into conflict. An early warning and early response systems (EWERS) serves this purpose. However, in general, EWERS systems in Africa remain weak and inadequate. To function well, EWERS should be embedded in good governance structures, democratic institutions and leadership, closely linked to ongoing peace building efforts on the continent. EWERS can only be successful with closer engagement with local actors and organizations. Numerous conflicts emerge from the local level, thus much information can be gathered from that level. The role of traditional and local leaders, community-based organisations, and faith groups become more prominent in providing information, as they will also have to make decisions on early response options. Continental and regional organizations have a lot to contribute to EWERS on the continent.²⁷

The CSoK, and especially knowledge centre may become a powerful instrument of early warning, bringing with it the possibility of closer engagement between local people and organizations responsible for monitoring and responding to threats. In this way the local people enjoys the opportunities to express their perspectives on causes of a conflict and a way to resolve it without relying on distorted views, created from a distance, imposed on them.

Principles of knowledge creation for sustainable peace

According to Zartman²⁸, traditional conflict management practices in Africa can be readjusted and refurbished to fit into a modern context. We have to determine what is new, different from that which is universal and conceptualized, how conflicts are managed, what the contextual societal conditions are, which mechanisms and practices operates, what kinds of conflicts can be handled and the relevance/appropriateness of traditional African conflict management practices to modern conflicts.

In this regard, taking in consideration the impact of CSoK on knowledge production, modern learning institutions and sustainable peace, the following principles of knowledge production for peace can be identified:

- **Glocal Interconnectedness.** A closeness of the community, societies moving closer to each other, the complementarily of structures, enabled by the restoration of relationships, personal sharing of knowledge and enhanced by ICT.
- **Knowledge conversion.** The user of knowledge, the community, is a main actor in the processing of knowledge, implying a collective evaluation, validation, capturing, value-adding, retrieval, analysis, interpretation and meaning making of all knowledge.

- Central Value-adding. A central facility where value is added to:
 - A synthesis of knowledge that can be used for innovation, decisionmaking and early warning;
 - the knowledge of the individual and modern learning institutions; and
 - products for the consumer market and services for the community and broader society.

These principles shapes the foundation of a model that illustrates how humankind is moving closer to each other, an opportunity that is posed by modern communications and a 'networking' world. The CSoK is a manifestation of this trend on local level, where people in distress use their most ancient weapon to protect and survive: their collective knowledge. Moving closer together enable them to learn more from each other, moving closer to the centre enable them to learn more from others, and moving across human made boundaries bring opportunities for sustainable peace and a quality of life that is attainable by putting their knowledge into action.

Conclusions

The relationship of knowledge creation and sustainable peace in Africa is characterized by glocal interconnectedness, knowledge conversion and central value adding. This relationship serves as a driving force for sustainable peace through the creation and application of knowledge. Through knowledge creation, communities in Africa can successful muster and merge knowledge to take control over their own destiny by transforming the community into a 'site of knowledge'. Sustainable peace requires knowledge, not only knowledge offered through formal learning but also knowledge that is embedded in real-world experiences of people. People who seek sustainable peace need to understand the causes and consequences of conflict to find creative and innovative solutions to activate peaceful transformation of society.

In interaction with the communities of P'Ikwe and Iwobudan it was found that the crux of knowledge production and application is the process and practices that takes place in community sites of knowledge and between and with other institutions. The local community is the guiding actor and the centre of endogenous knowledge application, because the community is situated at the crossroads where local knowledge and learning provided by modern learning institutions meet. In this way, communities are empowered to understand the challenges facing them, including the challenge of persistent disputes and violent conflict, and early warning of emerging conflicts.

Empowerment of the community includes learning in one's own language,

participation in developing learning content and methodology suitable to the specific culture. Multi-cultural scholars join together to participate and facilitate learning, preferable in knowledge centres established in CSoKs with the purpose of merging knowledge, collective learning and to establish a way of knowing and understanding human disputes unique to the local community to prevent or resolve their own disputes in an endogenous and innovative way.

The convergence of knowledge on community level enables the restoration of relationships, increased production of goods, changed behaviour, skills development and local institutional building, continuously reducing the risk of conflict. Knowledge belongs to the people, and if people create and apply knowledge collectively and in a non-dualistic way it, *inter alia*, creates good relationships that prevents conflict and lead to lasting peace.

Collaboration with the community by the rest of society enhances social cohesion and non-dualism, empowering communities, contributing to democratic governance structures in general, especially where structures are severely damaged or destroyed by political rivalry and violent conflict. Furthermore, successful community sites of knowledge imply that mechanisms are in place to provide early warning of grievances and frustrations and to prevent violent conflict. Community structures furthermore provide the facility for timely dispute resolution.

Community sites of knowledge create the opportunity for joint projects, involving modern universities to move closer and to intra-act with communities, as part of a bonding founded on the principles of Glocal Interconnectedness and central value-adding.

Recommendations

Communities should empower themselves, using the wealth of knowledge inside the community and the wealth of knowledge from a global knowledge network to produce goods and services to break out of the cycle of poverty and to re-establish positive norms and values in society. Developing communities should take the initiative to establish community sites of knowledge consisting of learning centres as point of entry, a network of participating families, bi-cultural key trainers, and visiting scholars to enhance the dispute resolution and violent conflict prevention capacity of the community. Such a capacity would involve a research capacity, a capacity for design and development of home-grown solutions, learning and teaching facilities and provision of services to the community such as dispute resolution and other needs-driven solutions.

Conflict resolution practitioners, as communities of practice, should take cognisance of glocality as a new way of knowing about disputes and violent conflict and how to resolve it. A new understanding is required to restore justice and the dignity of people who still suffers from the aftermath of political conflict and socio-economical neglect or misfortune. The consideration of historical facts or current affairs is just not enough

anymore to make a wise call: understanding the current cultural context is required to sustain peace.

African Universities should identify and place suitable scholars with communities who can communicate in the language of the community with the aim of empowering community members with best practices that may contribute to the inherent capacity of the community without dominating them. Facilitators from modern learning institutions should become culturally one with communities in a relationship characterised by mutual-empowerment through knowledge sharing.

Other stakeholders who have interests in a community should engage in joint projects with the community with the focus on democratic institutional building and economic empowerment of the community to reduce the risk of conflict in and with the community towards lasting peace. All stakeholders should join forces to empower the local community to prevent or resolve disputes in an endogenous, innovative and peaceful way before it escalates to the extent that it affects society as a whole.

State structures should recognise the contribution of local communities to good governance if allowed to apply customary processes to resolve disputes in a non-violent and legal way. Especially the early-warning capacity of local communities, their special understanding of causes and consequences of disputes and the most suitable way for resolving it before it escalates, presents a powerful tool for the promotion of democratic governance, service delivery, social coherence, socio-economic growth, transformation of society and sustainable peace.

Endnotes

- 1 I. Nonaka, 1998, 'The knowledge creating company', *Harvard Business Review on Knowledge Management*, ed. P. Drucker. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, p. 21.
- 2 The author attended and presented at this conference
- 3 D.W. Nabudere, 2012, *Afrikology and Trans-disciplinarity: A Restorative Epistemology*, Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa, p191-192.
- 4 C. Odora Hoppers, 2002, *Indigenous Knowledge and the Integration of Knowledge Systems: Towards a conceptual and Methodological Framework*, *Indigenous Knowledge and the Integration of Knowledge Systems*, Claremont, New Africa Books .p. 8.
- 5 P.J.Hountondji, Knowledge of Africa, knowledge of Africans. *RCCS Annual Review* no. 1, September 2009,p.10.
- 6 C Ake, Editorial: raison d'etre. *African Journal of Political Economy Vol. 1 No.1.*, 1986. p. i-iv.
- 7 B.R. Gaidzanwa. 'Critical enquiry into African knowledge production and epistemological systems, with the aim of generating endogenous Afrocentric

- perspectives and paradigms', presentation in Pretoria, Unisa, 3 October 2012
- 8 Houtondji, *Ibid.*
 - 9 M. Dia, *Africa's management in the 1990s and beyond: Reconciling indigenous and transplanted institutions*. Washington, World Bank, 1996. p. 241
 - 10 M. Barnett and C. Zürcher, 'The peacebuilder's contract: How external state building reinforces weak statehood', Eds.R. Paris and T. Sisk, *The Contradictions of State Building: Confronting the Dilemmas of Post-War Peace Operations*. London, Routledge. 2008.
 - 11 C. Call, and E. Cousens, 'Ending Wars and Building Peace'. *Working Paper Series: Coping with Crisis*. New York, International Peace Academy, 2007.
 - 12 The sources of these data are semi-structured interviews and focus group meetings with community elders of Iwokodan and P'Ikwe, the management of the Marcus Garvey Pan-Afrikan Institute in Mbale, conducted in January 2012 for the purpose of this study. This was followed up by participation in a conference in commemoration of the late Professor Dani Wadada Nabudere (the main exponent of the community sites of knowledge in an around Mbale) in Kampala, March 2012. This interpretative narrative is with full recognition to Reverend Sam Ebukalin, the Coordinator of the Uganda Change Agents Association (UCAA), Mr Roger Eli Wanda from the Marcus Garvey Pan African Institute, the Elder Council of Iwokodan and the Community of P'Ikwe.
 - 13 A. Mafeje, 'The Ideology of 'Tribalism'', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol.9, issue 2, August 1971, pp. 253-261
 - 14 R. Nzita, an N. Mbagala, N. *Peoples and Cultures of Uganda*, Kampala, Fountain Publishers, 1998,p..124
 - 15 Kwesi Kwaa Prah, 'Culture: The Missing Link in Development in Planning', in L. Keita (ed.) *Africa Philosophy and African Development: Theory and Practice*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 2011, pp. 160-165
 - 16 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,. Division for Public Administration and Development Management. *Understanding Knowledge Societies*, New York, United Nations Publishing Section, 2005.
 - 17 A.G. Velthuisen, *The Management of Knowledge: A Model for the African Renaissance*, Doctoral Thesis, Pretoria, UNISA, 2007.
 - 18 *Ibid*
 - 19 J. Faris. J. *Dispute Resolution: towards a new vision*. (<http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=26247>), 21 June 2012.
 - 20 J. Malan, *Conflict resolution wisdom from Africa*. Durban, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), 1997, p. 93
 - 21 D.W.Nabudere, 'The developmental state, democracy and the global society in Africa', paper presented at the DBSA/HSRC/Wits NEPAD Conference 'Investment Choices for Education in Africa', 19–21 September 2006,

- Johannesburg.
- 22 D.W Nabudere, 'Towards the Establishment of a Pan-African University: A Strategic Concept Paper', *African Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 8, no. 1., Afrika Study Centre, Mbale, Uganda. 2011. p. 1.
 - 23 Nabudere 2012, pp.192-193.
 - 24 M. Makhanya, 'Commemorating the meaning of Africa day today: Reflections', Annual Thabo Mbeki Africa Day Lecture, 2012, Pretoria, Unisa
 - 25 R. Paris, 'At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict'. Cambridge University Press, 2004, Abstrac
 - 26 D. Lanz, and D. Péclard,. Peacebuilding Through Statebuilding? Zurich, International Relations and Security Network (ISN), Center for Security Studies (CSS), (www.isn.org), 24 March 2011.
 - 27 A. Habib, Consultancy Africa Intelligence (CAI), (<http://www.polity.org.za>) 21 Feb 2011.
 - 28 I.W. Zartman, 'Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts: African Conflict 'Medicine'. Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2000.p.7.

References

- Ake, C, 1986, 'Editorial: raison d'etre', *African Journal of Political Economy* Vol.1,1, p. i-iv.
- Barnett, M. and Zürcher, C., 2008, 'The peacebuilder's contract: How external state building reinforces weak statehood', in Paris R. and Sisk, T. (eds.), *The Contradictions of State Building: Confronting the Dilemmas of Post-War Peace Operations*, London: Routledge, pp. 287-303.
- Call, C. and Cousens, E., 2008, 'Ending Wars and Building Peace, International Responses to War-Torn Societies', *International Studies Perspectives* Vol.9, p. 1-21.
- Dia, M., 1996, *Africa's management in the 1990s and beyond: Reconciling indigenous andtransplanted institutions*, Washington: World Bank, p. 241.
- Faris, J., 2012, 'Dispute Resolution: towards a new vision', (<http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=26247>), 21 June 2012.
- Gaidzanwa, B.R., 2012, 'Critical enquiry into African knowledge production and epistemological systems, with the aim of generating endogenous Afrocentric perspectives and paradigms', presentation in Pretoria, Unisa, 3 October 2012.
- Habib, A., 2011, 'Can 53 states ever be equal to 1? A discourse of the prospect of continental integration in Africa' Consultancy Africa Intelligence (CAI), (<http://www.polity.org.za>) 21 Feb 2011.
- Hountondji, P.J, 2009, 'Knowledge of Africa, knowledge of Africans', *RCCS Annual Review no. 1*, September 2009, p.10.
- Kwesi Kwaa Prah, 2011, 'Culture: The Missing Link in Development in Planning', in Keita, L. (ed.) *Africa Philosophy and African Development: Theory and*

- Practice*, Dakar: CODESRIA, pp. 160-165.
- Lanz, D. and Péclard, D., 2011, 'Peacebuilding Through Statebuilding?' International Relations and Security Network (ISN), Center for Security Studies (CSS), (www.isn.org), 24 March 2011.
- Mafeje, A., 1971, 'The Ideology of Tribalism', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol.9, 2, pp. 253-261.
- Malan, J.,1973, *Conflict resolution wisdom from Africa*, Durban: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), p. 93
- Nabudere, D.W., 2006, 'The developmental state, democracy and the global society in Africa', paper presented at the DBSA/HSRC/Wits NEPAD Conference 'Investment Choices for Education in Africa', 19–21 September 2006, Johannesburg.
- Nabudere, D.W, 2011, 'Towards the Establishment of a Pan-African University: A Strategic Concept Paper', *African Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 8, 1., Afrika Study Centre, Mbale, Uganda, p. 1.
- Nabudere D.W., 2012, *Afrikology and Trans-disciplinarity: A Restorative Epistemology*, Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, pp.191-192
- Nonaka, I. 1998, 'The knowledge creating company', in Drucker,P. (ed.), *Harvard Business Review on Knowledge Management*, Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, p. 21.
- Nzita, R., and Mbaga, N., 1998, *Peoples and Cultures of Uganda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, p.124.
- Odora Hoppers, C., 2002, 'Indigenous Knowledge and the Integration of Knowledge Systems: Towards a conceptual and Methodological Framework', in *Indigenous Knowledge and the Integration of Knowledge Systems*, Claremont: New Africa Books, p. 8.
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, 2005, *Understanding Knowledge Societies*, New York: United Nations Publishing Section.
- Paris, R., 2004, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Abstract.
- Velthuisen, A.G., 2007, *The Management of Knowledge: A Model for the African Renaissance*, Doctoral Thesis, Pretoria: UNISA.
- Zartman, I.W., 2000, *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts: African Conflict Medicine*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, p.7.

Sociologie D'une Revolte Armee: Le Cas de Libye

Ouannes Moncef

Département de Sociologie

Faculté des sciences humaines et sociale de Tunis-Tunisie

E-mail: ouannesm@yahoo.fr

Résumé

Dans cet article l'auteur propose une lecture sociologique des événements qu'avait connu la Lybie entre le 17 février et le 20 octobre 2011 et tente de répondre aux questions suivantes: Pourquoi le changement politique en Lybie s'est caractérisé par une violence cruelle qui s'est soldé par plus de 50000 morts et plus de 100000 blessés? Pourquoi cette violence était monopolisée par les islamistes radicaux? et quelle type de relation existait entre l'état et la tribu?

Mots clés: *changement--révolte- islamisme--radicalisme-tribalisme*

Abstract

This article is a sociological reading of events that occurred in Libya between 17 February and 20 October 2011. It tries to answer the main question:

why did change policy he take a very violent character with 50 000 dead more than 100 000 injured? Why was it monopolized by radical islamist? and What was the relationship between tribe and the state?

Keywords: *change-revolt-islamic-radicalism-tribalism*

Questions de départ

Comment peut-on lire objectivement les événements qui se sont déroulés en Libye entre le 17 février et le 20 octobre 2011 ?

Pourquoi ce changement politique a-t-il revêtu un caractère cruellement violent, ce qui a causé beaucoup d'effusion de sang : plus de cinquante mille morts, tués par les brigades de l'ancien régime, (Kata'ib), par les insurgés (moqatiloun), et par les frappes aériennes de l'OTAN ; et plus de cent mille blessés ?

Pourquoi ce changement politique a-t-il été monopolisé essentiellement par des islamistes radicalistes, entraînant ainsi l'exclusion des libéraux et des démocrates modérés déjà faibles et désunis pour plusieurs raisons ?

Rien ne sert d'étaler davantage les questions et les problématiques ; ce qui est opportun, méthodologiquement, c'est de procéder à une présentation de la chronologie des événements.

Chronologie des événements

- Le 14 février : 213 personnalités politiques et associatives demandent la démission de Kadhafi
- Le 15 février : La garde municipale a commis la « maladresse » de demander à des commerçants installés sur la place centrale d'El-Beyda¹, l'ancienne capitale religieuse de la Confrérie sénoussienne connue par sa loyauté à l'égard de la monarchie, leurs patentes. Cette intervention a produit un désordre dans la petite ville de l'Est libyen. Un petit groupe d'islamistes a saisi l'occasion pour organiser une manifestation qui s'est orientée vers la caserne d'El – Beyda pour l'occuper et, a priori atteindre les dépôts d'armes et de munitions. Il y a eu des accrochages armés entre les islamistes d'une part, et les soldats d'autre part, appuyés par la police de l'ordre public, provoquant ainsi des morts parmi les rangs des manifestants.
- Le 15 février : a été marqué par un calme à l'Est libyen.
- Le 17 février : l'avocat Fethi Terbel exerçant à Benghazi, ancien détenu à Guantanamo et ancien combattant en Afghanistan, libéré par Seif-el-islam, envoie des SMS aux familles de Benghazi pour les avertir que la prison d'Abou Selim à Tripoli allait être brûlée la nuit. Plusieurs centaines de Benghaziens sortent le soir et manifestent pendant toute la nuit devant le siège central de la police de l'ordre public.
- Le 19 février : Kadhafi dépêche, tôt le matin à Benghazi, Mustapha Abdeljélil, son ministre de la justice, originaire d'El-Beyda et appartenant à la tribu des Bràassa, l'une des plus anciennes tribus de l'Est ; le général Abdelfattah Younes Abidi appartenant à la prestigieuse tribu des Abidet et ministre de l'intérieur, Omar Ichkel (Kadhadfa), le chef des Comités révolutionnaires ; et Abdellah Sénoussi, patron des services de renseignements. Dès que Mustapha Abdeljélil foule le sol de Benghazi, il annonce sa rupture définitive avec le régime et rejoint les insurgés, en riposte aux événements d'El-Beyda. En revanche, Younes, Ichkel et Sénoussi rencontrent l'avocat Fethi Terbel et essaient de le convaincre de calmer les esprits et de privilégier la négociation avec les manifestants dans le souci d'éviter les tensions.
Des rumeurs circulent à Benghazi que Terbel a été arrêté ; les manifestations s'intensifient alors davantage. Des coups de feu sont entendus dans la ville. Le général Younès reste à Benghazi pour continuer les négociations. Ichkel et

¹ *El –Beyda fut aussi, par certains moments, la capitale politique sous la Monarchie , parce que le Roi aimait y passer une partie de l'été pour la tièdeur de son climat, ce qui la dotait d'une valeur symbolique surtout chez les populations de l'Est Libyen.*

Sénooussi rentrent à Tripoli pour dresser un rapport sombre sur la situation à l'Est libyen. Suite à cette réunion, la décision est prise de recourir aux armes face aux manifestants : ce fut ainsi le point de non retour : la rupture est alors consommée entre le régime et l'opposition.

- Les 19 et 20 février : Les forces de l'ordre utilisent les armes et tirent sur les foules, les manifestants leur répliquent.
- Le 20 février : Les villes de l'Est libyen rejoignent la révolte
- Le 21 février : Mustapha Abdeljelil démissionne du ministère de la justice.
- Le 22 février : le général Younès est assiégé à la caserne de Foudeyl Bou'amar et contraint par les manifestants armés à démissionner et à rejoindre les insurgés. Le jour même, les casernes de Bou'amor, de Bou'atna et le grand dépôt d'armes d'El-Rejma sont investis par la force.
- Le 27 février : La proclamation du Conseil National de Transition (CNT).
- Le 19 mars : Suite aux résolutions de 1970 et de 1973, l'OTAN intervient en Libye et commence ses attaques aériennes qui anéantissent au bout de quelques mois les forces régulières.
- Le 28 juillet : Younès est tué par une brigade appartenant à Al- Qaïda.
- Le 23 août : effondrement du régime de Kadhafi.
- Le 20 octobre 2011 : mort du colonel Kadhafi.
- Le dimanche 23 octobre : Abdeljelil annonce la « libération » de la Libye et la proclamation d'un Etat islamique ayant pour source unique de législation la *Charia*, dont découle l'autorisation de la polygamie.

Comment analyser cette cascade d'événements en empruntant les outils de la sociologie politique² ?

Le premier constat auquel on peut aboutir est l'existence d'une rupture implicite entre l'Est libyen et le régime déchu. Le régime n'avait presque rien investi dans cette région et plus particulièrement dans la ville de Benghazi. En effet, cette ville, que j'ai visitée plus de dix fois pour mes recherches, et où j'ai même été professeur visiteur dans son université, est une ville délaissée, exclue, humiliée et appauvrie ; chaque fois que je m'y rendais, je sortais avec la même impression que cette ville venait de sortir d'une longue guerre civile. C'était la même impression de tous ceux qui l'ont visitée, tellement elle était délabrée et délaissée. Ses habitants souffraient, en silence, et attendaient impatiemment leur « revanche ».

Le régime déchu croyait la contrôler par le biais de ses Comités révolutionnaires,

2 Moncef Ouannes, *Moujtaam, Solta, wa jam'iyyat fi libia*, Tunis, El-Taller, 2000, p.47.

or dans la réalité quotidienne le contrôle réel revenait aux islamistes radicalisés, aux éléments d'Al -Qaïda et aux frères musulmans qui étaient plus nombreux et mieux organisés sur le terrain que les autres forces.

La ville de Benghazi, ancien fief de la monarchie et surtout de la Senoussiya avait toujours un sentiment fort de sa particularité par rapport aux deux autres provinces : La Tripolitaine et le Fezzan. Quand je visitais Benghazi, j'entendais l'élite benghaziennne se plaindre de la domination de l'Ouest ; c'est-à-dire de la Tripolitaine. Il y avait une sorte d'animosité cachée et implicite entre les Tripolitains et les Benghaziens.

C'est pour cette raison que toute la Cyrénaïque et surtout Benghazi a résisté farouchement et a été la tête de pont de la révolte armée contre l'ancien régime.

Il ne s'agit pas d'une haine entre régions ou d'un repoussement partagé entre provinces, mais plutôt d'une nouvelle situation caractérisée par l'hégémonie des frères musulmans, des islamistes, des *djihadistes* et des éléments d'Al- Qaïda.

Islamistes durs mais pragmatiques sur le terrain

La force des islamistes radicalistes et des *Djihadistes* est d'avoir su modeler les jeunes désœuvrés, déçus par le système de Kadhafi, les déclassés, les exclus, les chômeurs, les contrebandiers des frontières, les humiliés, les désespérés, les drogués et les hommes d'affaires surendettés auprès des banques gouvernementales, les souder et les unifier malgré leurs origines tribales, familiales, professionnelles et géographiques hétéroclites, et même des partisans de l'ancien régime. La soudure de tout ce ramassis, tout ce monde hétéroclite s'est avérée efficace³ et a conduit aux termes de la révolte à la destruction de l'ancien régime.

Ces islamistes ont su être assez souples et pragmatiques pour pouvoir mobiliser, encourager les Libyens à s'enrôler dans les nouvelles milices. La mobilisation et le recrutement sont faciles à Benghazi. Le paradoxe de la Libye est d'avoir un peuple pauvre dans un pays riche. Les richesses fabuleuses sont très mal réparties, il suffit de préciser que 23% des Libyens vivent dans une situation de pauvreté et de précarité.

Le « génie » des islamistes est d'avoir su encadrer, canaliser et orienter ces jeunes et adultes déçus par l'autoritarisme exercé pendant 42 ans sans arrêt.

Ils n'ont pas « inventé la planète », mais ils ont su exploiter, habilement, une lassitude généralisée, un environnement social et culturel dominé par la culture religieuse et facilement mobilisable, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de l'application du principe *d'Al-Jihad* contre les régimes illégitimes et mécréants.

L'environnement culturel conservateur, par nature, facilite une vaste mobilisation. C'est pour cette raison que leurs slogans étaient mobilisateurs plus que ceux des démocrates ou des partisans du dialogue avec le régime.

3 L'annuaire statistique de la Libye de l'année 2004 (dernières statistiques).

C'est la branche islamiste, Al-Qaïda qui a voulu que cette révolte soit armée, car dans sa pensée politique le changement doit être violent et armé. Les actes de mort du général Abdelfattah Younès Abidi, du colonel Kadhafi, la profanation des tombeaux et la brûlure de la dépouille de la mère de Kadhafi portent tous, sans équivoque, les empreintes digitales des islamistes radicalistes, des Wahhabites et des *Djihadistes* et des éléments d'Al-Qaïda.

Et pour cause, leur connaissance de la religion est tellement simpliste et primitive qu'elle leur permet de s'impliquer dans de tels crimes. Or, la religion, à ma connaissance, bien que je ne sois pas spécialiste de la *Charia* musulmane, interdit toute forme de torture, fût-elle celle d'un chien ; que dire alors de la torture d'un être humain ?

Elle garantit aussi au prisonnier de guerre le droit à la dignité, au respect dans toutes ses formes, à la bonne nourriture, au droit de culte, au droit à la bonne justice équitable, en sus d'autres droits.

Le choix de prédilection des islamistes radicalistes était le recours à la violence⁴, parce que dans leur architecture mentale et leur programme idéologique, ils favorisaient les solutions armées. C'est pour cette raison, le soulèvement a été vite militarisé dès la première manifestation. Qu'ils soient à l'intérieur du CNT ou en dehors, ils avaient un problème beaucoup plus complexe que celui du recours aux armes. Ils devaient affronter le défi de renverser une situation géopolitique dominée essentiellement par l'ancien régime. Pour être objectif, il ne faut surtout pas omettre de signaler que la majorité des 140 tribus qui meublent la géographie libyenne appuyaient, explicitement ou implicitement, l'ancien régime et certaines d'entre elles avaient même combattu à ses côtés pendant huit mois. En fait, pour pouvoir renverser une telle situation qui n'était pas en leur faveur, les islamistes *djihadistes* ont dû exercer une forte pression pour que le CNT opte pour la demande de l'intervention extérieure concrétisée par l'OTAN, les pays du Golfe et surtout par Qatar.

En fait, pour être plus clair, il faut préciser que quand Sarkozy a reçu la délégation du CNT formée par Mahamoud Jibril, Ali Zeydan et Ali Aïssaoui le 7 mars dernier, ils lui avaient promis une part importante du pétrole en contrepartie de la part du chef de l'Etat Français, d'une intervention mettant fin, militairement au régime de Kadhafi. C'est pour cette raison que la France s'est empressée de remettre tout le dossier au Conseil de Sécurité dans le but de l'amener à adopter les deux résolutions de 1970 et de 1973, dont la tâche difficile était de protéger les populations civiles. En effet, le pétrole a motivé la réaction de l'Occident, et son intervention en Libye, un pays qui dispose de réserves en pétrole évaluées à 43 milliards de barils. Il faut signaler aussi que la Libye dispose de réserves en devises évaluées par l'ancien Directeur de la Banque Centrale de Libye à 168 milliards de dollars⁵. Tous ces éléments ont suscité l'appétit politique de

4 Moncef Ouannes, « Islamistes en Libye » in *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine* n°122, l'année 2006, pp.

5 Déclaration de l'ancien gouverneur du B.C.L., Farhat Ben Ghdara à la presse internationale et publiée par le

plusieurs acteurs.

Mais pour mieux comprendre ce paysage idéologique, il faut rappeler aussi que Kadhafi a beaucoup fait pour favoriser, financer et imposer une lecture appauvrissante de la religion musulmane⁶ ; ce qui a renforcé le caractère conservateur de la société, a produit un certain durcissement au niveau de l'interprétation de la religion musulmane⁷ et a légitimé le recours au meurtre. Or, il disposait en fait de tous les moyens pour promouvoir une lecture épanouie, rationnelle et surtout moderne de la religion musulmane. Cette violence cruelle est la résultante d'une lecture conservatrice de l'islam, renfermée et sclérosée. Mais il faut dire que l'ancien régime a beaucoup investi dans la violence, créant ainsi une culture de haine de la rancune et de la revanche⁸.

En effet, à la surprise de toute le monde, Mustapha Abdeljelil, le 23 octobre 2011 annonçait, lors de la célébration de la « libération » de la Libye la reconnaissance officielle de la polygamie dans un pays qui a un taux d'accroissement démographique l'un des plus élevés au monde (2,86 %).

La polygamie est-elle vraiment une priorité dans un pays complètement dévasté, ruiné par la guerre civile, les bombardements de l'OTAN et gangrené par la corruption et les déboires des choix économiques imposés par l'ancien régime ?.

Cette priorité accordée à la polygamie fait preuve d'une panne de projet et d'une faillite de l'imagination politique ; et surtout d'une méconnaissance des attentes d'une population jeune à plus de 50 %⁹ vivant dans un pays en situation de déconfiture politique et sociale. Il s'agit d'une révolte sans démocrates capables de constituer un groupe de pression sur le CNT pour ériger la démocratie longtemps attendue au rang de priorité.

Le régime de Kadhafi, lui-même, appliquait, à sa manière et à sa guise, la *Charia*. Où est donc l'innovation dans ce choix, qui ne constitue pas une réelle priorité, surtout pour les jeunes en situation de déréliction ?

Mais il ne faut pas oublier que le CNT obéit à une composition complexe formée par une majorité islamiste, une minorité libérale, et des éléments appartenant à l'alliance

journal Saoudien du Chark El Awset du 29/9/2011.

- 6 *Il suffit de voir le fonctionnement de l'Association pour l'Appel à l'Islam pour se rendre compte du type d'Islam dont il est question. Cette structure budgétivore a été fabuleusement financée par l'ancien régime et servait semble-t-il à des activités sécuritaires douteuses.*
- 7 *Moncef Ouannes, Militaire, Elites et Modernisation dans la Libye contemporaine, Paris, édition l'Harmattan, 2009, pp.150-160.*
- 8 *Rien de surprenant dans cette histoire, puisque Abdelhakim Belhaj, l'actuel commandant militaire de Tripoli, l'ancien membre d'Al-Qaida et ancien combattant en Afghanistan avait adopté cette même tactique. Il avait dans les années quatre-vingt-dix encouragé ses partisans à infiltrer les CR, parti au pouvoir, et à rejoindre les multiples structures de sécurité afin de renverser le régime par la violence. Découvert par les services de renseignement, il s'enfuit en Afghanistan. Malgré son repentir idéologique en 2009, il a préféré le recours à la violence. Abdelhakim Belhadj affirme dans un document volumineux de 400 pages (Mouraja'at) son repentir, son rejet des solutions armées pour le changement, et s'allie à Seil El-Islam Kadhafi. Le 17 février 2011, il rompt avec Seif, s'allie à Ali Sallabi, le guide spirituel des frères musulmans de Murrata, car il a découvert que pour gouverner il faut faire la guerre. Ce porte-étendard des Djihadistes n'a pas raté l'occasion pour renverser le régime.*
- 9 *L'Annuaire statistique de la Libye, 2004, p.112.*

tribale *Hraba* (*Abidet et Bra'assa*). C'est pour cette raison que les islamistes armés vont essayer, par tous les moyens, de dominer politiquement la phase post-Kadhafi ; ce qui les met dans une situation de conflit avec les libéraux, et peut être avec l'ensemble de la société, ce qui du coup va produire une situation instable politiquement et socialement.

Il est vrai que l'OTAN a « libéré » la Libye de l'ancien régime ; mais il a aussi ouvert la voie, semble-t-il, vers la transformation de la Libye en une base du radicalisme religieux au sein du Maghreb.

La situation à l'intérieur du *Conseil National de transition* (CNT) est complexe et tendue. Il est formé de deux groupes qui sont contradictoires et divergents, au niveau des idées, et surtout des modalités d'action. C'est ce qui rend la coexistence entre ces deux groupes difficile et met en doute la capacité du CNT à gérer la phase transitoire et à faire sortir le pays de sa crise, tellement les divergences idéologiques sont profondes et ingérables.

Mais en fait s'agit-il d'une révolte ou d'une révolution ?

Le 17 février 2011 : révolte ou révolution?

Il convient d'abord de se libérer d'une conception dépréciative et dévalorisante de la révolte et de certains jugements négatifs. En effet, pour y voir clair, il faut que la notion de révolte soit située dans son contexte spécifique.

La révolte, cela veut dire essentiellement une réaction subite, rapide et souvent non calculée et non programmée pour une situation précise ; un processus limité dans le temps et dans l'espace. C'est aussi une flamme qui s'allume et qui s'éteint vite. En effet, une révolte n'est pas obligée de présenter un programme bien défini ; elle peut opérer un simple changement.

En revanche, une révolution peut être définie, étymologiquement et historiquement, comme une rupture au sens polysémique. Mais cette rupture signifie avant tout rompre pour rétablir¹⁰, c'est-à-dire détruire ce qui existe pour pouvoir construire un nouveau modèle ou une nouvelle référence, ce qui exige inéluctablement un programme de bouleversement extrême, et une approche réfléchie du changement attendu.

Frantz Fanon, l'auteur de « la *sociologie d'une révolution*¹¹ », militant de la révolution algérienne et dénonciateur du colonialisme et du racisme, définissait la révolution par son programme de changement. En effet, une révolution est définie avant tout comme un programme total, global et collectif ayant des objectifs et des ambitions précis à réaliser.

Elle peut s'inscrire dans la durée, car une révolution ne peut être fondatrice et positive que lorsqu'elle est destructrice de l'ordre politique et social ancien. En peu de mots, la révolution ne se définit pas comme une rupture avec des personnes, mais plutôt avec des

10 *Encyclopaedie Universalis, Corpus18, 1995, pp. 1005-1009.*

11 *Frantz Fanon, Sociologie d'une révolution, Paris, François Maspero 1982, p.57*

systèmes autoritaires, corrompus et anachroniques. Mais il faut ajouter que l'acte de rompre signifie avant tout rétablir pour pouvoir changer.

Or, ce qui s'est produit en Libye est encadré par des Djihadistes sans programme, sans plate-forme et sans vision commune de l'avenir. La seule priorité qui mobilisait les membres du CNT, des *Djihadistes* et des frères musulmans était l'élimination physique de Kadhafi. Mais quelles sont donc les origines de cette profonde crise ?

Mais pour pouvoir répondre à cette question, il nous faut entreprendre une lecture rétrospective et analytique de l'évolution de la société libyenne pendant les quatre dernières décennies.

Les verrouillages producteurs de révoltes

Nous allons essayer dans cette partie d'analyser les formes de verrouillages producteurs de crises et de révoltes. Nous nous contenterons, pour une raison de rigueur, d'évoquer le cas de la Libye qui nous semble être édifiant, et révélateur à plus d'un titre.

- quelles sont les racines profondes de cette révolte armée en Libye ?
- pourquoi les Libyens ont-ils décidé de partir en révolte, après avoir supporté le régime pendant 42 ans ?
- pourquoi ont-ils décidé, finalement, de prendre leur sort en main et de changer la situation en leur faveur ?

Le verrouillage des élites et des acteurs

Ce qu'il faut noter tout d'abord est que la Libye a connu entre 1969 et 1977 un phénomène très complexe de phagocytose de l'élite formée sous la monarchie (1951-1969) qui s'est trouvée contrainte, soit au silence, soit à la diaspora.

La Libye a connu aussi un phénomène de démantèlement des structures étatiques qui n'étaient qu'une configuration encore embryonnaire ; ainsi que la revalorisation de la tribu, et ce malgré un discours hyper révolutionnaire et progressiste présentant ainsi une sorte de paradoxe politique, puisqu'il n'y avait pas de concordance entre le dire et le faire, entre le discours et la pratique.

La complexité découle du fait que les jeunes militaires qui ont fait le coup d'Etat de 1969 n'avaient ni une plate-forme arrêtée d'un commun accord, ni une conception claire de la gestion politique future, ni une charte idéologique commune qui puisse guider leur action politique, économique et culturelle.

Une telle situation ne pouvait qu'influer sur le système politique, sur son mode de légitimation et sur ses rapports avec l'environnement international.

L'ancien régime n'avait pas sa propre élite ; en effet, les membres des *Comités*

révolutionnaires n'avaient pas d'autonomie par rapport aux structures politiques et idéologiques. Or une élite doit être autonome par rapport au pouvoir central.

Le verrouillage de la société

La rente pétrolière permettait de dépasser les obligations de l'Etat moderne, et d'établir des rapports directs avec les populations et surtout avec les tribus, ce qui avait créé un vide institutionnel généralisé amenant des rapports directs avec les tribus là où elles se trouvaient. Le régime avait empêché la formation de structures médianes entre le pouvoir et les populations. En effet, les partis politiques, quoique embryonnaires en 1969, furent complètement interdits selon la fameuse loi 1972¹². Les associations de toutes sortes étaient interdites, et les tribunes autonomes quasiment inexistantes.

Quand j'ai fait mon enquête sur le terrain en 2000 sur la vie associative en Libye, enquête parue dans mon livre *Pouvoir, société et association en Libye*, j'ai fait remarquer que le nombre d'associations ne dépassait pas 39 ; elles étaient détenues par des personnes du régime. Ces associations étaient dans la réalité sans aucune efficacité, sans programme et sans connexion avec la réalité politique. Dans mon livre, j'ai essayé d'entreprendre l'étude d'une sociologie de verrouillage qui vise essentiellement à aboutir à la formule de la société désinstitutionalisée, une société sans intermédiaires politiques. Pour mieux étayer cette analyse, il suffit de remarquer que pour obtenir une bourse d'études à l'étranger, ou un prêt bancaire et pour se faire soigner, à l'étranger, il faut avoir l'appui du chef de tribu, c'est-à-dire d'un intermédiaire fiable et bien introduit auprès du régime et des structures bancaires.

Progressivement, la tribu était devenue l'instrument de négociation avec le pouvoir et le mécanisme de contrôle de la société et de l'opposition. Celui qui s'opposait au régime était mis en garde par son cheikh de tribu et s'il récidivait il était sanctionné par le pouvoir lui-même. Et ce pour une raison fondamentale, car ce choix politique vise tout d'abord à empêcher surtout une modernisation sociale et politique du pays.

Les tribus, clientes du pouvoir jouaient un rôle social et politique de première importance, en encadrant leurs membres, en les sécurisant, en les aidant à jouir des divers services dont ils avaient besoin. Il était normal que, en l'absence de structures politiques et administratives médianes entre le pouvoir et la société, les tribus jouent le rôle d'intermédiaires politiques et sociaux.

Toute observation subtile et toute analyse minutieuse de l'évolution de la société libyenne ne peuvent que constater l'absence de conviction du rôle que pouvaient assumer les associations dans le développement du pays. Ces dernières étaient, en effet, en mesure de porter un grand appui aux efforts étatiques en matière de développement. L'explication plausible est qu'il n'existait pas une claire répartition politique des tâches

12 Moncef Ouannes, *Moujtam, Solta wa jam'iyyeit fi Libya, Tunis, Al Taller 2000, p.47.*

entre le pouvoir et les associations parce que ces dernières ne bénéficiaient d'aucune marge de liberté d'action. Le système en place n'a jamais accordé d'importance pour la vie associative et pour son poids social, politique, voire économique. Or, force est de constater que le tissu associatif était en mesure de jouer un rôle important dans la vie sociale et politique en tant que structure intermédiaire. En effet, l'existence d'un efficace tissu associatif permet d'équilibrer les rapports entre l'Etat et la Société, d'éviter les abus de tous genre. C'est même une garantie contre les dérapages politiques, les crises sociales et la corruption. Une vraie société civile, inventive et associative, vivier de conscience citoyenne¹³ et de tolérance politique est une exigence absolue. Car elle renforce la société globale et lui donne tous les atouts nécessaires pour être invulnérable¹⁴.

Le verrouillage de la société civile

Mais une société civile ne peut être efficace, ne peut démontrer ses capacités que lorsqu'il y a une marge de liberté et d'autonomie par rapport au pouvoir central. Le régime « révolutionnaire » en Libye n'avait pas fait une telle concession pourtant incontournable et inévitable.

Ces deux questions sont légitimes surtout pour un pays qui a subitement supprimé les quelques rares structures caritatives et associatives.

Une société civile peut-elle coexister avec une société profondément tribale et solidement militarisée¹⁵ ? Une société civile n'est elle pas, par définition, l'antipode, voire le contrepoids de la société militaire ?

Or, la présence de la tribu en Libye était exagérée, instrumentalisée, voire manipulée. En effet, une société tribale dispensait le pouvoir de l'obligation de reconnaître la société civile et de démocratiser la vie politique. De là, l'encouragement de la société tribale, par le pouvoir alors que normalement les tribus doivent se fondre, dans les structures modernes de la société. Pour ce faire, il faut disposer d'un projet modernisateur capable de fusionner les tribus et de réaliser une transformation rationnelle et progressive de la société.

Les tribus étaient invitées et appelées à éviter que leurs membres ne s'inscrivent dans une logique d'opposition puisqu'elles disposaient d'un pouvoir persuasif.

Les tribus loyales étaient l'instrument du pouvoir pour le contrôle serré et rigoureux de la société et de l'ensemble géographique où les cheikhs de tribus étaient impliqués, au nom du pouvoir, dans la lutte contre les diverses oppositions sur leurs propres territoires. Kadhafi voulait responsabiliser les tribus et les conduire à faire régner la loi à la place du pouvoir central qui n'aurait plus à se mêler des conflits tribaux souvent complexes et

13 Jean- François Bayart, *La greffe de l'Etat*, Paris Karthala, 1996, p.89.

14 Moncef Ouannes, « Pouvoir, société et association en Libye », in *Revue Tunisienne de sciences sociales*, n°125 2003, pp.138-167.

15 Moncef Ouannes, *ibid*, p.47.

difficiles à gérer dans une société où la tribu était encore dominante socialement. Or la loyauté n'est pas garantie dans tous les cas. Il est patent que les tribus peuvent aussi entrer en rébellion et porter les armes contre le régime.

C'est la tribu de Zentene (à moitié arabe à moitié berber) qui s'est affranchie de toute obéissance au régime, s'est libérée de l'engagement moral et politique, et a libéré les petites tribus Amazigh de Djebel Nefoussa comme Yefren, Kekla, Sinouem, El Golâa, Ghariane, Tagoutta, Rhibett et Bir El Ghanem¹⁶.

Il faut analyser ce phénomène de rupture tribale, parce que le régime ne s'est pas rendu compte que les cheikhs de la tribu Zentene, souvent illettrés, facilement manipulables par le régime moyennant des sommes d'argent ou des intérêts immédiats, n'étaient plus influents ; la tribu a, en effet, secrété en cours de route, des jeunes influents qui ont fréquenté les universités anglaises, canadiennes et surtout américaines.

Ces jeunes étaient déconnectés du régime, ne partageaient pas ses vues politiques officielles et entreprenaient l'opposition en cachette. Le sociologue libyen formé aux Etats-Unis, Mohamedd Malhouf qui est l'un des notables de la tribu des Zentane a organisé des négociations entre sa tribu et le régime.

Au bout d'un certain temps, les insurgés lui ont barré la route et l'ont empêché de revenir dans sa région et dans sa tribu parce qu'ils considéraient que la rupture était consommée définitivement avec l'ancien régime.

Cette rupture inter générationnelle n'a pas été comprise par le régime, ce qui l'a induit en erreur. Il ne s'est pas rendu compte que les temps ont changé et les adresses aussi.

En effet, la tribu des Zentane longtemps crainte par les petites tribus berbères de Djebel Nefoussa avait joué, paradoxalement, le rôle de locomotive politique de l'insurrection contre l'ancien régime.¹⁷

Cette bédouinité forcée a coûté cher à la Libye, car la tribu est un corps social pragmatique qui cherche les intérêts de ses membres, et c'est pour cette raison qu'elle se tient toujours du côté du plus fort.

En effet, malgré un discours révolutionnaire et progressiste, La Libye a connu un phénomène de tribalisation de la vie politique parce qu'il ne s'y était pas produit un phénomène de dissolution de la tribu, mais au contraire un renforcement prémédité de son poids politique, économique et social. Et ceci légitima les alliances tribales. Pour cette raison et pour d'autres, le système tribal est resté vivace en Libye et impliqué dans la situation politique.

Imaginez donc un Etat sans société civile, sans partis, sans syndicats pendant 42 ans ; ajoutée à cela l'absence d'institutions fiables¹⁸ et de services indispensables. Un Etat

16 *Nos informations sont recueillies sur le terrain directement.*

17 *Le Cheikh des Zentane déclarait à la chaîne « la Libye libre » : « nous avons, nous les vieux de la tribu, suivi les décisions de nos jeunes » déclaration du 9 mars 2011.*

18 *Abdallah Laroui, L'Etat dans le Monde arabe contemporain : Eléments d'une problématique, C.E.R.M.A.C., Bruxelles, 1986.*

faible ou instable ne fait que renforcer la tribu et les appartenances primaires et claniques.

Mais signalons que le verrouillage est surtout d'ordre culturel et anthropologique. Toute la société a été contrainte à vivre au rythme du désert, à s'habiller à la manière des bédouins, les artistes étaient obligés de chanter sous une tente bédouine faite, de préférence, de poils de chameaux.

Le régime a choisi d'une façon délibérée d'imposer à la société une bédouinisation agressive et contraignante, et de vivre au rythme du désert.

Toute la société a été soumise à une culture tribale et bédouine qui rejette l'Etat, les institutions, les villes et le faste. C'est ainsi que la tente a pris un caractère culturel référentiel obligatoire.

Verrouillage de l'économie et de la circulation des richesses.

Ce verrouillage consiste à interdire la circulation de la richesse en dehors des cercles de confiance, des loyautés tribales et du clientélisme politique. L'argent n'est accessible aux Libyens qu'en fonction de leur loyauté et de leur allégeance politique au régime. Un tel phénomène est dû au fait que la rente pétrolière avait permis au régime de concentrer son autorité, de contrôler la dynamique de la société, d'empêcher l'apparition d'organismes d'opposition, et d'entretenir la violence qui s'est répandue sur l'ensemble de la société pendant plus de quatre décennies.

C'est le régime qui détenait le monopole de l'argent et de la violence. Tous ces verrouillages ont profondément touché l'évolution de cette société, ont produit une histoire faite de ruptures, ont démantelé l'Etat, ont donné lieu à beaucoup de malversations et de corruptions endémiques. Ces verrouillages ont produit cette révolte armée et ont secrété tant de haines et de revanches.

Il est vrai que cette révolte armée prouve encore une fois que la soudure de l'Est et de l'Ouest, de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque reste encore faible. Mais au-delà de la question de la soudure, il y a un véritable problème parce que les verrouillages ne peuvent que produire des souffrances, des privations, des tensions et des révoltes. Je tiens à le dire, sans ambages : lorsque j'étais au lycée à Tunis, au milieu des années soixante dix, j'apprenais par cœur les discours de Kadhafi. Il avait une attirance spéciale et savait influencer les jeunes de notre génération.

Le 20 septembre 1986, je débarquais pour la première fois en Libye, pour une visite touristique, et je fus surpris, voire même choqué par la saleté de la capitale, par la corruption et la déliquescence de l'administration. En quittant l'hôtel, une semaine après, pour me rendre à l'aéroport de Tripoli, j'ai décidé de me spécialiser dans la question libyenne, pour essayer de comprendre ce hiatus béant entre le dire et le faire et pour analyser ce faisceau de paradoxes qui caractérisent essentiellement la société libyenne.

En traversant cette longue distance de plus de 25 kilomètres, je méditais cet amer constat : que cette « révolution du 1er septembre » finirait, suite d'un coup d'Etat, dans un bain de sang. Cette prévision s'est transformée en réalité concrète le 17 février 2011.

La révolte des tribus : le cas des Zentene

Malgré ses origines bédouines, la tribu des Zentane se distingue par une intelligence politique exceptionnelle et d'un savoir faire qui peut paraître peu habituel à des bédouins vivant dans le Djebel Nefoussa. L'histoire politique de cette tribu a toujours fait preuve de réalisme concrétisé par l'art de diviser la tâche politique. Cette tribu était toujours soucieuse d'être du côté du vainqueur abstraction faite de son origine et de son identité ethnique. C'est pour cette raison que cette tribu a été le principal allié des Ottomans surtout sous la deuxième domination (1835-1911) compte tenu de son importance démographique étant la plus grande tribu de Djebel Nefoussa. Elle s'est impliquée par calcul politique en appuyant l'occupation italienne de 1911 jusqu'à la proclamation de la République Tripolitaine en 1918 qu'elle avait rejoint pour éviter d'être exclue. Ce choix de se ranger du côté de la République a été considéré par les autorités italiennes de l'époque comme une sorte de trahison. Il est vrai que cette tribu est souvent critiquée d'être opportuniste et versatile, mais en fait, elle dispose d'une intelligence au niveau de la répartition des tâches politiques. Face au danger et aux moments difficiles, cette tribu se divise en deux camps différents : le premier appuie le pouvoir en place et le second s'inscrit dans l'opposition.

Quand le danger est éloigné et la crise surmontée, les deux parties se rejoignent, se soudent de nouveau et s'unissent sans rancune, sans haine et sans revanche.

L'intérêt de la tribu prime sur toute considération individuelle ou collective. Cette tribu a toujours fait preuve de solidarité indéfectible entre ses membres. Pour mieux confirmer cette habileté politique, il suffit de mentionner que cette tribu a compris depuis mars 2011 que la dictature est en fin de course et que le régime ne pouvait plus continuer. Pour concrétiser cette prévision, la tribu s'est inscrite dans une logique de révolte, a chassé ses voisins qui ont refusé de partir en guerre contre l'ancien régime (Mchachia et Ouled Mahmoud) pour pouvoir dominer tout le Djebel Gharbi. C'est pour cette raison, cette tribu a été bien armée par la France et par Qatar et a fait appel au financement des commerçants et des hommes d'affaires originaires de la région et installés à Tripoli et qui ont financé une bonne partie de l'effort de guerre. Pour se dégager de toute responsabilité, les cheikhs de la tribu ont déclaré à la presse internationale que la décision de guerre a été prise par les jeunes ce qui leur évite l'affrontement avec le régime. Mais il s'agissait en fait d'une nouvelle forme de répartition de la tâche politique

Quel bilan et quel avenir?

Le bilan de la Libye dans la phase post-Kadhaféenne est, sans remuer de couteau dans la plaie, sombre. C'est un pays ruiné matériellement et mentalement, et dominé par les islamistes radicalistes financés et soutenus par les pétromonarchies du Golfe et

surtout par Qatar qui tient à jouer un rôle fondamental dans l'avenir de la Libye et ne cesse d'intervenir pour la création d'un parti islamiste¹⁹ qui regroupe les éléments radicalistes. Les frères musulmans de Libye ont organisé les 17,18 et 19 novembre leur second congrès politique à l'intérieur de la Libye. Le premier congrès a été organisé, clandestinement en 1992. Signalons qu'il sont appuyés essentiellement par Qatar, dans le cadre d'une stratégie géopolitique programmée par les États-Unis qui vise, à moyen terme, à propager le modèle Turc dans le Monde arabe et surtout en Libye, en Tunisie, en Egypte et en Syrie.

Pour mieux étayer cette thèse, il suffit de signaler que sur les 51 membres composant le *Conseil National de Transition* (CNT), 10 personnes ne sont pas encore connues. Abstraction faite de toutes les explications présentées, nous demeurons convaincu que leurs noms ont été cachés, délibérément, d'une part parce qu'ils appartiennent à Al-Qaïda et d'autre part, pour éviter surtout d'offenser l'Occident, le véritable protecteur de la révolte libyenne²⁰. Mais il ne faut surtout pas oublier les nombreuses retombées immédiates et lointaines sur les pays voisins : la Tunisie, l'Algérie et l'Égypte.

Le paradoxe sociologique de la Libye est d'être sortie d'une sordide dictature avec une trajectoire insolite de 40 ans ²¹pour passer sous une dictature islamiste armée beaucoup plus grave.

Le paradoxe de la Charia : projet de société ou simple concession politique?

Devant ce paradoxe, Mustapha Ablejelil a annoncé le dimanche 23 octobre, pour célébrer la « libération » de la Libye, l'adoption de la *Charia*, source unique de législation pour l'État, et la reconnaissance de la polygamie.

Mais la polygamie est-elle vraiment une priorité pour un pays qui a des défis insurmontables à relever ? La polygamie peut-elle résoudre les problèmes du retard économique et social, du déséquilibre régional, de la corruption, de la revanche entre tribus et du chômage?

N'est-elle pas une concession faite aux islamistes purs et durs ? N'est-elle pas aussi une preuve de la faillite politique et de l'absence de projet démocratique unificateur de toutes les forces concurrentielles en place?

En effet, entre islamistes et libéraux, il ne peut pas exister un projet en commun et une vision partagée de l'avenir. C'est ce qui pourrait expliquer l'absence de projet

19 L'ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères libyen et l'actuel représentant de la Libye auprès des Nations-Unies, Abdelmabmane Chelgam critiquait virulemment dans une émission télévisée l'ingérence de Qatar dans tous les détails de la révolte libyenne et son appui illimité à une fraction islamiste bien déterminée.

20 Bernard- Henri Lévy, *La guerre sans l'aimer*, Paris, édition Grasset, novembre 2011, 400 pages.

21 Moncef Ounnes, *Militaires, élites et modernisation dans la Libye contemporaine*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2009, pp.406-410. Cf. aussi, Solta, *Moujtam wa jamayyit en Libye*, Tunis, éditions Al- Taller, 2000, p.47.

démocratique fédérateur des efforts et unificateur des acteurs. Tous ces acteurs n'avaient en commun que l'ambition d'éliminer Kadhafi sans avoir de visibilité claire de ce que deviendrait la Libye dans l'avenir. Toutefois, il faut signaler, par souci de précision, que le rêve des islamistes radicalistes est d'islamiser la Libye en appliquant une lecture conservatrice, voire anachronique de la *Charia* islamique. Or les priorités de la Libye sont trop nombreuses pour que l'islamisation soit la plus urgente. Dans ce pays, les chantiers de reconstruction, il faut le reconnaître, sont illimités.

Priorités de la Libye : investir sans lassitude dans la reconstruction de l'être libyen

Cette révolte a certainement anéanti le régime de Kadhafi, mais elle a semé beaucoup de haine, de revanche dans la société libyenne et pour mieux illustrer ce drame, il suffit d'écouter les insurgés qui menacent devant les chaînes satellitaires (Jazira, Arabiya, France 24...) de raser Syrte, le village natal de Kadhafi et d'exterminer, sans merci, les Kadhafis²². Ces réactions témoignent d'une âme révoltée et brisée à la fois.

La priorité en Libye est donc de construire une culture de tolérance, de dialogue et d'acceptation mutuelle qui affronte la culture de la revanche.

Les Libyens ont besoin certainement d'une culture qui leur apprenne à regarder l'avenir pour « se purifier » d'un passé jalonné de déceptions et de frustrations ; une culture qui leur apprenne surtout à enterrer la hache de guerre en vue d'une conciliation et d'un nouveau démarrage plus rassurant pour tous les acteurs.

Il faut surtout empêcher l'émergence d'une nouvelle dictature géopolitique comme c'était le cas sous l'ancien régime, c'est-à-dire la domination de l'Est sur l'Ouest et d'une région sur une autre.

Ce n'est pas parce que Tripoli et Syrte dominaient la vie politique, sociale et économique que Benghazi doit prendre la revanche sur eux et les exclure. Ce n'est pas parce que les Ouerfella, les Kadhafis et les Tarhouna dominaient le pays qu'elles doivent être exclues, marginalisées et brisées. Dans une société démocratique, le dialogue doit être une priorité absolue, et triompher sur toutes les autres considérations subjectives.

La priorité des priorités en Libye est de reconstruire l'âme libyenne collective, brisée par cette guerre. Des tribus comme Tarhouna, Ouerfella, Ouled Slimane se sont scindées en deux camps opposés. Le premier a été du côté du pouvoir, en revanche, l'autre a choisi la rébellion, et de rejoindre la révolte armée. Les frères au sein d'une même famille se sont entretués parce qu'ils avaient choisi deux camps différents, voire opposés. Indépendamment des tribus et des familles, toute la Libye est entrée dans une profonde guerre contre elle-même.

22 *Le Monde* n°20767 du 28/10/2011, p.4

Il ne fait pas de doute que la Libye est aujourd'hui une société brisée, déchiquetée et fracturée, car toute guerre civile finit inéluctablement par briser l'âme collective de la société, détruire son unité nationale sans la reconstruire. Il faut mentionner aussi que la Libye est un pays dominé par la haine et par la revanche tribales.

Le pays est aujourd'hui fragmenté plus qu'il ne l'était sous l'occupation italienne ou Ottomane ; il y a d'une part la tribu Missrata qui contrôle une bonne partie du territoire qui s'étend de Syrte jusqu'à Zouara et qui dispose des atouts comme l'argent, les armes et l'intelligence. Cette tribu a osé chasser ses voisins appartenant à la tribu Taourgha parceque celle-ci a refusé de combattre le régime. Il y a d'autre part la tribu des Zentane qui contrôle entièrement le Djebel Nefoussa et une partie de la capitale Tripoli.

L'une des priorités de la Libye est de diffuser une nouvelle culture politique qui favorise le dialogue entre les Libyens. Car ils en ont besoin plus qu'en tout autre temps pour pouvoir apprendre à vivre ensemble par les idées et non par les armes, par la persuasion et non par la contrainte et la dissuasion. Les Libyens ont besoin d'une nouvelle forme de société qui les éduque à communiquer sans exclusion, qui leur apprenne à vivre ensemble, à coexister malgré leur différences et divergences, à favoriser le compromis et à éviter d'entretenir le conflit ; d'autant que le nombre d'armes qui circulent actuellement dépasse le chiffre de 20 millions, chiffre estimé, selon des sources crédibles, sur la base de 5 armes pour chaque famille libyenne, cela sans compter les armes qui sont entre les mains des milices.

Cette nouvelle culture doit dépasser l'appartenance tribale et l'allégeance locale et entretenir la loyauté envers l'Etat et le pays pour pouvoir construire une nouvelle société.

Pour mieux éclaircir ce sujet, il est opportun de se référer à la conférence présentée par l'ancien premier ministre Mahmoud Jbril le 15 novembre 2011 à l'Université de Tripoli où il affirme « *qu'en Libye existent deux légitimités : celle du CNT et celle des armes* ». Cette conférence reflète aussi sa profonde déception de l'évolution de la situation en Libye.

Nous espérons donc que la Libye produira sa propre démocratie, une vraie et non une simple démocratie de façade au service des tribus influentes qui disposent de l'argent et du poids démographique nécessaires.

En guise de conclusion

Le Monde arabe est arrivé au milieu des années 90 au stade suprême de la crise qui signifie la faillite politique et morale tellement il vivait une situation d'humiliation généralisée.

Les révolutions dans le Monde arabe, en Tunisie, en Egypte, en Syrie, au Yemen ne peuvent pas être expliquées uniquement par la pauvreté et l'exclusion économique²³ : Il faut éviter ce que j'appelle l'unilatéralisme méthodologie. Ce paradigme de la pauvreté risque de nous induire dans une erreur analytique appauvrissante de la compréhension de la situation.

Ces révolutions et révoltes révèlent un sentiment aigu de la trahison. Pis encore, elles témoignent d'un sentiment incontournable que les indépendances nationales²⁴ n'arrangent que les intérêts de l'Occident et ne se soucient guère des intérêts de leurs peuples. Le bilan des indépendances nationales est jugé dramatique : échec des modèles de développement, verrouillage politique, indigence citoyenne, faillite morale, pauvreté généralisée, rapacité des familles regnantes, et corruption endémique qui ont préparé le nid à la déception productrice de révolte. Dans le Monde arabe, la déception est grande et inimaginable, car la croissance économique est relativement faible et n'a pas profité à l'ensemble des composantes sociales. Il va sans dire que les régimes post-indépendances avaient conduit leurs sociétés à un immobilisme politique, social et culturel, à une fragilité économique et à une fermeture étanche des canaux d'expression. Les systèmes autoritaires post-indépendance étaient fragiles et faibles face aux pressions, surtout extérieures. Cette situation fermée et bloquée a fait que le Monde arabe est devenu incapable de résoudre ses problèmes internes sans intervention extérieure, comme cela a été le cas en Libye.

Il y a un sentiment d'être dans un continent exposé à tous les vents, sans immunité, sans protection, et sans remparts. C'est ce sentiment d'absence d'immunité et de fragilité qui perturbe le Monde arabe et alimente les tensions et les révoltes.

Pour mieux rapprocher cette image paroxystique et dramatique, il suffit de mentionner qu'il y a un sentiment partagé entre l'élite et la société que les choix politiques autoritaires ont transformé le Monde arabe en une géographie pourvoyeuse en pétrole, autrement dit en un réservoir énergétique de l'Occident pour utiliser des termes directs et incisifs.

Cette insignifiance à l'échelle internationale n'a fait que renforcer le sentiment de frustration déjà fort dans la région arabe. Comparée même à l'Afrique, le Monde arabe a mis beaucoup de retard pour arriver à la démocratie.

Ces révolutions traduisent un besoin impérieux de rompre avec l'ordre politique, social, économique et sécuritaire qui a régné pendant un demi siècle et dont les résultats

23 Pierre Blanc (dir.), *Révoltes arabes : premiers regards*, Paris, L'Harmattan 2011, 168 pages.

24 Hélé Béji, *Le désenchantement national*, Paris, François Maspero 1982, p.57.

ont été souvent catastrophiques. C'est pour cette raison que le Monde arabe ne pouvait plus supporter ces systèmes complètement verrouillés et qui n'offrent guère aux citoyens les conditions de la dignité humaine et du progrès.

Il a suffi du sacrifice d'un jeune qui s'est immolé par désespoir suprême, pour qu'éclate une grande colère qui s'est transformée, au fil des jours en une révolution véritable.

Cette révolte était porteuse d'un projet de démocratisation de la vie politique et sociale et de lutte contre la corruption.

En Tunisie et en Egypte, les jeunes ont pu transformer la révolte contre le désespoir suprême, le mépris, l'humiliation programmée et la « hogra » en une révolution démocratique ayant une vision claire de la transition, de ses exigences politiques, de ses modalités et de ses résultats .

En Libye, en revanche, le projet démocratique n'émerge pas dans le discours politique de Mustapha Abdeljélil et il n'est même pas considéré comme une priorité. Le président du CNT juge que la priorité de la Libye est la « libération » du territoire, la proclamation de l'Etat islamique, ayant pour base la Charia et la reconnaissance de la polygamie. Pour cette raison, la Libye fait figure d'exception dans cette nouvelle dynamique politique. En fait, les raisons sont multiples.

Tout d'abord les forces démocratiques ont été pendant plusieurs décennies harcelées, poursuivies et complètement interdites d'activités. D'un autre côté, les libéraux du CNT que je connais personnellement, sont « noyés » par une majorité d'islamistes.

C'est ce qui apporte la preuve que le projet démocratique ne fait pas l'objet d'une unanimité et ne bénéficie pas du statut de priorité nationale dans l'immédiat.

Certes, l'actuel président du gouvernement Abderrahmen El-Kib promet d'initier une transition démocratique, mais pourra-t-il le faire face aux pressions conjuguées des islamistes et de Qatar?

Il ne faut surtout pas oublier que les milices islamistes disposent aujourd'hui de fabuleuses quantités d'armes qu'elles refusent de remettre au CNT.

Mais pour mieux approfondir le débat, nous pouvons dire que le Monde arabe est aujourd'hui ballotté entre deux projets de société : l'islamisation apparemment financée et appuyée par Qatar et les Etats-Unis et le projet de démocratisation souhaitée par les forces démocratiques.

En un mot, le Monde arabe qui est aujourd'hui à la croisée des chemins, pourra-t-il réussir l'instauration d'une démocratie consensuelle et contractuelle ou optera-t-il pour une conciliation entre Islam et démocratie ?

Quel que soit le cas, il faut apprendre à regarder l'avenir pour mieux le préparer.

Sociology and Social Work in Nigeria: Characteristics, Collaborations and Differences

Ayodele Ogundipe, Ph.D

and

Patrick A. Edewor, Ph.D

*Department of Sociology
Covenant University Ota
Ogun State, Nigeria
E-mail: edeworpat@yahoo.com*

Abstract

This paper presents the evolution of sociology and social work in Nigeria and examines the current characteristics and areas of convergences and divergences in both fields. It was only in the 1960s that universities in Nigeria began to offer degree programmes in sociology with the first sub-department and full department of sociology established at the University of Ibadan and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka respectively in 1960. These were followed by the other first generation universities and subsequently, the newer universities. There are now scores of Nigerian universities that offer degree programmes in sociology both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. In discussing the characteristics of sociology and social work, the paper examines the teaching of sociology and generic social work at the tertiary level in two universities and the national social work policy and its limited implementation by the Ministry of Social Development under which social work is placed. This provides a reasonably clear picture of the current situation of sociology and social work in Nigeria. The findings show that the teaching of social work employs considerable sociological theories and sociology students are influenced by their exposure to social work. Some universities accept/approve the situating of social work in sociology departments for now. Social welfarism remains an area to be implemented in the future.

Keywords: Sociology, social work, social development, social welfarism, Nigeria

Introduction

When we consider the origin of sociology, we will observe that the discipline emerged in response to the social problems that prevailed in the society of the time. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) who is usually credited with being the founder of the discipline – he coined the word “sociology”, intended to develop a discipline that would employ the methods used in the natural sciences in studying human society. He initiated this because he wanted to find solutions to the problems that pervaded the French society during his time. Similarly, as far back as the 14th century, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) in North Africa had used the Arabic word, *Al Umran*, which may be translated to mean sociology – the science of the structure of human society. Whether we accept Ibn Khaldun or August Comte as the father of sociology or whether the discipline evolved from speculative social philosophy and empirical science, one thing that is clear is the fact that sociology is a product of a response to the need to confront issues of social decay and to formulate relevant policies aimed at rescuing society from decadence and bringing about positive change and general societal development (Otite, 2008).

Just as many sociologists focus on social problems in their research, social workers on the other hand, help to bridge the practical to the analytical aspect of sociologists' work. Although sociology and social work have a common origin in many parts of the world, today they are separate disciplines. Rather than being the clinical or applied aspect of sociology, social work has become a separate and distinct field of study. Yet there are areas of convergences and divergences, with both disciplines having their distinct characterization.

In this paper, we present the evolution sociology and social work in Nigeria and also examine the current characteristics of both disciplines as well as the areas of convergences/collaborations and divergences/differences in both fields. We first consider the historical antecedents or evolution of sociology in Nigeria (and its characteristics and contributions) before considering those of social work. Thereafter, we examine the collaborations and differences and then the conclusion.

Evolution and Characteristics of Sociology in Nigeria

As far back as 1939, a Nigerian, Nathaniel Akinremi Fadipe, obtained a doctoral degree in sociology from the University of London (Okediji and Okediji, 1970). Another Nigerian pioneering sociologist was Bankole Apata who obtained his doctoral degree in sociology from Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in the early 1950s (Rotimi, 2006). However, the establishment of sociology as an academic discipline was not until early 1960s. Although the University of Ibadan had begun as a University College of London in 1948, it was only in 1960 that a sub-department of sociology was created from the department of economics and social studies. A Chair

of Sociology was appointed for this sub-department in 1964. Similarly, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, established a full department of Sociology and Anthropology in October, 1960. University of Nigeria, Nsukka, is thus the first university in Nigeria to establish a full department of Sociology. Be that as it may, the department at Ibadan formally organized training with scholarships by Rockefeller and Ford Foundations for its young graduates to be trained overseas, especially in the United States of America and Canada. This was with the view of returning home to improve the academic staff strength of the department. This turned out to be very beneficial as this crop of staff constituted a formidable force which contributed to sociological knowledge in Nigeria (Erinsho, 1994).

Other first generation universities including the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) founded in 1961, Ahmadu Bello University (1962), University of Lagos (1962), and University of Benin (1970) all established and developed their own departments of Sociology. Many of the third generation universities that were established started their own departments of sociology as well. However, like their predecessors, the sociology courses were largely western-oriented.

In the early years of the sociology programme at the University of Ibadan, the scholars who pioneered the teaching of sociology were mostly foreigners, several of whom were social anthropologists. For example, Peter C. Lloyd played a key role in the sociology programme at the University College, Ibadan (now University of Ibadan). Later on, Ulf Himmelstrand, a Swedish sociologist and former president of International Sociological Association (ISA) made immense contribution to the development of sociology programme at Ibadan. Not only did he expose young Nigerians to the new vistas that the sociological enterprise offered, he made the department to gain both local and international recognition. The success of the sociology department at Ibadan had a multiplier effect on other departments of sociology which were established in other universities (Erinsho, 1994).

Other Nigerian scholars such as Akinsola Akinwowo of the then University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and the late Francis O. Okediji of the University of Ibadan also made tremendous contribution to the growth of sociology as well as the indigenization of the curricula in their respective universities. Most of the Chairs of sociology in the country today owe their inspiration to the vision, contribution, mentoring and support of these pioneers. Both Akinwowo and Francis Okediji trained in American universities (Boston, and Ottawa and Kansas respectively).

In addition to these, there were other first generation sociologists who were trained mainly in American and British universities. Among those trained in American universities were Ademola Igun (Columbia and the New School), Oladejo Okediji (Columbia), Tunde Oloko (Harvard), B. A. Oloko (Harvard), T. O. Odetola (Rutgers), Ayodele Ogundipe (Indiana), Cyril I. Clark (Indiana) and Omafume Onoge (Harvard), to mention but a few. On the other hand, those who trained in Britain include William Ogonwo (Leeds), E. O. Akeredolu-Ale (London), Philip Olusanya (London), Onigu

Otite (London), Onalapo Soley (Manchester), Simi Afonja (Manchester), Ibrahim Tahir (London) and Michael Angulu Onwuejeogwu (London). Nkemna Nzimiro trained in Western Germany, while Stephen Imoagene trained in Ibadan. These are just some of the first generation Nigerian sociologists, majority of whom took up teaching appointments in the first generation Nigerian universities (Rotimi, 2006). Table 1 presents the universities in which they taught in those early years of sociology in Nigeria.

On March 20, 1971, the Nigerian Anthropological and Sociological Association (NASA) was inaugurated. This association was aimed at organising and directing Nigerian sociologists and anthropologists to identify issues of enlightenment and national development. As its amended 1989 constitution shows, two of the principal objectives of the association are to “promote the application of social sciences in the formulation and execution of socio-economic policies” and to “mobilize and orientate sociologists and social anthropologists toward the liberation of Africa and other Third World peoples. Following its inauguration, NASA organized its first annual conference which was held in September 1971 at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The theme of that conference was *“Anthropology and Sociology in Nigeria, what for?”*

Table 1: Nigerian first generation sociologists/anthropologists and the universities in which they taught.

S/N	Nigerian first generation sociologists	Where trained	Where they taught
1.	Akinsola Akinwowo	Boston	Ife
2.	Francis O. Okediji	Ottawa and Kansas	Ibadan
3.	Onigu Otite	London	Ibadan
4.	Ademola Igun	Columbia and New School	Ife
5.	Oladejo Okediji	Columbia	Lagos
6.	Tunde Oloko	Harvard	Lagos
7.	B. A. Oloko	Harvard	Lagos
8.	T. O. Odetola	Rutgers	Ife
9.	Omafume Onoge	Harvard	Ibadan, Jos
10.	Ayodele Ogundipe	Indiana	Benin
11.	Cyril I. Clark	Indiana	Benin
12.	William Ogionwo	Leeds	Ibadan, Port Harcourt
13.	E. O. Akeredolu-Ale	London	Ibadan
14.	Philip O. Olusanya	London	Lagos
15.	Onalapo Soley	Manchester	Ibadan
16.	Simi Afonja	Manchester	Ife
17.	Ibrahim Tahir	London	Zaria
18.	Nkemna Nzimiro	West Germany	Port Harcourt
19.	Stephen Imoagene	Ibadan	Ibadan

The second conference took place two years after (December, 1973) at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, with *Rural Development* as the theme. This was followed by that which took place in December 1974 at the University of Ibadan on *National Integration* (Otite, 2008). Subsequent conferences and themes which provided the reference point through which Nigeria's post-colonial social structure and socio-economic conditions were analysed by the Association include: *The Challenge of Culture to the Development of Africa* (1975); *Power in Contemporary Nigeria* (1979); *Mobilisation of human resources for National Development* (1981); *Corruption in Development* (1982); *Strategies for Authentic Development in Nigeria* (1987); *Social Justice, National Integration and the Third Republic* (1989); *Nigeria at Crossroads: Which Way Out?*(1995); *The Challenges of Sociology and Anthropology in the New Millennium* (2000); *The Challenge of Development and Social Order in Nigeria* (2010); and *The Social Dimension of the Nigerian Democratizing Process* (2011). Some of the proceedings of these conferences were subsequently published and circulated among libraries in the country and handed over to national authorities and ministries for information and policy formulation (Erinosho, 1994, Otite, 2008). *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* is one of the official organs of NASA. It was first published in 1974 and issues of the journal have been published since then from time to time subject to the availability of funds. Its articles have always been reflections on social problems and reflections on various aspects of the problems of development of the Nigerian society.

The characteristics of sociology in Nigeria can better be understood in terms of its curricula and the specializations. Prior to the inauguration of the Accreditation Committee of the National Universities Commission (NUC) in 1988, it was the responsibility of the Senates of the different Nigerian universities to determine the contents of their respective sociology curricula. The Accreditation Committee of the NUC is charged with the responsibility of harmonizing the curricula of all universities in Nigeria in order to ensure uniformity and that minimum standards are met. Consequently, all sociology programmes were reorganized and sociology, like other subjects, now offer comparable courses at all levels in all universities. Newly established universities are also guided by the NUC guidelines in the preparation of their sociology curricula.

There are usually compulsory (core), required and elective courses. The compulsory courses normally include: History of social thought, sociological theory, methods of social research and social statistics. These are in addition to NUC general courses which are designed to develop the cognitive skills of students and they usually include: the peoples and culture of Nigeria, introduction to philosophy and logic, computer appreciation, use of English as well as peace and conflict studies. The elective courses are wide ranging and they focus on such thematic areas as family, religion, health, crime and delinquency, industry, development, population, ethnic relations, the military, social anthropology, social psychology and political sociology. These thematic areas have also been the areas of specialization in which sociologists have made specific contributions toward the development of Nigeria.

Social Work defined

Social work can be said to be the flip side of the coin of Development Sociology. There are no concise terminologies for the concepts of social welfare, social work, social services and social security. As with most terms we use in the social sciences, no universally accepted definitions exist. One makes up one's definitional salad from the smorgasbord of available meanings and usages.

Social work is paid work involving the giving of help and advice to people living in the community who have financial, family and other problems (Oxford Advanced Learners). It is based on scientific knowledge and skill in human relations to help individuals, groups or communities obtain social and personal independence. It is both a science and an art. It draws scientific knowledge and insight (theories) from sociology, anthropology, biology, education, economics, history, law, philosophy and psychology synthesized into social work theory/treatment. Therefore, social work depends on a body of knowledge of these mentioned disciplines as well as on the specific structure and functions of social services and the skill and responsibility of professional social workers (Morales and Sheafor, 1983).

Social work is a social institution in the sense that it is social intervention to encourage, enrich and increase the ability of individuals or groups to socially function. It, therefore, caters for those who have difficulty attaining social performance due to physical, psychological and social factors.

Social work has a different orientation from social welfare. Social welfare is wider in scope in that it includes organized activities aimed at helping individuals and communities to meet their basic needs. The 'social' in social work refers to human society, its organization or quality of life while 'work' refers to activity carried out to improve the quality of life of those who have difficulty accomplishing their life tastes, alleviating their distress and realizing their aspirations. It is a professional activity aimed at enriching and enhancing individual and group development. On the other hand, social security is social legislation against illness, joblessness, loss of life of a worker, traumatizing accidents and other unexpected contingencies. It includes social insurance, public assistance, health and welfare services.

Indigenous social work in Nigeria

Prior to the advent of colonialism, there was indigenous social work in Nigeria. Pre-colonial Nigeria had its very solid institutions in, for example, kinship, family and marriage systems. These institutions were very complicated but understood and practiced by the societies in which they were found as, for example, in the concept of the family. "Nuclear" family is a Eurocentric construct which never suited or captured the

idea of family in Africa. Western titillation of the idea of polygyny and polyandry aside, one can only properly understand the idea of family in Nigeria as full and not extended family because by the classificatory system of family in most Nigerian cultures full families are perfectly understood in the indigenous culture. Not having terms like 'uncle', 'cousin', 'niece', 'aunt', 'nephew' etc., Nigerian families are not "extended" to indigenous people. The idea of 'nuclear' family even in western countries today with the high incidence of divorce and remarriages gives the tie to the father, mother and their children in today's world.

So, kinship, family and marriage ties were iron clad in their responsibilities in traditional indigenous societies. Kinship groups met the recreational, religious, legal and economic needs of their members. They served as social security and social welfare agencies providing for the elderly, the sick, the unemployed, and gave shelter and food to new migrants. They were a form of friendship network of relatives, a readymade source of companionship and care-giving. Members were not usually turned away in times of need. Financial and moral assistance was provided primarily from parents to children in the early years of marriage. Other forms of mutual aid include the exchange of services and gifts and the giving of counselling (Odetola *et. al.* 1983:28). Age grades, traditional rulers, elders, local religious leaders and other influential members of the community also rendered services and assistance.

Ogundipe (2002) clearly articulated the historical antecedents of Social Work in Nigeria. The rendering of social service is as old as the earliest human communities and Nigeria has a long tradition of assisting the individual within the community. In traditional Nigeria as elsewhere in traditional Africa, corporate existence was supreme. People came together and lived in harmonious clan or lineage in groups where sense of belonging, solidarity, and affinity defined the individual and subsumed them under the general will. Here, we first consider the colonial period before considering modern social work practice in Nigeria.

Underlying Africa social structures is a labyrinth of relationships by blood or marriage, networking entire communities, and in that manner making everyone his brother's keeper. The sense of relationship and solidarity provided by kinship expresses itself in mutual support, assistance and succor.

Traditional Nigerian social structure includes organizational divisions into clans, lineages, families, households and individuals. Some of these structural divisions avail concerted action in times of stress, crises, sorrow, loss and failure. They encourage shared joy and success. Learning of genealogies of dissent is a traditional form of education, instilling a sense of origins, rootedness, sacred duty and history. Genealogies also established linkages between the living and the ancestors. The latter are believed to watch over the living from a higher plane than the earthly one and to render assistance or punishment as appropriate. Clan and lineage members by believing in a common ancestor possess a strong sense of identity with one another which often leads to further cooperation.

The family in Nigeria is the nucleus of individual and corporate existence. People

have full families, including grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters, their families and other relatives. This is quite unlike the partial (nuclear) families of husband, wife and their children of Euro-American societies. The full family unit provides even more service, aid and succor to its members. Within these full families, it is understood that people will nurture, share resources, socialize and educate one another.

Life in the family compounds is a communal one where the older ones share in the upbringing of the younger ones: the females playing the role of nurturing and tending, the males serving as authority figures and decision-makers. The old ones provide example and experience. The young in turn respect and provide for the old in the evening of their lives.

The need for solitariness is provided in the education given by the family in the home. Education at this level is pragmatic, utilitarian and religious-oriented. Obedience to decision towards the public good, harmony and efficiency is a rule of thumb. Intense development of communal spirit is fostered through socialization into clan and lineage structures. Communal duties and obligations rather than rights to clan and lineage members are mandatory. The duties include responsibility for the welfare of clan and lineage members, assisting the indigent and the disadvantaged, integrating the orphaned and widowed and showing hospitality to strangers. Moral and spiritual obligations include protecting human dignity and observing religious laws and sanctions.

Life is corporately lived in traditional Nigerian societies. The individual does not exist alone. He is part of a whole. The community invents and presents the individual who in turn is dependent on the corporate groups. The individual emanates only in terms of other people and it is in terms of the community, the clan, the lineage and the family that he becomes conscious of his own being. His duties, privileges, and responsibility towards other people define him. Since the individual is a corporate man and sees himself in terms of others, he is never alone. He shares his striving, achievements, failures with his kinsmen, neighbours and relatives, living or dead. Whatever happens to him happens to the whole group.

Therefore, the values of cooperation and continuity were high on the priority list. Welfarist values of friendliness, kindness, hospitality, generosity, honour and respect for the older people and helpfulness were enshrined in the socialization, education, belief and practice of Nigerian people in traditional times.

With the breakdown in social, political and economic organization by colonialism and its attendant ills, Nigerian social structure fell apart and the result of colonization, modernization and westernization created changes which fostered modern social problems.

Modern Social Group Work Practice in Nigeria

The Missionaries

The first missionaries came to Nigeria to proselytize Nigerians in the late 19thC. Travelers and explorers had earlier written and brought back to their countries in Europe stories about dark-haired people living in societies strange to the white man and practicing a different form of Religion. Explorers also described land rich in spices and ivory and gold. Following these reports, trading companies from Europe came on the heels of the colonizing colonials and the missionaries followed soon after that to save the souls of people on the West African Coast for Christ.

In 1842, Thomas Birch Freeman established the first Christian mission in Nigeria and in the following year, the first primary school was established in Badagry. Between 1842-1900, several missions including the Church Missionary Society had established themselves in various parts of Nigeria. The early missions provided schools where knowledge of the bible, singing of hymns, chanting of psalms and the reciting of denominational catechism predominated. Much of the learning was by rote. Adults who completed the primary six were quickly hired by the missionaries as catechists, teachers and priests. The trading companies employed many of the products of mission schools as clerks; the District Commissions hired yet others as workers, subalterns and interpreters in the Native Administration. Very quickly, products of mission schools were considered very learned, earned good salaries in those days and were considered to be socially mobile.

Missions introduced informal social work into their activities. Therapeutic rather than preventive types of social services were provided. Much of the concentration was on health. They provided drugs and opened clinics, taught midwifery and simple nursing sanitation and hygiene was introduced and child welfare and women's programmes were designed. These social educational services were primarily to lure more converts into Christianity and in return the trained converts were hired to expand missionary activities. The Salvation Army was also very busy providing welfare services.

Following the Depression of the 1930s and World War II social welfare in the colonies became an important colonial government concern. Formal social work started in Nigeria in the 1940s. Based on concern against child labour the Colonial Welfare Act was passed in 1940 with particular focus on labour and child welfare and a sanction against labour for children under 14 years of age. During World War II, the influx of migrants and abandoned children and juvenile in the streets activated the colonial welfare service which placed young migrants in boys' clubs. The Native Children's (Custody and Reformation) Ordinance was passed and Salvation Army home reverted by the government.

Social welfare services have grown since 1960 when Nigeria became independent. A Federal Ministry of Social Development, Youth and Sports was fashioned in 1972 so that social welfare services could be centrally policed funded and controlled. The Ministry today is a tripartite one of Social Development, Youth and Sports with equal attention paid to welfare services, youth development, voluntary youth organizations and national and international voluntary organizations.

Group work services in Nigeria today are provided through three channels: (i) Institutional Groups for therapeutic purposes, (ii) Voluntary Groups for training and discipline, and (iii) Community Groups for training and development.

Group work services in Nigeria aims at developing the personality and spirit of comradeship, mutual understanding and tolerance. They also aim at discovering activities and hidden talents among youths. Voluntary organizations are subsumed under group work services.

Institutional Groups

Institutional groups include Remand Homes, day-care centres, Approved Schools, Prison and Hospitals.

Remand Homes

Remand Homes were not originally approved schools, although today due to lack of staff and facilities, juveniles who should be in approved schools are placed in Remand Homes. Remand Homes in Nigeria were established as places of safety for children and young persons who are caught wandering and loitering because they are truants or because they are neglected and lacked parents or close supervision. So Remand Homes are shelters for children and young persons needing care, protection and control. They provide remedial and corrective training. Children are taught to read, write and numerate. Rigid roster of activity introduces from the discipline into their youthful lives and through group assignment and activities they learn to share, to take responsibility and to open up, even to show leadership abilities and capacities. Recreational activities include indoor and outdoor games such as soccer, table tennis, board and card games. Remand Homes provide a conducive atmosphere for diagnosing the problems of inmates and enable recommendation of the appropriate treatment. Social group work is practiced in such places as Remand Homes by the social workers attached to such institutions.

In Edo State there is Ugbekun Remand Home which because of less than ideal funding, poor staffing and poor facilities have over the years become a combined remand home and approved institution. Juvenile offenders awaiting admission to approved

schools, under-age criminals, juvenile court detainees, young people needing care and protection, truants who are beyond parental control and those who have committed a breach of recognizance are all placed together at the Ugbekun Remand Homes in Benin City, Edo State. This should not be so. A staff of principal social welfare officer, warden, matron, assisted by supervision officers, typists, clerks, gardeners and gatemen keep the place running. Inmates are categorized as: (i) criminals/delinquents, (ii) care and protection, (iii) beyond control and, (iv) breach of recognizance. Each category is further classified as: (a) remand, (b) awaiting repatriation, (c) detention, (d) referred cases, and (e) awaiting admission into Approved Schools.

Approved Schools

Approved Schools are residential establishments approved by the government for the education and corrective training of boys and girls who failed to respond to treatment while on probation. Generally, Approved Schools are primarily for hardened criminals/delinquents. Examples of such Schools in Nigeria are Birrel House Approved Schools (for junior boys) and Isheri Approved School (for intermediate boys). The primary objectives of Approved Schools' corrective training are those of readjustment and social reeducation in preparation for return to the community. Hence Approved Schools offer training in selected trades such as agriculture, carpentry, smithery, and tailoring. Such training is aimed at preparing trainees for adult life in a competitive environment and thereby lessening the possibility of their becoming adult criminals.

Government interest in the welfare of the juvenile delinquent does not stop at the approved schools. Government attempts to rehabilitate the delinquent so that he can be reabsorbed into his family and be a useful member of the community for the rest of his life.

Voluntary Associations

Voluntary Associations are encouraged to fill the gap in the provision of social services which the government would otherwise have provided. Group work are provided through voluntary associations which serve as a means of making available various types of constructive social, moral, intellectual and physical activities to their members in order to make them integrated personalities and useful citizens.

The Ministry recognizes and subverts some voluntary youth organizations prominent among which are:

1. The Boy Scouts of Nigeria;
2. The Boy's Brigade of Nigeria;

3. The National Youth Council of Nigeria;
4. The National Federation of Yoruba Farmers' Club;
5. The National Council of Youth Women's Christian Association of Nigeria;
6. The Islamic Youth League of Nigeria;
7. The Girls Guides Association in Nigeria; and
8. The Girls Brigade of Nigeria

Social Work Education, Training and Collaborations with Sociology

Social work is currently placed under the Ministry of Social Development. The government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria came up with a national policy on social development tagged: "Social Development Policy for Nigeria" in October 1989. A revised version of the policy was published in 2004. This newer version has a sub-section on social work education and training under the section on social welfare services. It states *inter alia*:

Social Work Education and Training has the task of producing various levels of manpower capable of applying professional knowledge and planned skill intervention in the various problem situations to achieve a suitable welfare state. The growing dimension of social problems without a corresponding increase in the number of qualified social workers to competently arrest these problems has created serious demands for professionally trained social workers in Nigeria.

Social problems and social welfare delivery in Nigeria have evolved to a stage which requires a proper handling by social workers who are adequately trained and equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, orientation, value and competence. This demand for professionally trained social workers has led to the establishment of a variety of educational courses, utilizing and contributing to the growth of professional social work (FRN, 2004).

Social work education and training is considered a process of professionalization of social work based on improved scientific knowledge which enhances the skills of social workers in human relations and problem solving.

A number of Social Development Institutes are established in the country in which the training of social workers is done. An example is the Social Development Institute, Iperu, Ogun State, which runs a one-year certificate course and a two-year diploma course in social development respectively. The curricula for these two programmes have both sociology and social work courses.

In addition, a number of Nigerian universities have both sociology and social work programmes. However, there are far more universities with only the sociology programme

than those with both. The few universities with the social work programmes usually situate the social work programme in the department of sociology. In one or two cases, social work later became a full-fledged department. One of such cases is the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Based on the request of the Federal Government, Social Work programme was established in 1976 in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in the Faculty of the Social Sciences. The programme was principally to train and produce middle level manpower who can man the Social Welfare Departments in the Ministries.

Since 1976, the social work unit in that University has pioneered the training of university level social workers in the country, in order to satisfy the need for this specialized manpower. At the initial stage, only the undergraduate diploma programme was offered. However, it began to offer the degree programme in 1985 and postgraduate programmes (PGD, M.Sc, Ph.D) as from 1986/1987 academic session. The social work unit acquired a sub-departmental status in November, 2001 and later, a full-fledged department in 2006.

The Nsukka undergraduate social work curriculum has considerable number of sociology courses such as Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Anthropology, Elements of Scientific Thought, Deviant Behaviour, Methods of Social Work Research, Ethno-cultural Relations and the teaching of social work employs considerable sociological theories.

Similarly, the University of Benin offers social work programmes both at the diploma, first degree and postgraduate levels but housed in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. The social work programme was started in 1979 but only offered at the postgraduate levels (M.Sc and Ph.D) at the inception. Later on (in March, 1983) the two-year undergraduate diploma programme (Diploma in Social Work) was introduced but was on a part-time basis. This was followed by the five-year undergraduate degree programme in the 1995/1996 academic session, also on a part-time basis. The degree programme emphasizes the pragmatic aspects of sociology, anthropology and allied disciplines in the service of the Nigerian society. It grew out of the cognizance of the needs of the wider society and the mounting trend towards professionalization. It is aimed at providing students with an opportunity to critically study the issues involved in effecting personal and social change.

An examination of the degree programme shows that such sociology courses as *Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology*, *Social Deviance*, *Ethnography of Nigeria*, *Sociological and Anthropological Analysis*, *Social Statistics*, *Social Problems in Nigeria*, *Deviance and Criminology*, *Political Sociology*, *Marriage and the Family*, *Research Methods* as well as *Demographic Problems and Family Planning* are among the courses taken by students of social work.

At both Nsukka and Benin, most of the members of Faculty (Lecturers) have their backgrounds in sociology with specializations ranging from criminology to social

psychology, social anthropology, industrial sociology, population studies, sociology of development, gender studies, political sociology and family studies. The teaching of social work thus employs considerable sociological theories. Since social work is situated in the departments of sociology, there is considerable interaction between sociology students and those of social work as they take some courses together. The students of sociology are considerably influenced by their exposure to social work while social work students also tend to reason sociologically due to their exposure to sociology.

Sociology and Social Work: Divergences

Sociology and social work are not the same. They are two separate and distinct disciplines. One might say that social work is basically an applied science studying how sociological knowledge is used to help people solve some social problems. Sociology, on the other hand, is primarily a basic science seeking valid knowledge about human social behaviour. Three conclusions can be arrived at from the comparison of sociology to social work: (i) Sociology is a wider field than social work covering all important aspects of human social behaviour. It covers not only their economy, religion, government, language and literature but also the social organization, the social structure, and the social matrix within which these various phenomena are found. (ii) Sociology also studies some aspects of each the other social sciences. (iii) Although sociology overlaps with these other disciplines, it differs from them in some ways. Ogunbameru (1998) has identified seven characteristics unique to sociology:

1. Sociology is a social science and not a natural science. This distinction is by content not by method. That is, sociology simply serves to distinguish those sciences dealing with the physical from the social universe.
2. Sociology is a categorical and not a normative discipline. By this is meant that sociology confines itself to statements of what is, not what ought to be.
3. Sociology is not an applied science but a pure science. Its main goal is the acquisition of knowledge about human society, not the utilization of that knowledge. For instance, sociology is mainly concerned with acquiring the knowledge about society that can be used to solve some of the world's problems, but it is not itself an applied science.
4. Sociology is not interested in the concrete manifestations of human events but rather, in the form they take and the patterns they assume.
5. Sociology is a generalizing, not a particularizing or individualizing science. It looks for general laws about human groups and societies not as the case of history which seeks complete and comprehensive descriptions of particular societies.

6. Sociology studies those phenomena that are common to all human interactions.
7. Sociology is both a rational and an empirical science. This final characteristic concerns methodological issues. In the course of investigation, science adheres to principles of objectivity, relativism, ethical neutrality, parsimony and skepticism (Ogunbameru, 1998).

The central distinguishing characteristic of social work is its capacity for providing the means and opportunities by which persons can work. Several efforts have been made to induce social as well as individual change, prevent social problems as well as alleviate their end results. The following, therefore, constitute the purpose of social work:

1. The planning, development and implementation of social services, programmes and policies required for meeting basic needs and supporting the development of capacities and abilities of individuals, groups, communities, and organizations.
2. The promotion, restoration, maintenance or enhancement of the functioning individuals, families, households, social groups, organizations and communities, by helping them to prevent distress and utilize resources effectively.
3. The pursuit of policies, services and programmes through legislative advocacy, lobbying and other forms of social action.
4. The development and testing of professional knowledge and skills related to this purpose.

However, on the interactions between people and resource systems, the social worker must:

- Help people enhance and more effectively utilize their own problem solving and coping capacities;
- Establish initial linkage between people and resource systems;
- Facilitate interaction, modify and build new relationship between people and societal resource systems;
- Contribute to the development and modification of social policy;
- Dispense material resources; and
- Serve as agent of social control.

In Nigeria, funding resources, resource systems and social workers are not there for the most part. Hence, social work education is the way it is. Social services, social security and social welfare are not there hence things are the way they are.

Conclusion

One of the problems faced by all societies is to develop ways to meet the needs of the non-self sufficient, the orphan, the blind, the physically challenged, the poor, the mentally disabled, the sick (particularly cases of HIV/AIDS) etc. In the past, the responsibilities were largely met by the family, church, neighbours and other similar agencies. In recent times the burden has become increasingly difficult for the immediate family to cope with the erstwhile functions of the full (extended) family, the age grade, church and neighbours. To accomplish these tasks the social workers must focus not on the problems of people or the problems of resource systems, which in Nigeria, for example largely are not there.

References

- Erinosho, O., 1994, 'Thirty-three Years of Sociology in Nigeria', *International Journal of Sociology* Vol. 9, No. 2, pp.209-216.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004, *Social Development Policy for Nigeria*, Abuja: FRN.
- Morales, A. and Sheafor, B. W., 1983, *Social Work: A Comprehensive Helping Profession*, Massachussets: Allyb and Bacon.
- Odetola, T. O., Oloruntimehin, O. and Aweda, D. A., 1983, *Man and Society in Africa: An Introduction to Sociology*, London: Longman.
- Odrah, C. I., 1991, *Identification of Gaps in Social Work Education in Nigeria*, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Toronto.
- Ogunbameru, O. A., 1998, 'Sociology: A Biographical Approach' in Ogunbameru, O. A. and Rotimi, W. R., eds., *Man and His Social Environment: A Textbook in Sociology*, Ibadan: Cardinal Crest Ltd.
- Ogundipe A., 2002, *Social Group Work*, Benin City: Ambik Press.
- Okediji, F. O. and Okediji, O. O., 1970, 'Introduction' in N. A. Fadipe *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Onokerhoraye, A. G., 1984, *Social Services in Nigeria: An Introduction*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Otite, O., 2008, 'Four Decades of Sociology in Nigeria', Text of a keynote address presented at a Conference to celebrate four decades of Sociology in Nigeria. Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, October 16.
- Rotimi, W. R., 2006, 'The Development of Sociology as a field of Dscipline in Nigeria' in Ogunbameru, O. A. and Rotimi, W. R., eds., *Man and His Social Environment: A Textbook in Sociology*, Ibadan: Spectrum.
- Wayne, J. H., 1986, *The Social Services: An Introduction*, New York: Peacock Publishers.

Education et Cohésion Sociale en Tunisie

Ali Hamami

*Département de sociologie,
Faculté des sciences Humaines et Sociales de Tunis*

Résumé

La présente étude se propose d'illustrer la problématique relative à la pertinence et l'efficacité des actions éducatives visant à renforcer la cohésion sociale dans le contexte national tunisien. Ainsi, seront traités, tours à tours la capacité du système éducatif (programmes, textes, curricula et autres dispositifs) d'assurer l'intégration sociale des jeunes apprenants et de renforcer les valeurs de la citoyenneté – avec ce que cette notion comporte comme référence à l'identité et l'altérité– en vue de permettre à ces jeunes d'accéder aux modes de penser et d'agir valorisés dans la pensée contemporaine.

Mots clés: Education, Cohésion sociale, Citoyenneté, Identité, Altérité.

Introduction

L'école, à l'instar d'autres instances d'intégration sociale, contribue à la transmission de normes, de valeurs et modes de comportements communs. Elle prépare aussi à la vie active et favorise ainsi l'intégration professionnelle. L'élève, au « centre de l'acte éducatif »¹, acquiert des compétences et intègre à sa propre personnalité les normes culturelles véhiculées par l'école et ses différents acteurs, afin de s'adapter à son environnement économique et social. C'est ce processus de socialisation qui est appelé, entre autre, à tisser le lien social et à forger la cohésion sociale.

Or, de nos jours, des transformations et des changements dans la vie économique et sociale affectent les lieux et les dispositifs d'intégration. Les instances de socialisation font ainsi face à des remises en question de leur rôle, et ceci pour différentes raisons:

- Tout d'abord, la famille jouait, traditionnellement, un rôle fondateur dans l'intégration en ceci qu'elle transmettait à l'enfant, dès la naissance, des normes et des valeurs et se présentait comme un espace fédérateur, un lieu d'activités communes. Or, suite aux importantes transformations sociales qu'a connues le pays, on assiste aujourd'hui à un essor de l'individualisme, à une tendance des parents à la démission, à une augmentation des divorces. Certes, la Tunisie est, pour le moment, moins touchée que d'autres pays par certains de ces

¹ Loi d'orientation, article 2, MEF, juillet 2002.

phénomènes. Mais il n'en reste pas moins qu'elle connaît, à son tour, une fragilisation de la cellule familiale et, par voie de conséquence, une fragilisation de son rôle intégrateur.

- Ensuite, le monde professionnel, qui permettait aussi aux individus de s'intégrer en leur offrant l'opportunité de se forger une identité professionnelle puis une identité sociale et, donc, un sentiment d'appartenance, est aujourd'hui remis en cause dans son rôle intégrateur. En effet, à l'épreuve de la crise actuelle, l'emploi est même devenu, pour certains, un facteur d'exclusion.
- Enfin, face à ce constat, on peut se demander si l'école, qui a toujours joué un rôle capital dans la socialisation des futurs citoyens et contribué ainsi à la consolidation de la cohésion sociale, n'est pas en passe de devenir un palliatif aux défaillances des autres instances et, par conséquent, l'instance centrale d'intégration sociale. Ou peut-être connaît-elle, elle aussi, des difficultés face aux profondes transformations de la société tunisienne contemporaine, lesquelles transformations remettraient en cause ses capacités intégratrices.

Pour « mesurer » l'état des lieux de l'école tunisienne quant à cette problématique, nous tenterons de répondre aux deux questions suivantes :

- Comment le concept de cohésion a-t-il été pensé dans les textes fondamentaux, les programmes et les curricula explicites ? (analyse de contenu).
- Comment le concept de cohésion est-il approché et vécu par les différents acteurs dans l'espace scolaire ? (enquête de terrain).

Problématique et approche méthodologique

Problématique

La présente étude se propose d'examiner la pertinence et l'efficacité des actions éducatives visant à renforcer la cohésion sociale dans le contexte national tunisien. Par action éducative, nous entendons les divers dispositifs mis en œuvre par les acteurs politiques (lois, programmes, curricula, pratiques enseignantes et autres formes d'accompagnement) et qui auraient pour tâche de renforcer le rôle intégrateur et cohésif de l'école.

Le terme de « cohésion sociale » est utilisé pour la première fois par le sociologue français Emile Durkheim qui y voit un indicateur du bon fonctionnement d'une société où s'expriment la solidarité entre individus et la conscience collective.² Dans

2 Emile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social*, Paris, PUF, 1^{ère} éd., 1893, p.113.

son acception la plus large, le concept de cohésion sociale fait référence à des valeurs de solidarité et d'équité dans l'accès aux droits. Parler de cohésion sociale revient donc à parler de lien social. Au fondement même de la solidarité et de toute organisation sociale, le lien social, qui renvoie à l'ensemble des réseaux d'appartenances et des interactions qui lient individus et groupes sociaux, peut s'affaiblir ou s'intensifier selon la conjoncture liée au contexte. Ainsi, certains facteurs comme, par exemple, l'accroissement des inégalités sociales ou encore les bouleversements sociaux contemporains (divorce, individualisme, délinquance, émigration, exode rural, régionalisme) peuvent agir négativement sur la qualité et l'intensité du lien social.

Dans cette perspective, notre étude portera sur, d'une part, l'efficacité des actions éducatives visant à renforcer la cohésion sociale en général (en assurant l'intégration professionnelle pour tous, en réduisant les inégalités ou en consolidant les liens sociaux par l'institution de l'espace scolaire comme espace de mixité sociale) et, d'autre part, l'éducation à la citoyenneté - avec ce que cette notion comporte de référence à l'identité et à l'altérité - comme moyen de transformer chez les jeunes apprenants leur façon de penser et d'agir - généralement issue d'une culture ancestrale - pour leur permettre d'accéder aux modes de penser et d'agir valorisés dans la pensée contemporaine.³

Notre réflexion s'articulera alors autour de ces deux hypothèses :

- Dans un contexte de mutation sociale et de « modernité inachevée », l'école tunisienne connaîtrait des difficultés quant à la transmission d'une culture commune qui se veut moderne et universelle.
- Les constructions identitaires et citoyennes des élèves seraient largement tributaires de l'ambivalence de cette culture tunisienne ancrée dans la tradition et aspirant à la modernité.

Les objectifs sous-jacents de cette étude sont ainsi les suivants :

- Cerner les objectifs de l'école tunisienne en matière d'éducation à la citoyenneté et de transmission d'une culture commune cohésive et intégrative.
- Cerner les perceptions des différents acteurs scolaires (élèves, parents, enseignants et directeurs d'établissement) quant à la pertinence de l'éducation à la citoyenneté et l'efficacité des activités participatives.
- Analyser l'impact des pratiques enseignantes sur les constructions identitaires et sur les processus de construction de la citoyenneté.

3 Nous reviendrons, avec plus de détails, sur le rapport entre contexte national et rôle intégrateur de l'école dans le chapitre suivant.

Pour mener à bien cette recherche, nous avons procédé par étapes pour entreprendre:

1. Une revue des documents relatifs à la consolidation du rôle intégrateur de l'école tunisienne rénovée (Lois d'orientation, Programme des programmes, contenus pédagogiques des matières porteuses d'une dimension citoyenne).
2. L'enquête de terrain portant sur les représentations et les perceptions des divers acteurs scolaires quant au rôle de l'école dans la cohésion sociale et son impact sur les pratiques et engagements citoyens à l'intérieur de l'espace scolaire.
3. Une enquête spécifique qui se focalisera essentiellement sur l'étude des perceptions relatives aux constructions identitaires et citoyennes.

Champ d'observation et techniques de collecte de données

Pour répondre aux différentes questions évoquées précédemment, l'enquête qualitative interprétative s'impose. Cette démarche nous permettra de reconstruire les points de vue et perceptions et de cerner les stratégies.

Notre champ d'observation se limitera aux établissements scolaires d'enseignement de base (primaire et collège) et du secondaire du gouvernorat de l'Ariana, situé dans le Nord-Ouest du Grand Tunis qui réunit les principales caractéristiques de l'école tunisienne d'aujourd'hui. Nous avons ainsi pu approcher :

- Des écoles en milieu urbain aisé, à savoir l'école primaire Bilel, le collège et lycée Menzeh VI.
- Des écoles en milieu périurbain défavorisé, à savoir l'école primaire 2 mars, le collège Bassatine et le lycée Chabbi du quartier populaire Mnihla-Ettadamen.
- Des écoles en milieu rural, où notre recherche a porté sur l'école primaire Jebbes, le collège et lycée Sidi Thabet.

L'enquête porte sur les élèves de dernière année des trois paliers scolaires primaire, moyen et secondaire, à savoir les élèves de 6^{ème}, 9^{ème} et 4^{ème} année. L'âge des élèves retenus dans l'échantillon varie ainsi entre 12, 15 et 19 ans

- 9 établissements scolaires;
- 9 focus groups d'élèves à raison de 9 élèves par groupe;

Ce premier travail de terrain a été complété et enrichi par une deuxième enquête centrée tout particulièrement sur la problématique de l'éducation à la citoyenneté dans un contexte de mutation sociale.

Nous avons donc eu recours, dans le cadre de cette recherche, à plusieurs techniques d'enquête, à savoir :

- L'analyse de contenu pour les documents officiels et les contenus pédagogiques.
- La mise en place d'un focus group rassemblant les élèves.

Le rôle intégrateur de l'école face aux défis du contexte

La réforme de 2002

La réforme de 2002 restitue à l'école la primauté de sa fonction de socialisation civique et politique dans un contexte de mondialisation : une nouvelle réforme se prépare donc avant même que l'on ait pu juger à leur juste valeur les résultats de la réforme précédente. Aussi bien l'accélération des progrès scientifiques et technologiques que le surgissement de ce phénomène soudain qu'on a baptisé «Mondialisation» ont donné lieu, en Tunisie, à une réflexion sur «l'Ecole de demain». Entamée en 1998, cette réflexion débouchera sur un projet de réforme du système éducatif consacré par la loi du 23 juillet 2002. Cette nouvelle loi introduit une hiérarchisation inédite des fonctions de l'école qui doit dorénavant s'appliquer à : Eduquer, Instruire, Qualifier (art.7). Ce faisant, elle assigne à l'école une mission éducative consistant en priorité à :

- Développer le sens civique des jeunes en les éduquant aux valeurs de la citoyenneté;
- Affermir en eux la conscience du caractère indissociable de la liberté et de la responsabilité et les préparer à prendre part à la consolidation des fondations d'une société solidaire basée sur la justice, l'équité, l'égalité des citoyens en droits et en devoirs (...);
- Eduquer l'élève au respect des valeurs communes et des règles du « vivre ensemble » (art.8).

Ce changement de perspective traduit le souci d'une société en mutation qui s'inquiète de la perte des normes, des repères et des « valeurs communes du vivre ensemble » auxquelles la loi fait explicitement référence. C'est donc tout naturellement vers son Ecole que la société se tourne pour lui demander d'être, plus que jamais, le lieu de socialisation et d'apprentissage des normes qu'elle valorise.

Par ailleurs, de nouveaux problèmes commencent à se poser. En effet, l'école qui, jusque là, avait pleinement joué son rôle « d'ascenseur » social et économique, se trouve confrontée au problème du chômage de « ses » diplômés. A ces chômeurs

diplômés de plus en plus nombreux, s'ajoutent les cohortes de jeunes en situation d'échec scolaire qui quittent l'école sans qualifications. De plus, on assiste à une recrudescence des actes d'incivilité et de certaines manifestations de violence en milieu scolaire. Se renforçant mutuellement, ces phénomènes interpellent l'école sur sa fonction « inclusive » et sa capacité à socialiser les élèves en les éduquant au respect de l'autre et aux règles du vivre ensemble.

C'est dans ce contexte et à la lumière de ces menaces qu'il faut apprécier les innovations introduites par la loi du 23 juillet 2002 qui redonne sa place à la primauté de la fonction éducative de l'École. Dès l'article 3, l'accent est mis sur les valeurs de « solidarité, de tolérance et de modération » que l'École se doit d'enraciner chez les élèves. L'École se doit également d'être « garante de l'instauration d'une société profondément attachée à son identité culturelle, ouverte sur la modernité et s'inspirant des idéaux humanistes et des principes universels de liberté, de démocratie, de justice sociale et des droits de l'Homme ». Le système éducatif reconnaît, dans ce cadre, l'importance de la vie extra scolaire, tous les types d'apprentissage devant être mis à contribution pour garantir l'éducation à la citoyenneté. Cependant, une mention spéciale est faite par la loi au rôle de la « vie scolaire » dans cette éducation⁴.

Le rôle intégrateur de l'école dans les textes, programmes et curricula

Citoyenneté, identité et altérité

Comme annoncé précédemment, nous avons donc passé en revue des textes de référence portant sur l'organisation et le fonctionnement de l'école tunisienne, ce qui nous a permis de faire ressortir un certain nombre de dispositions et de dispositifs destinés à assurer la contribution de l'école à la construction du processus d'intégration et de cohésion sociale. D'autres mesures, qui sont venues compléter ces dispositions et corriger les dysfonctionnements porteurs de risques de dégradation des conditions de cohésion, sont aussi à signaler.

Deux textes de référence ont entériné les engagements des pouvoirs publics quant aux mesures de renforcement de la cohésion sociale : « La loi d'Orientation de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement »⁵ du 23 juillet 2002 et le « Décret relatif à la vie scolaire »⁶.

4 Pour la première fois dans l'histoire de l'école tunisienne, un décret (n° 2437 du 19 octobre 2004) est consacré à l'organisation de la vie scolaire. Reprenant, pour le développer, l'article 49 de la loi qui stipule que « la vie scolaire consiste, avec toutes les activités qu'elle comporte, en un prolongement naturel des apprentissages et un cadre permettant, outre l'apprentissage de la vie en collectivité, le développement de la personnalité de l'élève et de ses dons », le décret définit la vie scolaire comme un lieu privilégié de l'apprentissage du « vivre ensemble » et de l'exercice pratique de la citoyenneté par les occasions qu'elle offre au débat et à la participation des élèves à la vie de l'établissement.

5 Loi n° 2002-80 du 23 juillet 2002, loi d'orientation de l'éducation et de l'enseignement scolaire.

6 Décret n° 2004-2437 du 19 octobre 2004, relatif à l'organisation de la vie scolaire.

Par ailleurs, « Le Programme des programmes » constitue un autre texte de référence capital. Il s'agit, en effet, de la courroie de transmission de la loi d'orientation dans l'élaboration des programmes des différentes disciplines d'enseignement. Opérationnalisant les orientations générales, ce texte les décline en compétences transversales et spécifiques.

Enfin, notre analyse se focalisera sur le contenu du programme d'« Education civique » des différents cycles d'enseignement, cette discipline étant censée mobiliser de façon directe et explicite les indicateurs de la cohésion sociale. Il faut tout de même signaler que le volume horaire réservé à cette matière (coefficient 1) ne dépasse pas une heure et demie par semaine.

Nous nous proposons donc, dans cette partie de l'étude, de nous pencher sur les supports susmentionnés pour questionner la vision et les perspectives éducatives qui s'y dessinent quant à la citoyenneté et, par conséquent, à l'identité et à l'altérité, l'« éducation à la citoyenneté (...) permettant à chacun de se reconnaître et de faire évoluer son identité à partir de l'identification de l'altérité... »⁷

La notion de citoyenneté

L'image du futur citoyen se profile dans des textes soucieux de développer des compétences aptes à permettre à l'apprenant de se construire une personnalité dont l'équilibre passe par son intégration professionnelle, la reconnaissance de ses droits à la dignité, à l'autonomie et à la différence, et sa participation à la vie publique.

La Loi d'orientation

L'article 8 de la loi d'orientation énumère et confirme l'importance de certaines normes et valeurs que l'école est appelée à développer chez les élèves. Il s'agit, entre autre, d'« éduquer les jeunes au respect des bonnes mœurs et des règles de bonne conduite, et au sens de la responsabilité et de l'initiative », ainsi que de « développer (leur) sens civique (...) ; les éduquer aux valeurs de citoyenneté; affermir en eux la conscience du caractère indissociable de la liberté et de la responsabilité; les préparer à prendre part à la consolidation des assises d'une société solidaire fondée sur la justice » et les « élever (...) dans le goût de l'effort et l'amour du travail... ». Le texte insiste sur les valeurs d'équité et d'« égalité des citoyens en droits et en devoirs ... », « sans discrimination fondée sur le sexe, l'origine sociale, la couleur ou la religion... ». Selon cet article, la fonction de l'école consiste donc à « développer la personnalité de l'individu dans toutes ses dimensions : morale, affective, mentale

7 M. Masson, « Identité et altérité ou construire une citoyenneté européenne pour demain », in *Etudes de linguistique appliquée*, vol. 106, 1997.

et physique ; affiner ses dons et ses facultés et lui garantir le droit à la construction de sa personne d'une manière qui aigüise son esprit critique et sa volonté, afin que se développent en lui la clairvoyance du jugement, la confiance en soi, le sens de l'initiative et la créativité ».

Ce développement personnel devrait contribuer à préparer l'élève aux différentes formes de participation dans l'espace scolaire, en vue de son futur rôle de citoyen. En effet, engager l'élève à participer à la vie scolaire revient non seulement à lui donner l'opportunité de contribuer aux choix et orientations de son école mais aussi à le préparer, en tant que futur citoyen, à l'exercice de ses droits dans la dynamique sociale. A ce propos, les articles 5 et 15 dudit décret définissent les dispositifs et le fonctionnement de cette participation : il s'agit d'exercer son droit de choisir ses représentants, de siéger dans les structures représentatives et de participer à l'élaboration de projets touchant à son espace scolaire.

Le Programme des programmes

Le document de référence pour la construction des curricula scolaires adopte la même perspective que les textes fondateurs, rappelant les fonctions de l'école, investie d'une double mission éducative à la fois instrumentale (transmission de savoirs et développement de compétences) et morale (transmission de valeurs).

Le programme d'Education civique du cycle primaire

Au niveau primaire, l'école doit s'efforcer d'apprendre à l'élève à adhérer à la vie publique dans le respect des valeurs civiques, de la citoyenneté et des droits de l'Homme. Ce programme se propose donc de faire acquérir à l'élève les compétences nécessaires à sa participation active à la vie publique, de l'informer de l'organisation juridique de la société et des différents secteurs de participation, de développer chez lui le sens critique et l'argumentation en lui apprenant à recueillir des données pour traiter et analyser un sujet de société. A ce stade, l'élève est appelé à connaître les structures de l'administration (gouvernorat, municipalité, ministère...), leur fonctionnement, leur rapport au citoyen, ainsi que le mécanisme des élections...

Le programme d'« Education civique » au collège

Au bout des trois ans de collège, l'élève est censé avoir acquis les outils aptes à assurer son intégration dans la vie sociale, à savoir le sens de ses droits et devoirs, les compétences nécessaires à sa participation à la vie publique et les valeurs morales régissant les

interactions sociales.⁸

Le programme d'« Education civique » au lycée

Le programme d'éducation civique au lycée reprend les mêmes objectifs que le collège et les décline en une série de thèmes à développer selon le niveau d'enseignement. Ainsi, en première année, l'enseignement porte sur la question du « citoyen et (de) la pratique sociale et politique ». ⁹ En deuxième année, le cours d'« Education civique » porte sur l'« Etat démocratique et (la) société civile ». ¹⁰ Enfin, le programme de troisième année traite du thème du « citoyen et (de la) communauté internationale ». ¹¹

Identité et altérité

Je est un autre
Arthur Rimbaud

Certains mots clés, relatifs à la question de l'identité et à son pendant, l'altérité, jalonnent les différents documents dont nous avons analysé le contenu. Le Même et L'Autre, l'identité et la différence, le « vivre ensemble » dans la diversité et dans le contexte contemporain de la mondialisation : autant de sujets portant à réflexion, interpellant notre vision du réel dans l'interrogation d'une modernité paradoxalement marquée à la fois par les replis identitaires et la nécessaire ouverture sur le monde, sur l'Autre, et

- 8 *Chaque niveau de ce cycle d'enseignement développe un champ de compétences spécifique. En 7ème année, l'enseignement est axé sur l'apprentissage de la communication, le développement de l'aptitude au dialogue, le sens du respect, des droits et devoirs, de la liberté et de la responsabilité, l'égalité entre les sexes, la participation et, enfin, la solidarité. En 8ème année, le programme porte essentiellement sur la participation à la vie publique à travers l'expérience associative (parti/association, multipartisme...), les élections (moyens de participation, responsabilité, représentativité, droits et devoirs...). Enfin, en 9ème année, c'est la citoyenneté proprement dite qui fait l'objet de l'apprentissage. On y traite du contexte général de la citoyenneté (appartenance à la patrie, citoyenneté politique, juridique, sociale, administrative) et des notions de liberté et responsabilité (les libertés fondamentales, la responsabilité sociale et environnementale).*
- 9 *Trois sous-thèmes jalonnent le programme de ce niveau, à savoir : le citoyen dans son environnement politique et social (les concepts, l'importance de l'organisation de la vie sociale, l'individu et la société, le rôle du citoyen dans la vie publique), le citoyen et l'organisation des pouvoirs (les différents pouvoirs, les valeurs de la république, le statut de l'individu par rapport aux différents pouvoirs), le citoyen et la pratique du pluralisme (les concepts, la reconnaissance de l'Autre et le droit à la différence, la pluralité des opinions et des positions, la relativité de la vérité, la modération, la liberté et la responsabilité, la démocratie et le développement).*
- 10 *Ce thème est lui aussi subdivisé en plusieurs sous-thèmes, à savoir : l'Etat démocratique moderne (l'Etat et la religion à travers l'Histoire, le pouvoir absolu (néfaste), l'apport de la philosophie des Lumières) ; la société civile (rapports Etat/société civile, Etat démocratique et société civile, domaines d'intervention de la société civile, valorisation du rôle de la société civile).*
- 11 *Ce programme est réparti en deux sous-thèmes : la communauté internationale (concepts, fondements, valorisation des solutions pacifiques des conflits) ; les droits du citoyen à l'échelle internationale (concepts, mécanismes de défense des droits de l'Homme, évolution du concept de citoyen (universalité et spécificité), droits de l'Homme et développement).*

donc sur d'autres perceptions de la réalité. Ces questions sont soulevées dans les textes fondateurs et reprises par tous les documents des programmes d'enseignement, à tous les niveaux.

L'historicité des peuples conditionne grandement leur définition d'eux-mêmes et leur représentation de l'Autre. En effet, l'identité n'est pas une donnée absolue. Elle fluctue, dans le temps, en fonction de la conjoncture sociopolitique et à l'épreuve du type d'interaction qui caractérise le rapport à l'Autre dont la conception, de par le rapport dialectique dans lequel s'inscrivent identité et altérité, est tout aussi mouvante. Ainsi, dans les situations coloniales, les rapports de domination et de conflit tendent à bouleverser aussi bien le rapport au Même que le rapport à l'Autre, la colonisation étant une expérience violente de l'altérité qui tend à déstructurer la perception de Soi et à radicaliser la représentation de l'Autre en tant qu' « artisan d'une « politique d'asservissement systématique économique, politique et intellectuel de tout un peuple sans défense » ». ¹² L'identité, mise à mal dans ce rapport de force qui relève, au fond, d'une « survalorisation identitaire qui justifie l'exploitation », se redéfinit en « stratégie de combat » ¹³ anticolonial : en effet, « c'est dans la revendication d'une identité nationale, héritée de l'exemple du colonisateur, que les communautés dominées ont trouvé la force de résister ». ¹⁴

Aujourd'hui, après la réaffirmation identitaire et l' « exaltation nationale dévolue à l'Histoire dans les pays dominés », après « une altérité de déférence puis de combat », la Tunisie s'ouvre sur le monde et se projette dans la modernité pour définir une nouvelle vision de la citoyenneté accordant une large place à l'Universel et déplaçant, ainsi, les frontières entre identité et altérité dont les rapports sont désormais à penser en termes de complémentarité et non plus d'opposition.

Identité et altérité dans « La loi d'orientation »

Identité

La loi d'orientation précise, dans l'article 3, que l'éducation a pour finalité d'élever les enfants dans la fidélité à la Tunisie, la loyauté envers leur pays, l'amour et la fierté de la patrie. L'école a ainsi pour mission d'affermir en eux la conscience de l'identité nationale et le sentiment d'appartenance à une civilisation dans ses multiples dimensions nationale, maghrébine, arabe, islamique, africaine et méditerranéenne, tout en renforçant l'ouverture sur une dimension universelle. En effet, elle est garante de l'instauration d'une société

¹² Abdesslem Ben Hamida, « Identité tunisienne et représentation de l'Autre à l'époque coloniale », in *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, vol.66, 2003.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Edouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau, *Quand les murs tombent. L'identité nationale hors-la-loi ?*, éd. Galaade, Institut du Tout-monde.

aussi profondément attachée à son identité culturelle qu'ouverte sur la modernité et s'inspirant des idéaux humanistes et des principes universels de liberté, de démocratie, de justice sociale et des droits de l'Homme.

En somme, l'école se doit de garantir à l'enfant une éducation complète en lui inculquant les valeurs fondamentales de la culture tunisienne, valeurs fondées, d'une part, sur la primauté du savoir et du travail et, d'autre part, sur les principes de solidarité et de tolérance qui inscrivent donc l'identité dans un rapport à l'Autre.

Altérité

En effet, l'importance accordée à ces valeurs ainsi que les références faites à la dimension plurielle de l'identité tunisienne et à la nécessité de s'ouvrir sur le monde apparaissent comme autant d'éléments relevant d'une propédeutique du rapport à autrui et du respect des différences.

A ce propos, l'article 1 de la loi d'orientation affirme d'emblée le principe d'égalité et le rejet de toute forme de discrimination : ainsi, l'enseignement, « obligatoire de six à seize ans », est défini comme « un droit fondamental garanti à tous les Tunisiens sans discrimination fondée sur le sexe, l'origine sociale, la couleur ou la religion... ». Quant à l'article 8 du même document, il appelle « au respect des valeurs communes et des règles du vivre ensemble ». Ainsi, aussi bien la loi d'orientation que le « Décret relatif à la vie scolaire » insistent sur le droit de chacun à la dignité et à la reconnaissance, notamment, de son autonomie et de son droit à la différence. Un autre texte non moins important, intitulé « Ecole de demain », explique les fondements de la loi d'orientation et traite dans son préambule de l'exigence de s'ouvrir au monde tout en restant soi-même, précisant que : « Intégrer l'économie mondiale suppose une large ouverture sur le monde, non pas seulement en termes de marché, mais aussi en termes de rapports culturels et d'échanges humains avec les autres pays. Même pour un pays comme le nôtre qui a une longue tradition dans ce domaine, il est indispensable de bien se préparer pour que cette ouverture ne donne pas lieu à une confrontation mais à une interaction positive avec les autres cultures ».

Identité et altérité dans le « Programme des programmes »

Langue et identité

Le texte commence par rappeler les fonctions de l'école en reprenant l'article 3 introduit ci-dessus, reprenant les mêmes termes relatifs à la question de l'identité telle que définie dans « La loi d'orientation ». A ce titre, il rappelle que, d'une part, la langue arabe est appelée à ancrer l'élève dans son identité nationale et que, d'autre part, l'apprentissage

des autres langues ainsi que les TIC sont nécessaires pour garantir l'ouverture sur le monde, cette dimension étant considérée comme fondamentale. Le texte évoque, de même, la dimension civique en tant que dimension constitutive d'une identité dont la connaissance et la conscience, accompagnées de la fierté du sentiment d'appartenance, doivent évoluer en partant de la structure familiale pour s'élargir à la patrie. « Le Programme des programmes » énumère ainsi de façon précise les composantes essentielles de cette identité fondée non seulement sur la langue mais aussi sur la culture, la foi et la civilisation.

Le Même e(s)t l'Autre

Néanmoins, le texte rappelle aussi que l'identité n'est pas une donnée figée puisqu'il s'agit d'un « fait historique qui évolue », et que le sentiment d'appartenance doit être élargi pour englober « l'appartenance à l'humanité tout entière ». Déclinant les choix éducatifs en compétences transversales à acquérir par les élèves, « Le Programme des programmes » propose notamment de développer :

- Des compétences d'ordre personnel : fierté d'appartenir à la Tunisie, fierté de soi, capacité d'interagir avec son environnement proche et lointain.
- Des compétences civiques : ancrage dans son identité, capacité de vivre avec les autres, respect de l'Autre, tolérance (dans le mode de penser et d'agir), solidarité, respect des lois, développement de l'esprit critique dans le respect des opinions d'autrui.
- Des compétences d'ordre communicationnel : fierté de soi et de son appartenance et respect de l'Autre et de sa spécificité, esprit d'initiative et travail collectif, conscience de la richesse relative à la diversité des civilisations et des cultures, humanité et dialogue, entraide et ouverture...

Identité et altérité dans le programme d'« Education civique » du cycle primaire

Identité et libre arbitre

Si ce programme insiste sur l'importance d'être « fier de soi et de son appartenance culturelle et civilisationnelle, de valoriser son appartenance à la civilisation arabo musulmane et d'être conscient de son appartenance à l'humanité tout entière », il attend aussi de l'école qu'elle développe chez l'élève un esprit critique lui permettant de

s'exprimer et de prendre position sur des sujets de société. A l'importance du sentiment d'appartenance à une culture spécifique, il appose ainsi non seulement l'importance de l'adhésion à une conscience humaine universelle qui n'entre donc pas en conflit avec l'identité culturelle nationale mais, aussi et surtout, la nécessité de laisser place à l'individu, à sa dimension personnelle et au libre arbitre.

Dialogue et participation

Selon ce même programme, « l'apprenant adhère à la vie publique en se référant aux valeurs civiques, de citoyenneté et des droits de l'Homme » pour tendre vers une « personnalité équilibrée et cohérente dans sa relation avec les autres ».

Communication et dialogue, action collective et sentiment d'appartenance à une collectivité, articulent donc le contenu du programme du 3^{ème} degré du cycle primaire. La notion d'« Autre » y désigne un partenaire dont la nature évolue et s'élargit tout au long du programme, « les autres » désignant d'abord les membres de la famille, pour ensuite englober un groupe restreint initiant à la vie participative (engagement dans une action collective, participation à la qualité de vie d'une collectivité), avant de s'étendre à la société tunisienne tout entière, à la communauté arabo-musulmane et, enfin, à l'humanité tout entière dans la perspective d'un rapprochement entre les peuples et civilisations.

Identité et altérité dans le programme d'« Education civique » du collègue

Le sentiment patriotique

Ce document stipule que le cours d'éducation civique s'engage à mettre en œuvre les principes et valeurs de la loi d'orientation. Ce document insiste ainsi, surtout et une fois encore, sur l'importance d'insuffler à l'élève la fierté de « son appartenance culturelle et civilisationnelle dans ses dimensions arabe, musulmane et humaine ». Le développement du sentiment patriotique semble ainsi être une constante des programmes éducatifs. La question est alors de savoir comment parvenir à créer un équilibre tel que ce sentiment national, plutôt que de se constituer en identité limite, puisse définir une identité assez forte pour intégrer en elle une dimension d'ouverture apte à garantir le respect et l'adaptation à d'autres réalités, l'intérêt et l'attrait pour d'autres cultures.

Du renforcement au dépassement de l'identité nationale

C'est probablement dans cette perspective que le programme d'« Education civique » du collègue se donne pour objectif, entre autre, de faire de « l'apprenant » un citoyen « convaincu des valeurs de l'humanité », à savoir des valeurs universelles privilégiant la

liberté de pensée, le respect de l'Autre et des différences, l'ouverture, la propension au dialogue et la solidarité.¹⁵

Identité et altérité dans le programme d'« Education civique » du lycée

Vers une dimension universelle de la citoyenneté

Au niveau du lycée, l'éducation civique introduit à la « pratique du pluralisme » dans l'exercice de la citoyenneté, valorisant ainsi la reconnaissance de l'Autre, le droit à la différence, la pluralité des opinions, la relativité de toute vision de la réalité... Si les programmes se rapportant aux deux premiers niveaux d'enseignement traitent de l'identité citoyenne dans ses différentes dimensions, celui destiné à la troisième année privilégie l'identité dans sa dimension universelle. Ce programme est articulé autour de deux axes de réflexion:

1. L'identité n'exclut pas l'universalité et s'étend pour couvrir « la communauté internationale ».
2. Les principes universels des droits de l'Homme, les valeurs démocratiques, ainsi que des préoccupations touchant au monde contemporain tel le problème de l'environnement, donnent à la citoyenneté une dimension mondiale qui donne tout son sens au concept de « citoyen du monde »

Résultats de l'enquête

L'objectif de l'enquête de terrain est de donner la parole aux jeunes élèves des différents cycles de l'enseignement afin de cerner leurs perceptions quant à l'impact et à la pertinence des programmes relatifs à l'éducation à la citoyenneté. L'école joue-t-elle son rôle d'instrument de cohésion sociale ? A quel point et de quelle manière ?

Nous explorerons ainsi leurs différentes approches des notions d'identité/altérité et

15 En 7^{ème} année, grâce à l'apprentissage de la communication et du dialogue, l'élève est appelé à respecter l'autre dans sa différence, à respecter l'égalité des sexes, à reconnaître et à exercer ses droits mais aussi ses devoirs en ceci que les devoirs relèvent des droits des autres. En 8^{ème} année, pour former l'élève à la participation à la vie publique, une place importante est accordée, entre autre, à la solidarité, à l'entraide, et au dialogue en tant que mode de gestion des conflits. Enfin, en 9^{ème} année et dans le cadre du thème de la citoyenneté, l'enseignement est axé sur les responsabilités citoyennes vis-à-vis de l'autre, de l'environnement... Ici, le rapport à l'autre est analysé dans la perspective du couple liberté/responsabilité.

leurs conceptions de la citoyenneté. Ceci nous permettra, par la suite, de mesurer les éventuels écarts entre les contenus pédagogiques relatifs aux constructions citoyennes et identitaires dans une société en pleine mutation et les perceptions sociales de ces mêmes constructions, ainsi que les éventuels décalages entre un projet éducatif conçu politiquement et mis en œuvre par une panoplie de lois et de programmes, et l'expérience vécue à l'intérieur des écoles.

Nous nous sommes ainsi interrogés, lors des deux étapes de l'enquête, sur :

- Les perceptions et représentations relatives aux questions de la citoyenneté, de l'identité et de l'altérité, ainsi qu'à la pertinence des programmes en rapport.
- L'action participative et l'exercice de la citoyenneté à l'intérieur de l'espace scolaire.

Nous présenterons, dans les pages suivantes, le compte rendu des résultats de cette enquête, accompagné de brefs essais d'analyse et d'interprétation.

Identité conçue, identité « bricolée »

« Le Programme des programmes » définit les contenus pédagogiques relatifs à la question identitaire pour les différents cycles de l'enseignement à travers, essentiellement, l'enseignement de « L'Éveil moral » dans le cycle préscolaire et l'éducation civique dans les cycles suivants. Il stipule, pour résumer ce qui a été dit précédemment, que la finalité de ces enseignements est d'inculquer à l'apprenant la fierté de soi et de son appartenance culturelle et civilisationnelle et de valoriser son appartenance à la civilisation arabo musulmane et la conscience de son appartenance à l'humanité tout entière, en passant par la dimension maghrébine, africaine et méditerranéenne.

Les programmes et curricula en matière d'éducation civique parviennent-ils pour autant à agir sur les esprits et à développer chez les élèves un sentiment d'appartenance et une identité bien définie ? Précisons que le terme « identité » est entendu ici dans le sens « des interrogations du point de vue de l'individu (ou du groupe) sur sa propre définition (« qui suis-je? ») ». ¹⁶

A la question de savoir comment ils s'y prendraient pour se présenter, les jeunes élèves de 16 à 18 ans qui devraient, du moins théoriquement, avoir une conception plus ou moins développée de la notion d'identité ainsi que des autres notions que nous discuterons ultérieurement, ont mis en avant leur identité personnelle, déclinant leur nom, prénom, âge, évoquant leur classe, et reléguant donc l'appartenance collective à un deuxième plan.

Cette attitude nous paraît tout à fait normale dans la mesure où, comme nous l'avons

16 Jean-Claude Kaufmann, *L'invention de soi. Une théorie de l'identité*, Paris, A. Colin, 2004, p. 15.

dit plus haut et comme nous le développerons plus loin, l'identité s'exprime généralement par opposition à une autre expression identitaire menaçante. Dans le cas de notre focus group, il n'y avait pas lieu de mettre en avant, en premier lieu, l'identité collective. D'ailleurs, parmi les tunisiens, ce sont généralement les appartenances familiales, professionnelles ou régionales qui prévalent.

Nous avons donc été amenés à aborder la question de l'identité collective en posant une question directe se rapportant à nos appartenances collectives : « Qui sommes-nous ? ». Les réponses furent unanimes : « Nous sommes des tunisiens ». A cette réponse, nous avons répliqué par une autre question : « Mais qu'est-ce que être tunisien ? ». Être tunisien, pour Manel comme pour Raja, Samia et Ahmed, c'est appartenir et être fier d'appartenir à sa terre natale et au pays de ses ancêtres.

L'appartenance est donc exprimée en terme de relation avec un territoire, construit et redéfini historiquement, qui fonde et consolide les constructions collectives d'une manière générale, alors que l'identité (al houya, dérivée du pronom personnel « houwa », à savoir « Il ») s'exprime à une échelle ethnoculturelle.

Même s'ils reconnaissent l'importance des influences culturelles, linguistiques, vestimentaires et culinaires héritées des turcs et des français - du fait de la longue domination coloniale ottomane et française -, les jeunes élèves se refusent à les considérer comme des éléments constitutifs de ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler la personnalité tunisienne. Bien au contraire, certains élèves ont mis l'accent sur le danger du « péril identitaire » (le terme exacte utilisé est celui d' « insilekh », qui signifie littéralement « sortir de sa peau ») provoqué par ce qu'ils ont appelé l'occidentalisation massive des mœurs et des pratiques sociales quotidiennes au détriment des composantes historiques de la culture tunisienne, à savoir la langue arabe et la religion musulmane.

Pour les élèves, ce constat vaut également pour les deux autres pays du Maghreb (Algérie et Maroc) qui encourent à leurs yeux un danger de « travestissement culturel », alors que les pays du golf sont considérés comme un véritable modèle de cette modernité à laquelle aspirent les interviewés en ceci qu'ils se sont montrés capables de concilier les extrêmes : modernité sur le plan technique, technologique, professionnel, urbanistique, etc., et conservatisme au niveau des mœurs et des traditions.

Le rapport à l'Europe occidentale, si proche géographiquement et si différente culturellement, devrait être, selon les dires de nos jeunes élèves, un rapport sélectif consistant à « *prendre le noyau et rejeter les épluchures* », c'est-à-dire à prendre ce qui pourrait nous aider à améliorer nos conditions de vie, sans perdre de vue notre identité et nos origines :

« Nous, les pays arabes, on essaye toujours de s'ouvrir sur l'occident mais, contrairement à l'Arabie Saoudite qui a su sauvegarder ses valeurs religieuses, nous, les tunisiens, aussi bien que les algériens et les marocains, sommes devenus presque entièrement occidentalisés. Prenez par exemple les jeunes ; ils se sont mis à

imiter les occidentaux dans leur façon de vivre : pantalon taille basse, piercing, coupe de cheveu bizarre, accoutumance aux jeux vidéo, etc.(...) ; nous avons une idée fautive sur l'ouverture, on n'est impressionné que par les apparences, alors que les mentalités n'évoluent pas. »

Ce positionnement identitaire par rapport à l'occident européen n'implique pas, chez les élèves, un refus catégorique d'interaction ou d'échange avec cet occident considéré comme hégémonique aussi bien sur le plan historique de par l'expansion coloniale, qu'au niveau d'une contemporanéité marquée par la mondialisation de ses normes et valeurs. Il s'agit essentiellement, pour eux, de trouver le secret d'une alchimie qui permettrait de s'ouvrir, de se moderniser, tout en restant soi-même. Cette recherche d'équilibre se traduit, dans la réalité, par des processus de bricolage identitaire dont les termes changent au gré des circonstances : cette identité bricolée se nourrit à la fois d'une identité nationale ayant une dimension plurielle, la Tunisie étant considérée, dans les manuels d'histoire, comme une synthèse de multiples civilisations berbère, romaine, byzantine, arabe, turc, andalouse, française¹⁷, et d'une identité marquée par l'arabité et l'islamité et qui n'existe que par opposition, prenant donc, vraisemblablement, la forme d'une « identité refuge » qui se construit contre l'Autre et s'alimente de la peur de perdre son identité.

Cette peur de perdre son identité ne fait que masquer, dans ce contexte de déstructuration des systèmes sociaux et culturels traditionnels, la fragilité de cette identité bricolée.

L'Autre : le proche et le lointain

La question de l'altérité est évoquée dans l'article 8 de la Loi d'Orientation en termes de droit à la dignité, à la différence et d'ouverture sur le monde dans la valorisation des principes de respect, de tolérance, de solidarité et d'entraide.

Dans ce sens, l'école aurait pour tâche de développer, chez les jeunes élèves, aussi bien l'estime de soi que la reconnaissance de l'Autre, dans le respect du droit à la différence.

Pour pouvoir appréhender les perceptions de nos jeunes élèves quant à l'altérité et la diversité et pour pouvoir se faire une idée de cet « Autre » rarement défini dans les manuels et dans les curricula, nous avons tenté d'orienter les discussions avec les élèves sur deux dimensions de l'altérité se rapportant à :

17 Pour Mohamed Fantar, historien et archéologue tunisien, « la population d'Ifrîqiya (l'ancienne Tunisie NDLR) s'était stabilisée avec le profil libyque perçu par la première vague phénicienne qui déferla sur le pays vers la fin du second millénaire avant Jésus-Christ. Et dès cette haute antiquité, cette population libyque se présentait comme le résultat des rencontres, une véritable synthèse ethnoculturelle et cette synthèse n'a cessé de s'enrichir de siècle en siècle par des apports venus de partout. », in *Revue de la Presse Tunisienne*, 16 décembre 1988, p. 10.

- L'Autre en tant qu'individu, groupe socioculturel ou groupe ethnique différent et évoluant dans le même espace national : cette dimension interpelle la question du genre dans le rapport à l'autre sexe et celle des minorités culturelles, berbère et juive en particulier, qui ont une faible visibilité sociale et culturelle lors même qu'elles sont partie intégrante de la « Tunisie plurielle ».
- L'Autre comme espace socioculturel et géopolitique historiquement institué, à savoir : l'Occident européen, la Méditerranée, le Maghreb, le monde arabe et l'Afrique.

Notre tâche consistait donc à donner la parole aux élèves afin de cerner leurs perceptions de l'Autre et comparer leurs perspectives aux programmes scolaires en rapport.

L'Autre proche

Aussi bien les programmes scolaires portant sur les sciences humaines que l'ensemble des élèves interviewés reconnaissent la diversité culturelle et ethnique de la société tunisienne. Cette diversité, historique et donc objectivement établie, est née, comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné plus haut, des multiples vagues d'invasions et de déplacements, vers la Tunisie, de populations originaires des deux rives de la méditerranée.

Cependant, concernant la question ethnique, les élèves ne retiennent que deux dimensions : la dimension juive et la dimension berbère, ces deux communautés faisant partie intégrante de la société tunisienne malgré, comme dit auparavant, leur faible visibilité sociale et culturelle. Nous ne disposons d'ailleurs pas même de chiffres exacts permettant de donner une idée de l'importance quantitative de ces communautés dont les membres sont toutefois estimés à quelques milliers. En effet, contrairement à l'Algérie et au Maroc, la Tunisie a été majoritairement arabisée et islamisée suite aux invasions des tribus arabes hilaliennes et salimiennes de la Haute Egypte, lancées en 1048 par le Calife fatimide chiite contre les tribus berbères des Ziride et Hamadide de la Berbérie Orientale qui avaient décidé de rompre avec le pouvoir central siégeant au Caire.¹⁸

Le déferlement d'une assez importante population arabe estimée, selon les historiens, à 200 ou 250 milles âmes, a bouleversé l'équilibre démographique et ethnoculturel de la région et facilité son arabisation systématique.

Les apports culturels et anthropologiques proprement méditerranéens et plus récents (turc, maltais, italien, français) sont aussi facilement observables aujourd'hui dans le quotidien de la population tunisienne¹⁹. Depuis l'indépendance, ce cosmopolitisme

18 Voir à ce sujet Ernest Mercier, *Comment l'Afrique septentrionale a été arabisée ?* Paris, Leroux, 1880. Voir aussi Ibn Khaldun, *Histoire, Livre 1, traduit par De Slane*.

19 Voir à ce propos Gabriel Camps, « L'origine des berbères », *Islam, société et communauté*, Paris, CNRS, 1981.

culturel et anthropologique a été largement exploité par l'élite politique au pouvoir pour défendre l'idée de la spécificité de l'identité nationale tunisienne par rapport aux thèses nationalistes pan arabes portées par les projets nationalistes nassérien et baathiste.²⁰

L'élément berbère en terre tunisienne

« Avez-vous idée de l'existence d'une communauté ethnique et linguistique berbère en Tunisie ? ». A cette question, les élèves ont répondu par l'affirmatif tout en présentant, cependant, de nettes difficultés à caractériser cette communauté.

Pour Samia et Manel, « *ils sont d'un nombre restreint et ils vivent dans les montagnes du Nord-Ouest, vu leur proximité de l'Algérie d'où ils sont originaires* » (sic). Pour Raja aussi, les berbères auraient des origines algériennes et seraient venus, ensuite, s'installer dans les régions tunisiennes limitrophes. Seul Seif a répondu en reprenant cette phrase tant rabâchée dans les cours d'Histoire : « *Les berbères sont les premiers habitants de la Tunisie.* »

Mis à part leur conscience de l'existence d'une langue berbère, « le chelha », les élèves n'ont montré qu'une vague connaissance, floue et historiquement imprécise, de la question des minorités en Tunisie en général et de la minorité berbère en particulier (surtout concernant les communautés des villages troglodytes du Sud), alors même

qu'ils affirment que la question de la diversité culturelle et ethnique est suffisamment traitée dans les cours d'éducation islamique et civique. Ce décalage entre savoir scolaire pédagogiquement transmis - qui s'avère être, au final, un savoir éphémère se traduisant rarement en compétences réelles ou en sédimentation culturelle capables de peser sur les perceptions et d'agir sur la conscience collective - et perceptions sociales, décalage qu'on retrouve d'ailleurs, et comme nous le verrons par la suite, dans la conception de la citoyenneté, donne matière à réfléchir. Les élèves lui trouvent deux explications : d'une part, ce décalage relèverait, pour eux, d'une résistance des mentalités qui ont du mal à changer ; ceci est peut-être la conséquence d'un processus contradictoire de socialisation dans une société où la culture traditionnelle et religieuse, encore très importante, est relayée par un discours politique qui privilégie la thèse d'une société tunisienne homogène arabe, musulmane, d'obédience sunnite et de rite malékite. D'autre part, les élèves avancent une hypothèse ethnographique expliquant cette situation par une attitude propre aux citoyens tunisiens qui auraient généralement tendance « *à apprendre pour rejeter tout de suite après ce qu'ils ont appris, alors que les européens, s'ils apprennent quelque chose, c'est pour agir en conséquence* ».

Ces deux remarques révèlent, à notre avis, des problèmes au niveau des procédés

20 *L'ex président Bourguiba était hanté par l'idée de la construction d'une Umma tounissya (Nation tunisienne) à partir de ce qu'il appelait une poussière d'individus. Dans ce même ordre d'idées, son ministre de la culture, Béchir ben Slama, a publié vers la fin des années 70, dans les éditions de la STD, un livre intitulé La personnalité tunisienne.*

explicites d'apprentissage en matière de sciences humaines en général, ainsi que des carences au niveau des contenus pédagogiques des disciplines traitant de l'altérité, à savoir essentiellement l'éducation civique et l'éducation islamique, qui abordent l'altérité comme une entité autonome différente, indéfinie et rarement spécifiée. Le rapport à l'Autre est en effet souvent traité à travers les principes généraux de tolérance, de dialogue des civilisations, de refus de la violence, etc.²¹

La Méditerranée : un espace à construire

La Méditerranée est plutôt considérée comme une « ligne de démarcation » entre deux mondes diamétralement opposés : une rive Nord développée et riche, et une rive Sud pauvre et sous-développée. Pour Seif comme pour Walid et Manel, la Méditerranée reste un « *symbole, un espace commun entre pays riverains* » à l'intérieur duquel les pays les plus proches sont d'abord les pays du Maghreb (Algérie et Maroc), suivis de la France pour, disent-ils, des raisons historiques et linguistiques.

Si la Méditerranée représente, dans l'imaginaire de nos jeunes élèves, une source économique et des opportunités d'échange et d'enrichissement mutuel, elle représente aussi une source de conflits et de tensions. Ahmed évoque ainsi les guerres qu'a connues la Méditerranée depuis la nuit des temps (guerres puniques, croisades, corsaires, guerres coloniales, éléments évoqués, d'ailleurs, dans les leçons d'histoire).

La Méditerranée évoque également, chez l'ensemble des élèves et aussi bien dans la première étape de l'enquête que dans la seconde, l'idée de l'émigration. L'émigration clandestine est considérée comme condamnable en ceci qu'elle représente « *une aventure dont les conséquences sont imprévisibles* ». Ainsi, 3 élèves seulement parmi les 81 élèves questionnés sur ce phénomène considèrent que « le harquane » (de « haraqua » qui veut dire littéralement « brûler » et est un terme de l'argot local utilisé pour désigner les processus d'émigration clandestine)²² peut représenter une chance pour ceux qui n'en ont aucune chez eux, même s'ils se refuseraient à faire cette expérience si l'occasion s'en présentait.

Concernant l'émigration légale, les opinions des élèves sont partagées : environ la moitié des élèves considère que l'émigration peut représenter une chance d'améliorer ses conditions de vie et de poursuivre des études avancées, tandis que l'autre moitié dit préférer rester en Tunisie.

Il est donc évident que les jeunes ne se font pas une représentation claire de la Méditerranée qu'ils ne conçoivent pas vraiment comme un espace socioculturel et

21 Pour plus de détails voir chap. Programmes des manuels d'éducation civique.

22 Les sociologues justifient l'usage de ce terme par le fait que les émigrants clandestins brûlent tous eurs papiers avant de prendre des embarcations de fortune, signant ainsi la rupture avec le pays d'origine. Par ailleurs, une métaphore empruntée au code de la route crée un parallèle entre le fait de brûler (griller) un feu rouge et celui de griller les frontières et violer les lois.

économique plus ou moins intégré, complémentaire et solidaire. Elle reste une idée à construire au niveau politique et à consolider économiquement et culturellement.

L'éducation à la citoyenneté

Nous avons, plus haut, évoqué l'article 8 de la Loi d'Orientation qui définit le rôle de l'école dans l'éducation citoyenne des élèves. Or, si cet article insiste sur l'importance du développement du sens civique, des valeurs d'équité et d'égalité et de la dimension participative dans la formation des futurs citoyens, nous sommes obligés de reconnaître qu'il subsiste de sérieuses lacunes sur le plan de la mise en pratique des programmes et contenus pédagogiques. En effet, si ces derniers sont sans équivoque, leur application demeure problématique, et ceci au niveau de tous les acteurs scolaires : enseignants, parents, élèves, et administration.

La notion de citoyenneté (al mouwatana)

La citoyenneté est d'abord définie par les élèves en termes d'appartenance à la patrie et de fierté quant à cette appartenance. Cette approche s'explique par la jonction de deux éléments, à savoir, d'une part et comme vu précédemment, les définitions véhiculées par les manuels scolaires et, d'autre part, la connotation patriotique du terme « citoyen » (en arabe : mouwaten) dans le sens commun.

En effet, l'équivalent arabe du terme « citoyenneté », « almouwatana », néologisme fabriqué n'existant dans aucun dictionnaire ni encyclopédie classique, est dérivé de la racine « watana » qui signifie, selon Lissen el 'arab, le plus célèbre et le plus ancien des dictionnaires de la langue arabe, « espace ou territoire que l'on occupe, ou où l'on s'installe ». Le « watan » de telle ou telle tribu renvoie ainsi à la région occupée par cette tribu. Par exemple, la province côtière du Cap bon, intercalée entre le Grand Tunis et la région du Sahel, est désignée par le terme « al watan al kebli », qui signifie « le pays tourné vers la Mecque ».

Par extension, si le terme « watan » désigne la patrie, celui de la « watania » signifie « patriotisme » : le « mouwatin » - citoyen - appartient donc à un « watan » - patrie - et fait preuve de « watanya » - patriotisme -. Ainsi, aussi bien dans les programmes scolaires que dans l'imaginaire collectif, la citoyenneté désigne en premier lieu le dévouement à la patrie.

La citoyenneté est, dans un deuxième temps, perçue comme un ensemble de droits et devoirs parmi lesquels les élèves citent, en priorité, la participation à la vie politique, les élections et l'engagement dans la société civile. A l'intérieur de l'espace scolaire, les élèves, tous milieux confondus, estiment que la citoyenneté devrait s'exercer à travers leur implication à l'intérieur d'institutions représentatives ou associatives. La réalité reste,

cependant, bien en deçà de leurs attentes.

Ces institutions demeurent en effet largement méconnues par la majorité des élèves qui affirment unanimement n'avoir jamais participé à une réunion portant sur le fonctionnement de leur établissement, alors même que la Loi d'orientation prévoit ce type d'activités.

Pour Seif, lui-même chef de classe, « *même quand on est élu chef de classe, on n'a pratiquement rien à faire ; c'est pour la forme. Normalement, en tant qu'élus, on doit intervenir par exemple pour réparer des injustices, présenter des suggestions, imaginez-vous, même une boîte pour les suggestions*²³, ça n'existe pas ! ».

Les élèves expriment ainsi leur désir d'avoir plus de possibilités de s'engager et de participer à la vie même de l'école. Mais ces possibilités font défaut, remarquent-ils, faute d'associations, voire même de clubs d'activités culturelles (mis à part les associations sportives), lorsque les collèges et lycées pilotes abondent, d'après eux, d'activités associatives car, d'après Manel, « *c'est parce qu'ils sont l'élite qu'il faut leur offrir tout ce dont ils ont besoin. Alors qu'on oublie généralement qu'ailleurs aussi il y a de bons élèves.* »

Pour Soumaya, le Ministère de l'éducation a commis l'erreur de faire de la discrimination entre élite destinée aux collèges et aux lycées pilotes et élèves ordinaires. Elle considère ainsi que « l'hybridation » des classes (mélanger les bons et les moins bons) est une chose souhaitable pour s'enrichir mutuellement et pour que tout le monde puisse bénéficier des mêmes moyens.

Les élèves distinguent également deux types d'enseignants, correspondant à deux types de comportements éthiques dans le rapport au savoir :

- Les « formalistes », soucieux de terminer le programme et peu ou pas du tout engagés dans la sphère citoyenne.
- Les « essentialistes », ceux qui « trimbalent leur conscience avec eux », selon les dires de Seif et de Raja. Ceux-ci sont plus proches des élèves ; ils prennent le temps de les écouter, les aident à surmonter leurs difficultés.

Les directeurs d'établissements sont, eux, catégoriquement accusés d'être toujours du côté de l'enseignant sans jamais laisser place au moindre scepticisme, se cantonnant ainsi dans un rôle plus coercitif que dialogique.

En conclusion, il nous semble donc important d'insister sur les lacunes de l'éducation à la citoyenneté, qui demeure largement théorique et laisse peu de place à l'expérimentation, contrairement à ce qui est prévu dans les programmes scolaires. Nous savons, en effet, que l'éducation à la citoyenneté ne peut se fonder uniquement sur un système d'autorisation et d'interdiction, l'abondance de discours théoriques ou

23 Pourtant prévue par le décret relatif à la vie scolaire.

d'exhortations pressantes et réitérées qui risquent de mener, paradoxalement, à un rejet total de tout le système de valeurs proposé par l'enseignement en question.

Nous savons également - ceci étant suffisamment explicité par les différents acteurs scolaires - que les charges pédagogiques, le souci d'améliorer les scores, le temps scolaire limité, les cours particuliers, le caractère moralisateur des manuels scolaires et les pédagogies inadaptées, sont autant de facteurs qui pèsent négativement sur l'éducation à la citoyenneté dans nos écoles. Ainsi, aussi bien par leur contenu (la plupart du temps une longue liste de définitions et de concepts) que par la méthodologie proposée (un enseignant qui informe et un élève qui retient et récite), les programmes d'éducation civique, loin de développer le sens civique, le sentiment d'appartenance à une identité claire et aux contours bien définis et des attitudes et comportements positifs envers autrui, énumèrent des savoirs à monnayer lors des séances d'évaluation. Cette surcharge théorique est d'autant plus évidente et moins motivante que le volume horaire et le faible coefficient attribué à cette matière sont loin de garantir l'adhésion des apprenants aux valeurs et principes énoncés. Ce constat est d'ailleurs confirmé par le fait que les élèves (et pas seulement les élèves, d'ailleurs) parlent de « matières à apprendre par cœur ».

Cela étant, il semble insuffisant de déléguer à la seule école la formation civique des nouvelles générations. L'éducation à la citoyenneté est l'affaire de tous : famille, école, associations, doivent se relayer et se compléter dans cette mission éducative.

Ainsi, pour Raja, « *l'enseignement de l'éducation civique est effectué au niveau théorique et conceptuel, abstrait, alors que dans le cadre de la vie pratique à l'intérieur de l'école, il n'y a pas d'opportunités de mise en pratique de ce savoir théorique* ».

Pour Samia, « *L'éducation civique, comme toute autre matière, on s'en occupe essentiellement pour pouvoir répondre aux questions de l'examen et avoir de bonnes notes. Il est vrai qu'elle contient des choses intéressantes comme les droits de l'Homme, mais le problème est qu'on ne l'appréhende qu'au niveau théorique et on ne l'applique pas dans nos comportements de tous les jours* ».

Pour en conclure

La recherche appliquée telle qu'elle a été menée et exposée dans ce papier nous a permis d'aller au-delà des interprétations théoriques sinon spéculatives et approximatives des faits relevant de la socialisation (sous entendue contradictoire) en matière de la conception de l'identité, l'altérité et de la citoyenneté pour accéder à l'observation des faits dans leurs contexte et leur quotidienneté.

Les grilles d'analyse proposées dans ce travail ont permis également d'accéder à une interprétation objective des données récoltées auprès des divers acteurs du système éducatif en combinant une double perspective : celle qui dégage les propriétés de la pratique sociale et celle qui permis d'accéder à la subjectivité des individus.

De cela un constat essentiel se dégage : les objectifs relatifs à la contribution de l'école

dans la construction de la cohésion sociale sont clairement définis dans les textes de référence ainsi que dans les programmes. Les trois indicateurs de la cohésion sociale retenus dans ce travail (identité, citoyenneté et altérité) ont été bien explicités dans les textes fondateurs et également bien déclinés (théoriquement du moins) en compétences à acquérir dans les programmes.

Néanmoins, l'analyse du corpus de données recueilli auprès des acteurs de terrain montre bien l'écart considérable entre textes et pratiques dans un contexte où les cadres de référence ne sont pas encore définitivement institués.

Bibliographie

- Ben Slama, B. (SD), La personnalité tunisienne. Tunis : Editions de la STD.
- Ben Hmida, A. 2003 « L'Identité tunisienne et représentation de l'Autre à l'époque coloniale », in Cahiers de la Méditerranée, vol.66
- Carrero Perez E., et Hakim, G. 2006,. Réforme de l'enseignement technique et de la formation professionnelle au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du Nord. European Training Foundation et la Banque Mondiale.
- Camps, G. 1981, L'origine des berbères : Islam, société et communauté. Paris : CNRS.
- Décret n° 2004-2437 du 19 octobre 2004, *relatif à l'organisation de la vie scolaire.*
- Durkheim, E.1983, *De la division du travail social.* Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1^{ère} éd.
- Fantar, M. 1988, « *La population d'Ifriqiya* », in *Revue de la Presse Tunisienne*, 16 décembre 1988.
- Glissant, E., Chamoiseau, P., *Quand les murs tombent. L'identité nationale hors-la loi ?*, éd. Galaade, Institut du Tout Monde.
- Ibn Khaldun, Histoire, Livre 1, traduit par De Slane.
- Kaufmann, J-C. 2004, L'invention de soi. Une théorie de l'identité. Paris : A. Colin.
- La nouvelle réforme du système éducatif tunisien, Programme pour la mise en œuvre du projet « Ecole de demain » (2002 – 2007), Octobre 2002.
- Loi n° 2002-80 du 23 Juillet 2002, loi d'orientation de l'éducation et de l'enseignement scolaire.
- Loi n° 2008-10 du 11 Février 2008, relative à la formation professionnelle.
- Manuel « *Livre des sciences sociales* », partie d'éducation civique de la 9^{ème} année de l'EB., sans date (SD), CNP, P240.
- Manuel « *Livre des sciences sociales* », partie d'éducation civique de la 1^{ème} année de l'ES., (SD), CNP.
- Manuel « *Livre de l'éducation civique* » de la 3^{ème} année Lettres, (SD), CNP, P240.
- « *Pacte national* » signé en 1988, signé entre différents partenaires politiques et sociaux (partis politiques et société civile).
- Mercier, E. 1880, Comment l'Afrique septentrionale a été arabisée ? Paris : Leroux.
- Programme des programmes*, MEF, Direction des programmes et des livres scolaires, septembre 2002.
- Année préparatoire, document cadre*, MEF, Direction des programmes et des livres scolaires, 2007.
- Programme de l'éducation civique du troisième degré de l'enseignement primaire*, MEF, Direction des programmes et des livres scolaires, (SD).
- Programme d'éducation civique au collège*, Direction des programmes et des livres scolaires, MEF, (SD).

The Representation of Self Injury and Suicide on Emo Social Networking Groups

Carla Zdanow

and

Bianca Wright

Department of Journalism, Media and Philosophy

PO Box 77000

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Port Elizabeth

6031

Tel: 041 3656725

Cell: 0827680472

Email: Bianca.wright@nmmu.ac.za or bmt@icon.co.za

Abstract

The influence of the media on suicide has become a growing topic of discussion in various academic fields. Little attention has however been paid to the influence of social media on teenage suicide. In this age of technological savoir-faire, teenagers are beginning to spend more and more time communicating via internet social networking sites. Recent news reports have blamed both social networking and the teenage emo subculture for romanticising suicide and encouraging and promoting suicidal behaviour online. In these uncensored and unrestricted online communities, destructive and dangerous conversations between vulnerable teenagers may go unnoticed. With this in mind, this baseline study aimed to determine the portrayal of suicide and self-harm on social networking sites by analysing the representation of these behaviours among emo teenagers on the popular social networking site Facebook. A content analysis of two emo groups revealed a glorification, normalisation and acceptance of suicidal behaviours and determined that the potential for social networking sites to be used as a tool for the promotion and encouragement of such behaviours exists. As such, with evidence now pointing towards a connection between teenage use of social media and the promotion of positive perceptions of suicidal behaviour, further research into the role of new forms of media in suicide contagion may need to be undertaken.

Keywords: *emo, social media, social networking, teenage suicide*

Introduction

Today's teens are impatient, overloaded with media and entertainment, techno savvy and street smart. Yet while they have the knowledge[,] they lack the awareness and maturity, and are emotionally naïve. Today's teenagers know a lot more than their parents in terms of technology but they have also accomplished something their parents' generation did not – they are killing themselves far more than any other generation.

(South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) 2009)

Suicide is not a modern phenomenon. People have been taking their own lives as far back as the ancient civilizations of Greece and Persia. This act of “self-murder” is growing at an alarming rate, with the World Health Organisation reporting an estimated one million suicides annually worldwide (2008:5). Although suicide is not specific to any particular gender, religion, economic sector or age group, the statistical findings on teenage suicides are particularly worrying, with suicide being recognised as the third leading cause of death among the youth (American Association of Suicidology (ASS) 2008:1)

In South Africa, suicide rates range from 11.5 per 100 000 to as high as 25 per 100 000 of the population, depending on sampling procedures and research methods, according to research by Schlebusch (2012). “About 11% of all non-natural deaths are suicide related. On average 9.5% of non-natural deaths in young people are due to suicide.” An article by South African psychologist, Judith Ancer (2011) notes that “social and cultural factors such as videos, chat rooms and songs about self-harm on YouTube, MTV and the indulgent idealisation of self-mutilation in emo subculture (a music, dress and lifestyle broadly celebrating the unbottling of angst) have increased the incidence of deliberate self-injury and provoked copycat behaviour among teenagers.”

In this technological age, the internet is becoming a major influence on the beliefs and perceptions of societal groups, especially since the development of new media technologies. Since the inception of social media, websites and chat rooms promoting and romanticising suicide and suicidal behaviours have become increasingly vivid and increasingly accessible. Recent news stories have blamed social networking sites, chat rooms and an association with emo for the promotion of teenage suicide worldwide (Britten and Savill 2008, Davies 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>; <http://www.news.com>). Despite this, little research has been done to determine social media's effects on positive perceptions of suicide and suicidal behaviours among teenagers. This study therefore attempts to investigate the representation of suicide and suicidal behaviour as norms on emo subculture social networking sites. Emo, an abbreviation of ‘emotional’ is a popular teenage subculture, similar to Goth and grunge, which commemorates “moody emotions through dark dress, melancholic behaviour and angsty music” (Davis 2008:55). The possible abuse of social media, by this teen subculture, as an instrument in the promotion and glorification of teenage depression, suicide and suicidal behaviour, is thus

the main focus of this study.

Various theories of suicide have been developed over time; however within the context of this study Joiner's Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicidal Behaviour will be discussed. In terms of media and communication theory, the Libertarian model of communication will set the background for this investigation.

Based on the following assertions this article seeks to identify the potential influence of social media on teenage suicide and aims to determine whether social media is being used as a tool to promote positive perceptions of and encourage suicidal behaviour among teenagers belonging to the emo subculture.

Suicide and suicidal behaviour

The notion of suicide was first defined in the Abbe Des Fontaines (1737) using the term "self-murder". Today, suicide can be defined in much the same way, as the act of deliberately ending one's own life. Often linked to depression and other mental disorders, suicide is a worldwide problem which transcends economic, demographic, religious and cultural differences. Age is also no barrier to suicide. Indeed, as the third leading cause of death among the youth (American Association of Suicidology 2008:1), teenage suicide is an ever-present aspect of contemporary society. Depression is a major cause of suicide internationally. The South Africa Depression and Anxiety Group claim that "90% of adolescents who die by suicide have an underlying mental illness" (2009:1). The American Association of Suicidology concurs that the presence of a psychiatric disorder is one of the factors that contribute to the risk for suicide among the youth (ASS 2008:2). These psychiatric disorders often set the president for suicide, attempted suicide and other suicidal behaviour. The reasons for these depressive conditions can be linked to social isolation, loneliness, hopelessness, abuse, conflict and loss. With a lack of support and a feeling that they have nowhere to turn, many teenagers see suicide as the only way to end their sadness. According to the World Health Organisation, "A suicide occurs every 40 seconds and an attempt is made every 3 seconds" (WHO 2000:5, SADAG 2009:1). Consequently, it is estimated that for every successful suicide there are between 100 and 200 unsuccessful attempts (AAS 2008:1). These figures suggest that the majority of people that have had successful suicides have had failed attempts in the past. As a result suicidal behaviours such as self-mutilation and attempted suicide are more common among teenagers than suicide itself. Notwithstanding the influence of the mental state of an individual on their predisposition to suicidal tendencies, other factors have also been addressed in terms of their propensity to enlist suicidal acts and behaviours. The media's influence on suicide is one of these factors.

Data on suicide in Africa is sketchy. South Africa's statistics have been greatly strengthened in recent years by the work of Schlebusch (2012), who is the founder of the Durban Parasuicide Study (DPS). According to Schlebusch (2012), suicides in South

Africa occur predominantly in males, while in non-fatal suicidal behaviours females predominate

In non-fatal suicidal behaviour, the peak age is in the 20-29 age group with a mean age of 25 years. About one third of hospital admissions for non-fatal suicidal behaviour involve children and adolescents. Generally the child and adolescent group is the second most at-risk age group for non-fatal suicides after young adults. Non-hospital based studies report suicidal behaviour / ideation in school children that range between 4% and 47% (Schlebusch 2012)

The media's influence on suicide

At present the impact of traditional media on suicidal behaviour cannot be confirmed, but a range of studies have suggested that diverse links between suicide and the media's influence are possible (Gould 2001, Phillips et al 1989, Romer et al 2006, Stack 2000). Although evidence of the media's influence was already seen in the 18th century, systematic investigations into copycat suicides based on media content were first attempted by the University of California's David Phillips, in the 1970s. During a 20-year study, Phillips looked at the increase in the number of suicides after a newspaper's front page report on suicide. Of the 33 months where suicide was on the front page, 26 months saw a significant increase in the number of suicides (Cited in Stack 2000). According to Stack, the largest copycat suicide effect was found after the suicide of American icon Marilyn Monroe (2000). An additional 303 suicides were reported during August 1962 in America alone. Although there is no direct evidence that the media plays a role in initiating suicidal behaviour there are case studies which suggest that the influence is certainly possible if not probable. To this end, the emergence of new media technologies and the ever-present role they play in modern day life may also add to the media's influence.

The impact of new media

With numerous studies looking at the effects of the media on suicide it is not difficult to support the argument that suicide is contagious (Gould 2001:200). The question is, do new forms of media such as social media also play a role in suicide contagion? In her article *Suicide and the Media*, Madelyn Gould maintains that "the media affords the opportunity for the indirect transmission of suicide contagion, the process by which one suicide becomes a compelling model for successive suicides" (2001:200). This insight could lead to the suggestion that any form of mediated information, including social media, has the ability to indirectly support contagion. At present, new forms of online media have become increasingly popular and increasingly stable parts of everyday life.

For teenagers, social media has become particularly important. The influence of this new media and the idea of this type of contagion came to the fore in 2007 when teenage suicide incidents in both Wales and Australia were blamed on social media, in particular social networking. Between January 2007 and January 2008, seven Welsh adolescents were suspected to have committed suicide. All the suicides were from the same town of Bridgend and were said to be linked through the popular social networking site, Bebo. A BBC news report on the suicides suggested that social networking sites may be “romanticising” suicide among the youth (BBC 2008). In a similar occurrence in April 2007 two Australian teenagers were found dead as a result of an apparent suicide pact. Both teenagers had profiles on MySpace a popular social networking site. After the suicides, information relating to suicide was found on their personal pages. “Poetry titled ‘suicide in the night’ and statements including ‘let Steph and me b free’ followed by ‘RIP Steph and Jodie’”, were vivid warning signs that went unnoticed (Davies 2008).

Emo and social media

In the spate of recent teenage suicides, many of the victims have been said to have identified with the popular teenage subculture - emo. Martin insists that although the teenagers he studied may have had contact and used the same suicide method, another striking similarity was the victims’ association with the cultural movement of emo (2006:1). The community and the media made claims of a possible suicide pact, but Martin holds that “identifying with emo may in itself influence toward suicidal behaviour” (2006:2).

What differentiates emo from other teenage subcultures is that emo was the first cultural movement to be created on the internet (Kelly & Simon 2007). The development of social networking sites gave outcast teens the opportunity to find each other online and share their thoughts, pain and above all music (Simon & Kelly 2007: 73-75). Rodriguez (2000) insists that “Emo kids rely heavily on the Internet to learn how to be emo”. He further states that there are plenty of websites dedicated to teaching teenagers and young adults exactly how to be “an emo kid” (cited in Ryalls 2006:6). In recent years emo has moved away from being seen as just a genre of music, to being recognised as a subcultural movement of the 2000’s. Emo is a mind-set, a way of life and forms part of many teenagers’ social identity. In their book, *Everybody Hurts*, Kelly and Simon explain that emo is “a place where people who don’t fit in – but who long to fit in with other people who don’t fit in – come to find solace” (2007:1).

Brown (2012) describes emo as a middle-class defined subculture, with a pronounced white female profile, a description that is reflected in the data collected in this study. While little data on the emo subculture in South Africa exists, it is interesting to note that the impact of the culture has been significant enough to warrant a parenting workshop on

the subject by Rapewise (Rapewise 2012) and an online dating service, Emo Chat that brings together all emo people from South Africa (Emo Chat 2012). In addition, recent media reports have noted the recent growth of the subculture, traditionally dominated by white youth, among the black populations of South Africa (Nxumalo 2011).

Emo, social media and suicidal behaviour

Blumler and Katz (1974) and McQuail (1983) agree that people use the media to fulfil specific needs. This implies that teenagers use social media as a means to satisfy certain desires. These could include the need for communication or escapism, or voyeuristic or narcissistic needs. For emo teenagers, social networks may fulfil the need of feeling part of a group, being able to communicate with similar people and express a similar identity. For many teenagers the online emo community may seem far more inviting than the judgmental world that they are used to.

Depression, a 'core emo value' (Simon & Kelly 2007:2), is one of the leading causes of teenage suicide internationally (AAS 2005, SADAG 2009, WHO 2009). Since emo developed through the internet, it is plausible to suggest that a large part of their communication is via the internet, in particular through social media. It is therefore possible that teenage emo social media groups may create a platform for the positive presentation of depression, suicide and suicidal behaviour (Simon & Kelly 2007: 73-75),.

According to a number of websites on the emo culture, "Emos hate themselves while Goths hate everyone" (Martin 2006:2). If one of the aspects of the emo subculture is a hate for oneself then as Martin suggests, emos may be in more danger of hurting themselves than any analogous subcultures. Cutting, self-harm and anorexia are also believed to be ubiquitous in the emo subculture. According to Sands (2006), "although the look is similar (to Goth), the point of distinction, frightening for schools and parents, is a celebration of self-harm" (cited in Ryalls 2006:12). Sands (2006) further argues that "emos exchange competitive messages on their teenage websites about the scars on their wrists and how best to display them" (cited in Ryalls 2006:12). This claim that cutting activities are a key element of the emo culture is another pointer towards the risk in identifying with emo (Martin 2006:2).

MySpace, Facebook, You Tube, chat rooms, blogs, forums and other social media are used as a form of online communication. On Facebook, over 500 groups relating to the emo lifestyle, culture and context have been created. These groups allow teenagers who adopt similar social contexts to communicate virtually through their online identity. Buchner et al (1995) and Giddens (1991) suggest that "the online realm may be adopted enthusiastically [by teens] because it represents 'their' space, visible to the peer group more than adult surveillance, an exciting yet relatively safe opportunity to conduct the social psychological task of adolescence – to construct, experiment with and present a reflexive project of the self in a social context" (cited in Livingstone

2008:396). But, is this environment really as safe as teenagers think it is? Kiesler and Kraut (1999) found that the more participants in a field trial used the internet the more lonely, socially unengaged and depressed they became (cited in Naito 2007:592). This could be particularly true among teenagers who spend more time on social networking sites than spending time having 'real' conversations with 'real' people.

Research design and methodology

This research takes an interpretative approach using qualitative data and is based on a thematic content analysis of user statements submitted to two emo groups on the social networking site, Facebook. By investigating the content and underlying themes of these groups we were able to actively engage with the message content and identify aspects of the perspectives of those who produced the message. In doing so it gave an idea of how emo teenagers interact on social networking sites. Focusing on the ideas found within the content examined allowed me to extract themes related to the research topic. The comments and notes written within the groups gave a clear indication of the subcultures attitude towards suicide and suicidal behaviour and helped to determine whether or not the social networking site is being used to promote and glorify this behaviour.

The data investigated consisted of the texts found within two separate emo groups, one South African and the other international, on the social networking site, Facebook. The wall and discussion board sections were studied and analysed. The groups accessed were directly related to the topic of this investigation and offered some insight into the use of this form of media by emo teenagers.

These groups were accessed on 27 April 2009. All textual content was collected from the wall and selected discussion boards and prepared for analysis. Once collected and sorted, the content was analysed and examined according to a theoretical framework. The study did not examine other influencing factors that may contribute to suicidal ideation or self-injury, but focused only on how the concepts of suicide and self-harm were represented on these two emo social networking groups.

Findings

The evidence drawn from the in-depth analysis of the findings of the content of the emo groups on Facebook, indicates specific aspects, or themes that are consistent, and therefore both revealing and relevant within the scope of this research report.

Based on the thematic analysis the following primary and secondary themes are evident:

Primary Themes:	Normalisation, Nihilism, Glorification, Us versus Them, Acceptance
Secondary Themes:	Reason, Mockery

These themes can be found in both the International and South African Facebook groups.

The first group, ...Emo..., is a global, 'just for fun' Emo group which, currently has 15 201 members (15 July 2009). This group offers members a place to meet people within the subculture with similar ideas, values and interests. The discussion board of the group gives members the opportunity to 'talk' about various topics and ideas. As part of this research four discussions that could offer a platform for the promotion of suicidal behaviour were analysed, these included "Cutting"; "Why everything sucks"; "whats you favourite form of torture self/to others" and "Kill yourself...". The second group, Emo..., is a common interest/philosophy group created in Cape Town, South Africa. It currently has 228 South African members. Compared to the international group this emo group is particularly small therefore content for this analysis was gained from the Emo... wall and from the discussion, "How do you know when you are Emo".

Throughout the discussions in both groups, certain lead 'characters' came to the fore getting very involved in the debates. Other members expressed their ideas in one post and then left the discussion and the majority of members had no involvement whatsoever in the discussions. This is indicative of the 1% – 9% – 90% participation inequality ratio suggested by Nielsen (2006). He states that "In most online communities, 90% of users are lurkers who never contribute, 9% of users contribute a little, and 1% of users account for almost all the action". In the texts analysed by Nielsen 1 % of the participants accounted for the majority of contributions to the discussions. The same members were also found to contribute in all of the discussions analysed.

Themes identified

The abovementioned primary and secondary themes of normalisation, nihilism, glorification, Us versus Them, acceptance, reason and mockery will be discussed in this section.

Normalisation

The normalisation of activities otherwise regarded as destructive is a recurring theme throughout the analysed content. When discussions are steered towards the topic of self-harm there seems to be evidence of justification of actions or ideas as a normal part of life. The normalisation of such activities as a form of "stress relief", suggests that it is an acceptable way to deal with underlying emotional issues. The following posts illustrate this theme:

Discussion board theme	Participant	Post
Cutting	5	<i>"it counters emotional pain with physical pain to me it relieves stress people smoke, do drugs I choose to cut"</i>
	15	Um what I think of cutting is that like..... some people punch walls etc 2 get rid of their pain (emotional pain) but us we cut to do the same as them... so yeah.... They got their way of getting rid of pain and being hapi :D but we cut to get hapi so yeah\... that's just what I think :D.... and btw I think THERES NUFIN RONG WIT CUTTING!!
	25	if you cut that's fine it releases your deep sad or angry emotions.....I cut.....then after I feel not so angry...

The topic of suicide was not discussed at length within the content analysed, however a normalisation of the act can be seen in a discussion on what it means to be emo. When defining emo, one respondent stated,

"Emo is one of the hardest things, to explain. People hate emos, b/c they view us as suicidal, cry babies, or just weak. That's NOT what emo is. Suicidal yes, at times. But, don't judge me for being emo. It's not what I chose to be. It's just what I am."

This post illustrates the idea that being emo is not a choice and that suicide is at times part of the subculture, it is also implied that this is just a normal part of the culture.

Nihilism

Based on philosophy, Nihilism is often seen as an extreme form of cynicism that rejects all life, and is frequently "associated with extreme pessimism and a radical scepticism that condemns existence" (Pratt 2005). In a similar sense, Nihilism is the idea that life is futile and without meaning or purpose. According to Kelly and Simon depression and effortlessness are two of the 'core emo values' (2007:2). These values can be seen as an expression of Nihilism in that they confirm the ideas that there is no point to life and there is no point in making an effort to be happy, as you will gain no meaning from it. Throughout the various content examined in this research, the idea of Nihilism is

evident in some of the member's discussions of the worthlessness of life. This expression of a negative outlook on life can be seen in the statements made by the group members in the table below.

Discussion board theme	Participant	Post
Why everything sucks	3	<i>"everth sucks cuz nobody understand us and my life z a piece of shit that i would like to throw it now and end it as soon as i can".</i>
	6	<i>"everything suks epecially ppl cuz they dont understand u at all and think ur wierd i get made fun of for being emo.....and thats just some of the reasons my life sucks.....and alot of ppl just dont understand.....how i feel"</i>
Cutting	22	<i>"i really dont care what my family thinks of me. my mom's a drugaddict and my dad abandoned me... i live in a town i hate while the city i love is 6 hours away from me. im friendless in the town, and LOVED in the city. does anyone wish to argue with me about why i cut my wrists?"</i>
Kill Yourself	2	Responding to the post Kill Yourself respondent two replied <i>"I might just do that, no1 would miss me anyways"</i>
Emo... wall		<i>"Life is so dipressing...."</i>

Glorification

Glorification of the emo subculture in general and the suicidal behaviours connected to it was clearly evident in the content analysed. The honour and praise of self-harm was a particularly dominant theme, where members saw the self-destructive and injurious behaviour as "good" and "cool", negating the fact that it is dangerous and may result in life threatening situations.

Cutting, a form of self-harm said to be linked to the emo subculture was a topic of lively debate on the international emo group's discussion board. The discussion was initiated by the following post:

"I'm an emo and I always cut and then got sent to the hospital for a very long time. But I still cut does anyone else find that self-injury helps them more than talking it out?"

The following posts, in response to this statement indicates a clear glorification of the risky activity,

Discussion board theme	Participant	Post
Cutting	7	<i>Cutting is a good way to get out stress. Better than Drugs"</i>
	12	<i>Combining smoking n cutting is cool"</i>

Us versus Them

Joining an online social networking group often means joining an online community. Humans are naturally social beings and according to Williams (2008), "our need to be part of a community, any community" is a major draw card for joining online networking groups. He suggests that "because so few [of] us take an active part in the physical community in which we live we have extended our [social] needs to our technology" (Williams 2008). For emos social networks allow for online interactions which would not necessarily take place in the physical environment (Simon and Kelly 2007: 73-75). Members of online groups are usually attracted to them because of a similar interest in what the group has to offer and the ideas it supports. In the case of this research a connection to the emo subculture is the attraction. By joining these groups, members frequently develop a sense of belonging, camaraderie and sharing that was often missing from their offline lives (Williams 2008). The theme of Us versus Them is developed from the in-group (members within a group), out-group (people who are not part of a group) dynamic that exists within social structures. Thomas et al (2004:165) explain that "[y]our perception of yourself as an individual can only be in relation to others and your status within social groups". Based on the ideas of Bennett et al (2004:2) prejudicial attitudes towards out-groups develop early in life. According to Aboud (1988:24), children notice similarities and differences between themselves with ease and "dissimilar people are disliked" (cited in Bennett et al 2004:2). The existence of in-groups and out-groups leads to the development of an Us versus Them mentality. 'Us' in the form of a community is expressed in the following posts:

Discussion board theme	Participants	Post
Cutting	9	<i>"oh yay. dudes, at leas i no i ish not alone! seriously, i dont no any1 els who cuts. i feel so alone..."</i>

	27	<i>it's so nice having people that understand. Cutting cleans the mind and I forget all pains and troubles are forgotten for that moment in time.</i>
--	----	---

When members come into contact with people who do not share the same ideas as them an Us versus Them mindset often develops, where the “other” is seen as an “emo hater” who does not understand the lifestyle, emotions or culture. The following posts indicate this feeling of community based in the idea of Us versus Them.

Discussion board theme	Participant	Post
Kill Yourself	6	<i>“just becuz we r different u make fun of us. just becuz we keep to ourselves u stay away. just becuz we might (or might not) cut ourselves, u cuss at us and say we r stupid and dont mean anything to the world. im sorry if we r soooo terrible to the world's population, but we're here, and we're here to stay. just because u hav the emotional range of a glass of water doesnt mean u hav to make fun of othrs who r more emotional. emo: «emo»tional, «emo»tionally sensitive. othr defs r out there too. just becuz we're different u hav to make fun of us and u know wat? we r sooo more matire than all of u haters cuz if we were u, e wouldnt make fun of emos, while here u r laughing and pissin evryone off by putting them doWwn. we r the mature ones here and u self-centered emo hating fuckos bttr leave us alone and stop messin with us.”</i>
What is your favourite form of torture self/ to others	9	<i>“yes i agree with hannah!! and sophoa fragapen and steive emodeath shut the fuck up!!! if u r against us hating our life and cutting our self and is just going to sit here and type that much just to do that thats pretty stupid!!</i>
Emo... Wall		<i>no matter what anyone says emo rocks and all you ppl commenting on emo, go get a life. u dont know anything bout emo, u probably dont know any emos, and u dont have a life coz u come on facebook to post shit bout emo</i>

For teenagers that are involved in the emo subculture and the various risky activities that it may involve, this sense of not being alone and having someone else who is in a similar situation to talk to, must be of relief and comfort. This relates to the next theme, that of acceptance.

Acceptance

Acceptance as a theme of this study refers to acceptance as a vital part of teenage social development. Humans are social beings, therefore certain social needs have to be fulfilled in order for teenagers to develop effectively. These needs, according to Humphrey (2002:35) include: (1) “The need for affection, which involves acceptance and approval by persons, (2) the need for belonging, which involves acceptance and approval by the group and (3) the need for mutuality, which involves cooperation, mutual helpfulness and group loyalty”. This need for group acceptance and loyalty is the underlying essence of this theme. Acceptance also forms part of the previous theme of Us versus Them in that the referenced ‘Us’ implies a measure of acceptance of those who belong. This theme, in terms of the acceptance of emo in general and of self-harm is expressed within the content of the texts. As referred to earlier, cutting is often associated with the emo subculture (Sands 2006, Martin 2006). This association has been highlighted throughout the various discussions and the acceptance of this self-harming behaviour is clearly stated. The following posts indicate the lack of condemnation of self-harm and may have the capability to result in an encouragement of such behaviour.

Discussion board theme	Participant	Post
Cutting	4	<i>“okay, not gonna say that you should cut. but it think if you have a way of calming down and releasing any pain you have. then do it.”</i>
	23	<i>“I cut and I have multiple friends who all cut. We know we have problems and need to work through them but it’s hard. People put this lable on cutters without any face behind. It’s like druggies. You automatically assume there bad people but there not. But cutting is like my personal drug. A legal one”</i>

The abovementioned primary themes focus on the emo perspective. The secondary themes of reason and mockery, indicate the presence of those who do not agree with the emo culture and are against their way of life.

Reason

The theme of reason looks at posts expressing practical alternatives and ideas that may be helpful to people.

The following statement was made in response to the cutting discussion:

“ I would really be sad if one of my buddies were cutting themselves, I cant take seeing people hurting themselves like that, its really sad, if I in my life can only at least stop one person from huting themselves I would be so glad, everyone always say” what a freak or whatever” but its sad, ppl please stop cutting,you ca come cut me, just don’t cut yourself”

This is an example of reason although the theme of reason is present it is not commonly found throughout the varying texts and discussions.

Mockery

Although Facebook groups are created for people with similar ideals and interests, a range of people who are against the emo subculture have joined as members. This means that throughout the discussions, mocking, sarcastic, insulting and vilifying messages can be found. Usually referred to as Trolls, these members make sarcastic and contemptuous remarks which act as disruptions to the discussions and often result in an online attack between the ‘emo’ and the ‘emo hater’. Trolls are traditionally defined as “members of a community or usenet group who make posts deliberately designed to attract responses of outrage or indignation The majority of the trolls found on the Facebook groups studied can be referred to as “malicious trolls,” as they enter the discussions with the intent of being deliberately abusive and condescending (<http://communitiesonline.homestead.com/dealingwithtrolls.html>). This maliciousness can be seen in the group, *Kill Yourself*, where regular troll, Steve emodeath initiates a discussion with the following post:

“seriously.. do it.
rid the world of your faggotry”

Other example of mockery can be seen in the following posts:

Discussion board theme	Participant	Post
Cutting	2	“ oMG u THinK sO??// i’M bLusHING!11 IOLz!!!11 leTS gEt TogETheR aND cUT OuR RiS TS aND cRy tiLL oUr MatCHinG eYE LyNeR RuNNSss!!!!!!1
	28	<i>You fuckers make me sick. You are the lowest of the low. Seriously? cutting yourselves because of your “problems”? You are all just wbinny drama little drama queens... Grow the fuck up”</i>

Kill Yourself	8	<p><i>"You all agree with each other because you are all fad following faggots. You are sheeple not people. You all have zero personality You all smelly funny You all walk around with a face like a smacked arse You all whine about how the world is against you You all don't have real problems You all cut yourselves but fail ;(</i></p> <p><i>Wow what an amazing contribution you are to society!!!:O Using/wasting up doctors/nurses time and resources because of your failed 100th suicide attempt. Cut downwards not across newfags. Hmmm, very individualistic if you askin' me.....not!"</i></p>
Emo... Wall		<i>"Emo is the gay form of Satanism"</i>

Depending on the nature of the discussions, trolls may tend to dominate the conversation with condescending, cynical and hurtful comments.

From the above analysis it is clear that the two emo groups studied are being used by people both inside and outside the subculture to discuss a variety of topical issues. Although a range of topics and discussions can be found in each group, this research focused on the discussion board topics that had the potential to highlight teenage depression, suicide and suicidal behaviour.

Discussion

Based on the thematic content analysis of the Facebook groups and an examination of the uses of this form of social media, a number of themes relating to the topic of the research emerged.

A normalisation, glorification and acceptance of depression and self-mutilation were prevalent throughout the online dialogues examined. Cutting as a major form of self-harm was brought up in almost all of the discussions examined and the overall emo perspective of the activity was found to be positive, with teenagers expressing their affirmative opinions of the behaviour openly and without reserve. This positive portrayal of self-harm not only has the potential to encourage the behaviour but may also give teenagers a means to justify their activities based on its acceptance by others within the groups. As mentioned earlier, cutting is regarded by some as a key element of the emo subculture (Martin 2006, Sands 2006). Therefore, simply identifying with emo may be all that is needed to justify self-harming activities.

The theme of nihilism which indicates an underlying belief that life is pointless and futile, was present within the discussions. The acceptance and encouragement of this idea within the groups could promote the belief that life is not worth living and in turn may have the potential to influence the thoughts and attitudes of other members of the emo groups.

The theme of 'Us versus Them' signifies the development of a feeling of community within the groups based on emo versus "non emo" or "emo hater" identification. This community helps to create a feeling of belonging and sharing among the members and allows them to find solace and acceptance from other teenagers who are experiencing their lives within the same social context. According to Blumler and Katz (1974) and Mc Quail (1983) the media is used as a means to fulfil specific needs. Based on the analysis of the research one of those needs may include the need to be social. This need to be social and part of a friendship group or community falls into the third category of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, namely Love and Belonging (1943).

The problem that emerges with the idea of Us versus Them is that teenagers are often very impressionable and may take on dangerous behaviours or activities that have been discussed, as a means to 'fit in' even more with the members of the groups. This means that teenagers, who are part of these groups and have seen that self-harm is regarded as a 'normal' and 'cool' part of the subculture, may start cutting in an attempt to feel more like the other emos within the group.

The secondary theme of mockery had an impact on the flow of the discussions within the groups. Hateful, insulting and condescending remarks were found in all of the discussion boards analysed. These negative comments have the potential to demoralise, alienate and vilify teenagers who are looking for a place to meet people who are similar to them. Consequently, the input by trolls may be damaging in that it may help to strengthen some emo teenagers' beliefs that they do not belong and are a burden to those around them.

The various themes discussed above can be linked to Joiner's Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicidal Behaviour. Joiner's theory says that in order for people to commit suicide they need to have a "sense of thwarted belongingness", "a perception of functioning as a burden on others" and the "acquired capability for suicide" (Anestis 2009). Based on the themes of this research, elements of each of these predispositions to suicide are evident. A sense of thwarted belongingness, as suggested by Joiner, refers to the person's feelings of unbearable isolation and a belief that no one understands them and they have no one to relate to. These groups and social networking sites offer teenage emos a place to meet up with people who are similar to them and understand their lifestyles. However, teenagers who are depressed may focus on the comments of the trolls and may end up believing even more that they don't fit in, in neither the real nor online worlds. The second part of Joiner's theory is the "perception of functioning as a burden". This refers to the person's belief that the lives of those around them would be better if they weren't around anymore. Once again trolls within the emo Facebook groups may have an impact on the teenagers' ideas that they are a burden to those around them. Comments such as

“Im sure your families are so glad your little problems in your head are being solved while they cry at the hospital”,

“Oh i’ll cut my wrist, the hospital will fix me, too bad other people dying from car crashes will die because under funded hospitals cant afford enough doctors,”

exemplify the suggestion that emos that cut themselves are a burden to their families and to those around them.

The final element of Joiner’s theory is that in order for somebody to commit suicide they have to have a “capability for suicide”. This refers to the person’s ability to become accustomed to pain and the fear of death (Anestis 2009). This familiarisation and acceptance of pain is evident throughout the discussions and is illustrated in the glorification, normalisation and acceptance of self-harm and cutting. The illustration of the realisation of all three elements of what the Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicidal Behaviour describes as key for a person to commit suicide, within the content analysed indicates that social networking groups may not be as safe as people believe them to be.

A lack of restriction of content found on social media groups is related to the Libertarian model of communication. Since freedom of expression and anonymity are seen as essential parts of the internet it becomes evident that the Facebook groups examined in this research illustrate the use of social media as a form of freedom of expression. Despite the reporting and banning functions, which form a security measure on the Facebook site, teenagers are still given free rein on the groups they can join, the friends they can invite and the comments they can make. As a result teenagers use these social networking groups to express their views on various topics related to the emo culture, this expression may however have the power to promote risky behaviour in an already ‘at risk’ portion of society.

As a result of the findings of this research it can be suggested that social media, in particular emo groups on the social networking site Facebook, are being used as a tool to promote positive perceptions of and encourage suicidal behaviour among the teenage emo subculture. Consequently, it becomes overwhelmingly apparent that social forms of new media may indeed be contributing to the development of positive perceptions of suicidal behaviour, and as such, play a role in suicide contagion. From the analysis of the data investigated, the promotion of depression and suicidal behaviour was evident. Self-harm, particularly cutting is viewed and expressed by participating members as an acceptable and normal part of the emo subculture. And, although suicide is not a major topic of discussion, these groups give teenagers the opportunity to discuss issues surrounding the subject and allow for the positive representation of suicidal behaviours.

The findings of this research establish that teenage emos are using the social networking groups studied to discuss issues of interest and that some of these discussions could lead to the glorification and promotion of depression and self-harm.

Conclusion

The idea that the media plays a role in suicide contagion is not a new matter of concern. Researchers have been trying to determine the media's influence on suicide as far back as the 18th century (Stack 2000). Today however, the interest in the impact of traditional media has been overshadowed by the interest in the role new forms of media, particularly social media, play in the contagion of suicide. As technology develops and new forms of communication media emerge, the potential for new forms of contagion develop. It was therefore the aim of this research to examine this new technology and determine whether or not social media in the form of social networking sites, has the potential to offer a platform for the promotion of suicide and suicidal behaviour. Focusing on the teenage subculture of emo, which developed on the internet (Simon & Kelly 2007), and examining their use of the social networking site Facebook, it was determined, using a thematic content analysis, that the emo groups studied were being used as a tool to promote positive perceptions of self-injury and suicide. The use of this type of media as a means to promote and justify self-harming and suicidal behaviour highlights the concern that the internet is an often unsafe and risky place for children and teenagers to spend their time.

This is a baseline exploratory study on a topic that has not been extensively explored. While the research findings are interesting, further research is required. The focus of the study was on the role of social networks in creating positive perceptions of self-harm and suicide among a particular teenage subculture and did not focus on other factors that may influence suicidal ideation or instances of self-injury.

Although social networking sites are designed to offer a platform for communication and are not necessarily developed with the intention to cause harm, they do have the potential to open the doors for the promotion of a variety of risky and even dangerous behaviours.

References

- [Unknown]. 2008. *Web worries after suicide spate*. BBC News [Wales] 23 January 2008. URL: (consulted on 12 March 2009): <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/7204172.stm>
- [Unknown]. 2008. *Bebo blamed for 13-year-old boy's death*. 12 June 2008. URL: (consulted on 6 April 2009): <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,23853471-2,00.html>
- [Unknown]. *Communities Online: Trolling and Harassment*. URL: (Consulted on 1 July 2009): <http://communitiesonline.homestead.com/dealingwithtrolls.html>
- Ancer, J. 2011. "Cutting' and Your Teen". In Times Live. URL (consulted on 2 December 2012): <http://www.timeslive.co.za/opinion/columnists/article964268.ece>
- Anestis, M. 2009. *Joiner's interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behaviour*. URL: (consulted on 1 April 2009): http://www.psychotherapybrownbag.com/psychotherapy_brown_bag_a/2009/03/joiner
- American Association of Suicidology. 2008. Youth Suicide Fact Sheet. URL: (consulted on 13 March 2009): <http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/stats-and-tools-fact-sheets>
- Bennett, M., Barrett, M., Karakozov, R., Kipiani, J., Lyons, E., Pavlenko, V. and Riazanova, T. 2004. Young Children's Evaluations of the Ingroup and Outgroups: A Multinational Study. URL: (Consulted on 16 July 2009): <http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=psypapers>
- Blumler, J.G. And Katz, E. 1974. *The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
- Britten, N. and Savill, R. *Police fear internet cult inspires teen suicide*. The Telegraph. 18 April 2008. URL: (Consulted on 6 April 2009): <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1576338/Police-fear-internet-cult-inspires-teen-suicide.html>
- Brown, A. 2012. "Suicide Solutions?". In *Popular Music History*; Apr2012, Vol. 6 Issue 1/2, p19-37, 19p.
- Davies, K. 2008. *Caught in the Web*. Marie Claire. May 2008, 54-58.
- Emo Chat. 2012. *About Us*. URL (consulted 2 December 2012): <http://www.emochatco.za/>
- Gould, M. 2001 *Suicide and the Media*. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 932(1):200
- Humphrey, H. 2002. *Teenagers will be Teenagers*. Nova Publishers.
- Livingstone, S. 2008. Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy and self-expression. *New Media Society*, 10:393 – 411
- Martin, G. 2006. Editorial. On suicide and subcultures. *Australian e-journal for the Advancement of Mental Health*, 5 (3): www.auseinet.com/journal/vol5iss3/martin.pdf

- Maslow, A. H. 1943. A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review* 50(4):370-96.
- Mc Quail, D. 1983. Mass Communication Theory : An Introduction. London: Sage
- Naito, A. 2007. Internet Suicide in Japan: Implications for Child and Adolescent Mental Health. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 12: 583 – 597
- Nielsen, J. 2006: *Participation Inequality: Encouraging more users to contribute*. URL: (Consulted on 1 July 2009): http://www.useit.com/alertbox/participation_inequality.html -
- Nxumalo, M. 2011. Alternative Kidz. URL (consulted 2 December 2012): <http://www.thiis.co.za/music/alternative-kidz/>.
- Phillips, David P., Lundie L. Carstensen, and Daniel Paight. 1989. Effects of Mass Media News Stories on Suicide, with New Evidence on Story Content. In Cynthia Pfeiffer ed., *Suicide among Youth: Perspectives on Risk and Prevention*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press
- Pratt, A. 2005. Nihilism: The Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. USA: Embry Riddle University. URL (consulted on 1 July 2009): <http://www.iep.utm.edu/nihilism/>
- Rapewise. 2012. About Us. URL (consulted 2 December 2012): <http://www.rapewise.co.za/>.
- Romer, D., Jamieson, P. & Jamieson, H. 2006. Are News Reports of Suicide Contagious? A Stringent Test in Six U.S. Cities. *Journal of Communication*, 56:253 – 270
- Ryalls, E. 2006. Emo Subculture: An Examination of the Kids, Music and Style that Form Emo Subculture. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the NCA 93rd Annual Convention, TBA, Chicago, IL*. URL: (Consulted on 1 July 2009): http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p187580_index.html
- Schlebusch, L. 2012. “Suicide prevention: a proposed national strategy for South Africa” In *African Journal of Psychiatry*, 15:436-440.
- Simon, L. & Kelly, T. 2007. *Everybody Hurts: An Essential Guide to Emo Culture*. HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.
- Stack, S. Media Effects. In *Suicide influences and Factors*. 2007. URL: (consulted on 7 March 2009): <http://www.deathreference.com/Sh-Sy/Suicide-Influences-and-Factors.html>
- Stack, Steven. 2000. Media Impacts on Suicide: A Quantitative Review of 293 Findings. *Social Science Quarterly* 81 (2000):957-971.
- South African Depression and Anxiety Group (2009). *Curbing Teen Suicide in South Africa*. URL: (consulted on 9 March 2009): <http://www.sadag.co.za/index.php/Suicide/Curbing-Teen-Suicide-in-South-Africa.html>
- Thomas, L., Singh, I., Peccei, J., Jones, J. and Wareing, S. 2004. *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction*. (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Williams, P. 2008. Why People Join Social Networking Sites. URL: (Consulted on 1 July 2009): http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/861427/why_people_join_social_networking_sites_pg2.html?cat=9 -

World Health Organisation. 2000. *Preventing Suicide. A Resource for Primary Health Care Workers*. Geneva: WHO Press

World Health Organisation. 2008. *Preventing Suicide. A Resource for Media Professionals*. Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse. Switzerland: WHO Press.

www.facebook.com. *Emo...*(South Africa) (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=af83b61b5b6001eb3bd22a744d1517e&gid=7147310972&ref=search>)

...Emo...(International) <http://www.facebook.com/s.php?sid=8af83b61b5b6001eb3b22a744d1517e&init=q&sf=r&k=200000010&n=&q=EMO%20#/group.php?sid=8af83b61b5b6001eb3bd22a744d1517e&gid=40630268654&ref=search>

Theatre for Development: An Alternative Programme for Reproductive Health Communication in Urban Nigeria

Charles Emeka Nwadigwé

Theatre Arts Department

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Email: ce.nwadigwé@unizik.edu.ng; chebenwa@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

Communication and public education is vital in reproductive health. It enables awareness of disease, emergent infections, safety and preventive measures. However, health communication programmes in urban Nigeria is faced with a lot of problems among which is the wrong choice of media channels which results in the message not reaching the targeted population. This paper explores the use of Theatre for Development (TfD) as an alternative and complementary medium for communicating reproductive health information to urban dwellers in Nigeria. Using some completed and ongoing health communication projects in Nigeria for illustration, the study seeks to open a forum for dialogue and debate and to draw the attention of policy makers and health workers to exploit the potentials of TfD in combating the challenges of healthcare in urban settings on the continent.

Keywords: *communication; reproductive health; culture; TfD; Mass media.*

Introduction

As global emphasis shifts from curative to preventive healthcare, the imperative of information, communication and education has become high on the agenda of health planners and policy makers. In Africa, there is an increased focus on birth control, child spacing, family planning and prevention of factors and conditions that potentially harm or complicate the reproductive health of women, especially HIV/AIDS disease. This has meant the design of health promotion programmes. However these programmes seem to face significant challenges among which is effective communication to the target population to achieve a desired result. A key reason for this is the choice of channels of communication. Efficient communication in (reproductive) healthcare is critical in achieving appropriate result. This cannot be overemphasized (Strohl Systems 2009); research has shown that knowledge of 'how sex, sexuality and relationships are understood and constructed in different societies has the potential to inform the development of sexual and reproductive healthcare

services, improve care, and enrich sexuality education agendas' (Izugbara 2004: 63).

In recent times, particularly with the proliferation of technologically-driven information channels, health education still continues to be focused more on providing health information to the public without paying due attention to the nature of the media chosen. In the process, information and communication become hardly distinguished, thus resulting in inappropriate choice of media. Yet, there is a marked difference between information dissemination and communication. Communication, as has been described, is a two-way traffic involving the sharing of ideas, knowledge and experience. It is distinct from the one-way traffic of mere transmission of information without commensurate feedback mechanism (Defleur and Dennis 1994).

With so much energy channeled into the provision of reproductive health information to the public, there appears to be little invested into receiving the feedback, which would have allowed the target populations to take initiatives and contribute to communication plans and strategies for action. Thus, many communication projects fail to make the intended impact as the target audiences remain apathetic despite the information being disseminated. A sample study in Kenya, for instance, observes that despite the avalanche of information on the mass media, the spread of HIV/AIDS continues to rise. The study asserts that wrong communication media, language and channels are often used while vital cultural realities in Kenya and Africa are not considered in the packaging and dissemination of reproductive health information (Macharia 2005).

A common and insidious fallacy in media and communication practice is the tendency for information managers to presume that messages disseminated through the mass media will certainly reach target audiences and achieve the desired response (John 2009). Such views are offshoots of the Bullet and Stimulus – Response theories propagated in the late 20th Century. However, these have been criticized and found wanting as experiences show that mass media channels are potent in creating awareness but less effective in convincing the target audience to respond positively or adopt an innovation (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971; Mda 1993; Gumucio-Dagron 1994, Nwadigwé 2007a; Odi 2008). The study by George and Frank Briggs (2009) also shows that a world of difference exists between mere awareness of diseases or infections and actual compliance with the required preventive measures.

In Nigeria and indeed many countries in Africa, the mass media are the major channels of communicating reproductive health information to urban dwellers. But there are difficulties in terms of reaching the target population as earlier mentioned. A greater percentage of the country's urban population lives in the slums under conditions of poverty. Many of them cannot afford newspapers and television sets although most own radio sets. Despite owning radio sets, many urban dwellers in Nigeria prefer to play music or watch movies rather than listen to the radio. Thus,

health message on radio would tend to reach fewer of the desired number targeted. A research study in Kenya also observes a similar trend and submits that most Kenyan families have access to the radio but 'no time to listen' because 'their lives have become complicated by the fact that they are struggling for survival' (Macharia 2005: 117).

Another considerable barrier to reproductive health communication in Nigeria is illiteracy. Many people cannot read health messages printed in newspapers, posters, billboards and pamphlets even where they are printed in the vernacular. Mass media information in Nigeria's urban centres is also dominated by the use of the Lingua Franca (English language and its pidgin variants) and this alienates a good segment of the populace. Audience apathy to mass media content is often attributed to the epileptic infrastructure and operational structure of the media houses. Many state-owned media houses lack good equipment and this limits their reach. Some broadcasting stations remain off-air for a considerable number of hours daily due to public power cut, faulty power generators and other technical problems while some cannot transmit clear signals even within their immediate localities. Consequently, reproductive health information carried on such channels is often lost and ineffective. Yet, most health education campaigns are executed by government agencies as part of public service. These agencies prefer to use the ill-equipped public-owned mass media channels to save cost. This scenario is further compounded by interference from political parties in power. In Nigeria, they exercise undue control over public-owned mass media, inundate their daily broadcasts or publication with propaganda and censor any information that may cast the efficiency of the government or its department in bad light.

Besides these structural and operational pitfalls, the mass media by their very nature are 'impersonal' channels. Though it has 'wider reach at faster time', it often 'fails to attract and hold attention' and can also 'distort information/message content; feedback is almost non-existent and most crucially, it fails to communicate effectively because its flow of information is mono-directional' (Odi 2008: 165). Indeed, based on empirical evidence, 'there is a growing feeling among communication researchers that existing media systems have failed to serve the needs of development in Africa' (Mda 1993: 1).

In view of these realities, NGOs, development workers and international agencies are finding interpersonal communication channels as useful alternatives or complement to the mass media. This is reinforced by the proven potency of interpersonal channels in persuading target audiences to adopt innovations (Abah 1997; Garcia 2001; Odhiambo 2005). The persuasion function is crucial and sensitive to the efficacy of communication for change. In the Nigerian context, Obielozie (2009: 131) argues that 'the mass media with their straight news journalism cannot do the tricks. They can create awareness but it requires a different brand of communication to convince the mother to take her child to the clinic for a type of treatment she does not

understand'. Health education researchers also agree that a unique communication approach is currently required in promoting health awareness and positive response (Lyzun and McMullen 2009).

One of such unique and alternative communication media is Theatre for Development (TfD) which applies its participatory and popular appeal to interact with target populations using their cultural heritage and resources. The use of popular media such as drama and theatre for community education is well documented. The medium is increasingly being applied to address sexual and reproductive healthcare challenges in developing countries (Gumucio-Dagron 1994; Mbizvo 2006; Kafewo 2008).

However, despite the pedagogic and communicative potentials of TfD, policy makers in Nigeria are often reluctant to incorporate it into the reproductive health education and communication programmes. This ostensibly draws from the prevailing stereotypical consideration of drama, theatre and the popular arts in Nigeria as pastimes for fun and relaxation. In fact, 'theatre, and generally the performative arts, have always been recognized and viewed as entertainment. All their other potentials are subsumed under this superficial understanding' (Komolafe 2005: 227). Studies have shown that even developed and more technologically advanced societies resort to the popular arts for sustainable and effective sexual and reproductive health education (Keller and Brown 2002; WHO 2004). In essence, they have recognized the popular media 'as important vehicles for health promotion, raising awareness and education about a range of health and sexuality issues' (Kang and Quine 2007: 418). The adoption of this approach in Nigeria is still slow and in many instances not encouraged.

Methodology

Study Site

Data for the study were collected from five urban centres in Nigeria. Three of the sites, Awka, Nnewi and Uyo are located in the south while two Dass and Dutse are in the northern region of the country. Three of the towns are capital cities while two are industrial centres. They all feature large concentration of people with considerable signs of expansion as influx of people and erection of new buildings continue steadily. The population engages in a range of commercial activities while a significant number are either public servants or employees of private enterprises. The towns also face the challenges of urbanization similar to other urban centres in Nigeria. These include inadequate infrastructure, unemployment, poverty, insecurity and epileptic utility services including healthcare.

Research Design

The study adopted a multi-methodological approach to data collection. This involves oral interview with sample respondents, observation and content analysis of some sexual and reproductive health messages. The purpose was to investigate the process and impact of reproductive health communication by studying the design and content of the messages, the media or channels of their delivery and the response of the target audience. Each method was designed to enrich the database and illuminate the research problem.

Samples

A number of decisions in the research design required the selection of representative samples to make the study manageable and validate the findings. Two sampling techniques were therefore used in the selection of the urban centres to be studied, the respondents to be interviewed and the media and messages to be analyzed.

The sampling of the urban centres was purposive, following some criteria and characteristics that are relevant to the problem being investigated. The towns have the features of most urban settings in Nigeria; in addition, they offer a diversity of healthcare services and institutions including University Teaching Hospital (UTH) and or model General Hospitals. These urban centres also have access and proximity to mass media information and establishment. They have also witnessed TFD workshops focused on reproductive and maternal health education.

The selection of interview respondents followed a randomization based on area or cluster sampling technique to enable the researcher and field assistants obtain samples from different sectors or cultural areas such as markets, schools, offices, hospital and residential clusters across the study sites.

Interview

The primary objective of the interview was to obtain information on the opinions and attitudes of respondents concerning the reproductive health messages disseminated through the various media of communication. The interview schedules were therefore not in-depth but brief and focused on reaching a diversity of respondents. The major language of interaction was English with its pidgin variants. In some cases, the vernacular was used for optimal communication. The interviews were recorded on tape and later transcribed. A total of 291 respondents were interviewed, showing an average of 58 persons per town. Among these respondents, 73% are female, while the rest are male. The gender of 2 respondents could not be ascertained. From their visual appearance and dress patterns, they appear to be members of the gay and lesbian communities.

Observation

The active observation of events as they unfold at the study sites also yielded additional data. The events were connected with reproductive health issues and allied information considered relevant to the research premise. Some of the observations were personally made by the researcher while others were made by field assistants recruited and located at each study site. The observations were noted and added to the corpus of collected data.

Content Analysis

This entailed an evaluation of the content of reproductive health communication as expressed through the mass media and TfD process. The analysis covers the design and content of the information, the channels and context of their dissemination and the feedback (verbal and non-verbal) from the audiences or participants in the communication chain.

Results

Sources of Information

Reproductive health information in Nigeria is disseminated through a range of communication media. These include the mass media (print and electronic), the popular media (drama, theatre, music), films and indigenous or folk media. The interview results indicate that a greater number of urban dwellers access information on sexuality and reproductive health through the mass media especially radio and television. A respondent aged 41, states:

We do get reproductive health messages through the radio and TV. I know there are posters too but I only them in hospitals. Most people in the city watch TV if there is electricity, so, they will get to hear the messages.

Similarly, the popular arts enjoy wide acceptance among urban populations. Observations show that music, video and movies are being played at home and various street corners. A youth age 22, interviewed at a video centre explains:

I like drama and films. Everybody enjoys it. It makes you to relax, just like music. Unless they are playing music video or showing drama on TV, I will prefer to watch Nollywood (Nigerian Video-films).

This respondent represents the views of those that see the popular media as mere channels of entertainment. Observation and analysis of the plays and films they watch at home and on television show that they rarely carry reproductive health information except in some isolated scenes or television serials which are not regular on the screen. The health departments in the towns sampled have no mobile film unit to facilitate health education campaigns. The mobile film unit is owned by the information and culture ministry but much of their work is focused on publicizing government programmes often coloured by political propaganda.

Content of Information

The information on sexual and reproductive health transmitted through the various media are designed to address a range of issues concerning prevention of infections, sexual behaviour, care, management of ailments, health-seeking behaviour and counselling services. The interviews, observations and content analyses of the messages show that the major focus of reproductive health education in the sampled urban centres is on behavioural and attitudinal change and re-orientation in the areas of family planning particularly on child spacing and contraception, HIV/AIDS and STIs, antenatal and post-natal care (safe motherhood), Versico Vaginal Fistula (VVF), female circumcision, breast and cervical cancer, premarital sex and abortions, marital fidelity and use of condoms. A middle-aged respondent affirms:

Yes, I hear about man and woman affair. They tell you about infections, how to avoid it and what to do if you get infected.

Another respondent, aged 33, has a different view:

The information is not enough. It is supposed to be regular on radio, television and even shown in films. But they only mention it occasionally. They talk about it but they don't show or demonstrate how it works.

A pregnant mother, (age withheld), complains of apparent discrepancy between the media information and the reality at the clinics and hospitals:

Sometimes, they tell you the services are free. But when you go there, they tell you to pay for this and that. Even the drugs are costly. If the drugs are free, why are they hoarding or selling them? The government should investigate the issue. This is why many people are not interested.

In many instances, it can be deduced that awareness is being created but the impact and response to the information does not indicate commensurate compliance. A number of

adolescent respondents admitted having experienced multiple sexual partnership in the last twelve months. A male respondent, aged 19, says:

Well, I know about infections. The information is everywhere, so, I use condoms as they suggested. But sometimes you cannot help it when the condom bursts or when a girl puts you in the mood and condom is not available at that material time. But they always talk as if it is the men that usually cause the problem.

Apart from gender stereotypes in some reproductive health information in the mass media, the vulnerability of female partners in sexual relationship was also linked to practical realities in society which are not addressed by the media information. According to a female respondent, aged 25:

It is not about ignorance. Let's be realistic. Despite all that talk in the media about abstinence, people are still having affairs daily. If a man shows interest in a serious relationship that could lead to marriage, what do you do? For how long will you keep him off? The men are always domineering. Sometimes, you use sex to oil a relationship. The media is not addressing that reality.

Observations also indicate that despite the mass media campaigns, female circumcision is still practised even by urban dwellers while STIs and abortions are on the increase especially among young people who often patronize quacks for solutions.

The packaging of the reproductive health information by the relevant agencies is also connected to its efficacy. The mass media messages are presented in different formats. Some are broadcast as straight announcements, others are packaged in 10, 15, 20 or 30 seconds jingles. Some are printed as handbills, stickers, billboards, posters or newspaper adverts with pictures or graphic illustration. There are also 15-30mins drama skits for radio and television as well as 45-60mins sponsored documentary or feature films on reproductive health. Some of these include *Dying for Tomorrow* (a 60 min feature film), *Wetin Dey* and *I Need to Know* (30 mins. serials for radio and television) and *One Thing at a Time*, (15 mins radio play). There are equally a number of TfD workshops such as *Had I Known*, *Correct man*, *Pick and Drop* and *The Invitation* which focus on adolescent and urban youth sexual behaviour. A health worker, age 51, in an interview maintains:

A lot of information is being provided in the various media but people are more interested in pursuing money and material things. They are in a hurry; they rarely look at posters and billboards. Many of them drop the handbills as soon as you give them.

But a media executive, age 58, observes that:

Nigeria is a large and complex society. The messages are often poorly timed and fail to reach a reasonable segment of the populace. Some miss the programmes

due to work schedules or power cut. The information should be repeated and varied but they are not doing that. The messages packaged in drama and films are captivating but they are rarely available on air or video shops.

A semi-literate respondent, age 41, complains about the meaning of media messages and argues that the signals and images are 'confusing and lack focus' especially in dealing with complex issues as V.V.F., P.M.T.C.T. and breast and cervical cancer. The respondent adds that the presenters 'speak in a hurry' and the meaning of the message is often lost. Content analysis of some samples of reproductive health messages in the mass media show some inadequacies in the message design. For instance:

Sample 1: Printed information on Poster and Billboard:

AIDS is here with us. Avoid casual sex. Avoid being infected. Go for test now.

This message uses no images or graphic illustration to help catch attention. It also gives the impression that HIV is AIDS and that it is only through sex that AIDS can be contracted.

Sample 2: Broadcast information on Radio (Transcribed from the vernacular):

Two women chat about sexual relations with their husbands, admire each other's looks and compare the merits of the oral and injectable contraceptives they use for birth control respectively.

The message does not feature any male voice, yet it talks about male sexuality. It gives the impression that contraception or birth control is a woman's affair whereas sex is a man's delight. Birth control needs the consent and support of the husband but that male voice to give the endorsement to the idea and message is clearly absent.

Sample 3: Broadcast information on TV:

A male low income earner is shown in his house with several children. Food is served but the children scramble for it due to insufficiency. The father's ration is served, the children scramble for it as well and this time carry the dishes away. Other children come and demand for more food and money to buy footwear. The man goes off hungry and laments his mistake for not planning his family.

This message suggests that the burden of unplanned family is only economic. Thus, rich men can go on having children. It also places the burden of unplanned family on men alone and ignores the health and social implications of too many births on the woman.

Sample 4: Broadcast information on TV (Short Film):

A pregnant teenage girl hides in a corner watching other girls going to school. She looks sad while the other girls are happy, chatting and laughing along the way to school. In a flashback, we see the girl's past encounter with a boy in school, their romance and sexual relationship that led to her pregnancy and dropping out of school. The scene changes to the present and the girl breaks down, crying and regretting her action. Her mother comes out and angrily orders her indoors, telling her to face the consequence of her waywardness. The scene closes with a message that premarital sex can destroy one's future.

The message suggests that casual or premarital sex is only harmful to the female. It shows no social, psychological or health repercussion on the male that impregnated her. It also gives the impression that the main burden of casual sex was pregnancy and this encourages illicit and unsafe abortions among young people. Since the messages were transmitted through the mass media, there was no forum to actually discuss the information and their inherent shortcomings.

Content analysis of some Tfd work focusing on sexual and reproductive health education at the study sites shows that attitudinal and behavioural change as well as preventive healthcare are addressed with the people following a participatory learning and action (PLA) format. The Tfd facilitators visit a community or urban neighbourhood, gain entry and acceptance of the local leaders and then conduct a field research with some volunteers. The identified problems are couched into a drama sketch and presented to the people using local volunteers. The issues are openly discussed immediately after the performance and remedial action taken. Few weeks later, the facilitators return to the community on follow-up work, to evaluate and monitor the people's compliance. They receive feedback from the target community and address all barriers to effective action and compliance.

The medium was used to address the problems of female circumcision, promiscuity and child spacing at Awka, early marriage and V.V.F. at Dutse, safe motherhood and STIs at Dass and HIV/AIDS, STIs and multiple sexual relationships among transport workers in Uyo. In a response after one of the workshops, a community inhabitant, age 38 states:

This programme is quite good. The message is clear and they allow people to contribute and air their views. Some of the issues we hear on radio are not clear to many of us until now. I request that this campaign be repeated and extended to other neighbourhoods and communities.

Observations show that Tfd campaigns are not frequently replicated in communities because they are rarely funded. The programme is also part of the curriculum of theatre

students in tertiary institutions whose academic calendar can only permit one workshop each year. Nevertheless, there are documented cases of Tfd campaigns funded by donor agencies, especially UNICEF, to specifically address reproductive and sexual health matters in Nigeria (Gumucio-Dagron 1994; Abah 1997; Obafemi 1999; Kafewo 2008).

Discussion

From available evidence, it is clear that significant efforts are being invested into passing reproductive health information to the public. These messages, at best, help to create awareness but fail to convince and persuade the target audience to adopt the desired change. Part of the problem lies in the internal structure of mass media organs with its technology and audio-visual complexity. Images and codes are easily misunderstood and misinterpreted. In the area of reproductive health education, it is argued that 'the globalization of communication and the mixed and confusing messages about male versus female sexuality portrayed in the mass media, has not been helpful (Action Health 2009: 1).

The television is the glamour medium for urban populations. Information targeted at urban dwellers is usually transmitted through this medium with high expectations of success but this is not always the case (Macharia 2005). The reproductive health information in the mass media is largely unidirectional following a top-down structure. It is prescriptive, less participatory and lacks the 'learning-by-doing approach' (Ogunsuyi 2002:102). There is an obvious gap between the content of the media information and the realities of the people's culture and living conditions. These discrepancies are rarely addressed in the message design and delivery because it lacks interactive qualities inherent in the popular media such as Tfd (Iorapuu and Bamidele 2004).

The urban centres in Africa are significant sites of struggles and tension. The populace undergoes considerable environmental, social and psychological strain to earn a living. Observations show that most people return home after a day's work to relax and they continually find entertainment in the popular arts such as music, video, films and dramatic programmes rather than boring jingles, announcements and panel discussion on radio and television. An effective communication programme for this category of people must be unique and creative. It should be keyed into their pastimes, the popular arts and taken to them at convenient locations where they will be disposed to participate (Nwadiuwe 2007a).

In essence, a unique, creative and radical approach to communication is the goal of Tfd. The results emerging from the study sites suggest that people can easily make out time at work to participate in a brief workshop than when they are at home. The reproductive health campaigns at Uyo focused on transport workers (drivers, conductors, transport unions, touts and ancillary services providers) and took place

at motor parks. The programmes at Dutse focused on public servants and took place at the secretariat whereas those of Awka and Dass were situated at the market square and Emir's courtyard respectively. The impressive turnout and active participation of the target populations were facilitated by the choice of venue and optimal timing. To address adolescent sexuality, the school environment becomes ideal (Kafewo 2008).

Media information requires precision. This demands accuracy in focus, timing and optimization of opportunities. As programming schedule and content become more complex in line with the dynamic society, the competition for media space becomes tougher. This necessitates the creation of 'prime time', a transmission belt that attracts high tariff for commercial broadcasts due to its audience profile. Hence, poorly funded health education campaigns cannot be broadcast at 'prime time' and often suffer low audience rating and ultimately fail to make the desired impact.

One intractable challenge that confronts reproductive health education is the seeming apathy of urban audiences. Hence, information are being provided but negative and risky behaviours persist with rising infections and concomitant health implications. Analyses of the content and context of the sexual and reproductive health information in urban settings highlight the urgency to incorporate interpersonal channels in the communication agenda. Devito (2002) has emphasized the centrality of interpersonal skills and interactions in the efficacy of message communication. Thus, it is not enough to churn out series of information through the mass media without commensurate reinforcement using interpersonal channels which are critical to the making of decision and choices by message receivers.

Theatre for Development (TfD) is a popular medium that is anchored on interpersonal communication. Research results show that 'people are inclined to have more faith in interpersonal communication than the mass media' (Nwadigwé 2001: 82). The essential ingredient of the interpersonal channel is its richness in homophily – the degree to which participants in a communication exchange share common characteristics – which builds trust, credibility and makes communication efficacious (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971). Homophily is inherent in culture, arts, language, association and social capital and these are essential ingredients of the TfD process. Beyond the creation of awareness, 'TfD goes to the people, integrates and achieves a rapport with them, and employs the local media, arts and culture of the people in communicating to them' (Nwadigwé 2001: 81). The traditional role of drama and theatre as non-formal education is not being explored and integrated into the communication plans for urban reproductive health in Nigeria.

Policy Implications

Urban reproductive health is crucial to human development. As urbanization increases, the challenges for sexual and reproductive health rise with the influx and concentration of people. In Africa, the issue of reproductive health is even more critical because of the traditional attachment and emphasis on procreation. Urban reproductive health information requires effective communication and Tfd should be incorporated into the policy.

The mass media is useful in creating awareness but Tfd is more interactive and effective in persuading target audiences for affirmative and sustainable action. Urban reproductive health policy makers should seriously consider the complementary application of both media for optimum impact.

Communication in modern societies is becoming increasingly complex with advancements and dynamism in technology, culture and human relations. Policy makers in urban reproductive health education must engage experts in communication and culture to plan and map out strategies for their media campaigns. Observations indicate that personnel in health departments and institutions often handle the information task. While these workers are experienced in health matters, the design, packaging and execution of media communication campaigns should be left for communication experts, hence the need for collaboration.

The phenomenal rise and popularity of the Nigerian video-film industry has made the dramatic arts quite attractive. This can be integrated into the urban reproductive health education programme. The messages can be packaged into short films and screened for urban neighbourhood communities at town halls and viewing centres. This will be followed by an interactive session on the issues presented. The message can then be reinforced with songs, dances, music and skits based on the theme and cultural contexts of the events.

There is the need for periodic audience research to evaluate the impact of reproductive health education programmes. Feedback emanating from such surveys can be used in reviewing the communication plans to strengthen its effectiveness. It is important to know the views and feelings of audiences through a sustainable feedback mechanism. These views can determine the effectiveness of messages but this is lacking in most mass media campaigns in Nigeria. It is instructive to note that Tfd begins with field research and ends with a follow-up segment which is another avenue for audience research and feedback that are integral aspect of its methodology.

Conclusion

There is ample evidence that points to the potency of popular drama and theatre in community education. This has been applied in diverse situations to facilitate development in Nigeria (Abah 1997; Idoko 2002; Obadiogwu 2004; Nwadiogwe 2007a; Kafewo 2008). Though the governments are yet to make its use a deliberate policy, UNICEF Nigeria has over the years resorted to popular theatre in promoting health education. This 'has been effective in those communities where modern mass media, such as radio and television, are neither very effective or relevant for the purpose of conveying messages' (Gumucio-Dagon 1994: vii).

It is apparent that the heavy reliance on mass media for reproductive health education has not worked. This affirms that 'communication is no longer a phenomenon essentially related to technology, but one in consonance with social structures and dependent on cultural life (Ogunsuyi 2002: 102). Culture cannot be ignored in the packaging of media campaigns. Reproductive health information in the mass media needs to be reinforced through interpersonal channels to reassure and persuade the audience to accept, try and possibly adopt the desired change. These processes, due to cultural reasons, have been found to be 'outside the functional range of the mass media' (Nwadiogwe 2001: 75). Obviously, opinions, notions and attitudes held by individuals and groups invariably influence their sexual behaviour. Much of these notions are shaped and coloured by culture. There is therefore, 'the need for approaches to sexuality education to be sensitive to the cultural contexts within which these notions are formed and sustained (Izugbara 2004: 63).

There is a functional link between the popular interactive media and sexuality and reproductive health education in Africa. From a Nigerian perspective, it was found that 'simultaneous use' of interactive media involving video tapes, cartoons series and posters in conjunction with TFD activities' has been 'extremely effective' (Iorapuu and Bamidele 2004: 39). Thus, 'drama and theatre can be adapted as tools for delivering sex education to youths and adolescents' (Nwadiogwe 2007b: 365). Experiences in South Africa (Mda 1993) and Kenya (Macharia 2005) point to a similar direction. In addition, the Zambian standpoint indicates that 'interactive approaches, including songs, drama and forum theatre' have facilitated reproductive health communication programme (Chapman & Gordon 1998:27).

An effective reproductive health education campaign must be culturally-sensitive, balanced and avoid gender stereotypes. Some of the sexual and reproductive health information being transmitted through the mass media are unbalanced and appear to reinforce gender stereotypes. While some give the impression that reproductive health matters are women's problem (Macharia 2005), others portray the men as 'sexually voracious, careless and irresponsible (Sternberg 2000:89). A participatory and interactive communication process provides forums for dialogue and elimination of such socio-cultural barriers to effective communication and action.

References

- Abah, S.O. (1997). *Performing Life: Case Studies in the Practice of Theatre for Development*, Zaria: Shekut Books.
- Action Health Inc. (2009). *Meeting the Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs of Young People in Nigeria*, Available at: www.actionhealthinc.org/publications/downloads/srh_guide.pdf, Accessed August 16, 2011.
- Anedo, A. O. (2009). Taboos among the Igbo: violation and contemporary socio-cultural implications, *Nka: Journal of Theatre and Cultural Studies*, 1 (4), 93-102.
- Chapman, K. and Gordon, G. (1998). Reproductive health technologies and gender: is participation the key?, in: C. Sweetman (Ed.), *Gender and Technology*, Oxford: Oxfam GB, 34-44.
- Defleur, M.L. and Dennis, E.E. (1994). *Understanding Mass Communication: A Liberal Arts Perspective* (5th Edition), Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Devito, J. A. (2002). *Messages; Building Interpersonal Communication Skills*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Garcia, H. R. (2001). Word of wind: building bridges between health education and culture, *Compas*, 4, 14-16.
- George, I., and Frank-Briggs, A. (2009). Sexual lifestyle of long-distance drivers in Port Harcourt metropolis, *Port Harcourt Medical Journal*, 3 (2), 140-144.
- Gumucio-Dagron, A. (1994). *Popular Theatre*, Lagos: UNICEF.
- Idoko, E.F. (2002). Theatre and eclecticism: the "Tandari" experience, *Research in Drama Education*, 7 (2), 169-178.
- Iorapuu, T.O. and Bamidele, L. (2004). Tfd in children and women's rights practice: implications for other interactive media, in: F. Osofisan (Ed.), *Communicating Children and Women's Rights Practice in Nigeria: Experiences from the Field*, Abuja: UNICEF, 10-17.
- Izugbara, C.O (2004). Notions of sex, sexuality and relationships among adolescent boys in rural southeastern Nigeria, *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*, 4, (1), 63-79.
- Izugbara, C.O. and Ukwayi, J.K. (2004). An intercept study of persons attending traditional birth homes in rural southeastern Nigeria, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 6 (2), 101-114.
- Jhingan, M. L. (2005). *The Economics of Development and Planning*, (38th Edition), Delhi: Vrinda Publications (P) Ltd.
- John, V. (2009). *The Media of Mass Communication*, New York: Pearson Inc.
- Kafewo, S. (2008). Using drama for school-based adolescent sexuality education in Zaria, Nigeria, *Reproductive Health Matters*, 16 (31), 202-210.
- Kang, M. and Quine, S. (2007). Young person's concerns about sex: unsolicited questions

- to a teenage radio talkback programme over three years, *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*, 7, (4), 407-420.
- Keller, S.N. and Brown, J.D. (2002), Media interventions to promote responsible sexual behaviour, *Journal of sex Research*, 39, (1), 67-72.
- Komolafe, A.M. (2005). Sustaining theatre for development: the LASU experience, *Nigerian Theatre Journal* 8, (1), 227-249.
- Lawanson, T.O. (2006). Challenges of sustainability and urban development in Nigeria: reviewing the millennium development goals, Report submitted to *Africa Insight*.
- Lyzun, K. and McMullen, A. (2009). 'Prostate Man', the ageing superhero: A unique approach to encouraging prostate health awareness among men over 50, *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 2 (1): 3-9.
- Mabogunje, A. (2002) Re-constructing the Nigerian city: the new policy on urban development and housing, Paper presented at a National Conference on the City in Nigeria, Ile Ife.
- Macharia, J.A. (2005). Communication of HIV/AIDS information: the role of language and culture in the spread of the pandemic in Kenya, *Alore: Ilorin Journal of Humanities* 15, 104-123.
- Mbizvo, E. (2006). Theatre - a free for health promotion, *The Lancelot* 38, (Supplement 1), 30-31.
- Mda, Z. (1993). *When People Play People: Development Communication Through Theatre*, London: Zed Books.
- Nwadigwu, C. E. (2001). Sustainable development communication: the Tfd approach, *Ibom Journal of Social Issues* 6, (1), 68-84.
- Nwadigwu, C. E. (2007a). 'Meet us at the other side of the river': performance venue and community education among migrant fishermen in Nigeria, *Research in Drama Education*. 12 (1):65-77.
- Nwadigwu, C. E. (2007b). Unwilling brides: 'phallic attack' as a barrier to gender balance in higher education in Nigeria, *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning* 7 (4), 351-369.
- Obadiogwu, C. C. (2004). *Beyond the Fourth Wall: Theatre at the Frontier of Human Development*, Awka: Penmark Publishers.
- Obafemi, O. (1999). Rekindling and redefining popular theatre aesthetics and praxis in Africa, *The Performer: Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts* 1, (2), 1-7.
- Obielozie, E. (2009). Renewing the face of the nation: of reveille to the folk theatre, *Ama: Journal of Theatre and Cultural Studies* 4 (1), 129-134.
- Odhiambo, J.C. (2005), Theatre for development in Kenya: interrogating the ethics of practice I, *Research in Drama Education*. 10 (2):189-199.
- Odi, C. O. (2008). Theatre in development communication discourse, *Anyigba Journal of Arts and Humanities* 5, 158-167.

- Ogunsuyi, S. (2002). Evolving participatory communication for national development in the 21st century, *Theatre Experience: A Journal of Contemporary Theatre Practice* 1, (1), 101-110.
- Onwuliri, F. (2000), The incidence of urinary tract infections in Jos, *Humanity: Jos Journal of General Studies* 2, (2), 156-165.
- Ordinioha, B. and Brisibe, S. (2009). Experiences and attitudes of young men towards abortion in a semi-urban community in Rivers State, Nigeria, *Port Harcourt Medical Journal* 3 (2):160-166.
- Rogers, E. and Shoemaker, F. (1971), *Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, (2nd Edition), New York: The Free Press.
- Sternberg, P. (2000), Challenging machismo: promoting sexual and reproductive health with Nicaraguan men, in C. Sweetman (Ed.), *Gender in the 21st Century*, Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Strohl Systems (2009). *The Need for Efficient Communications in Healthcare*, Available at http://www.strohlsystems.com/software/files/Notifind/Notifind_Healthcare.pdf (Accessed May 26, 2009).
- Umar, M.B. and Ogunranti, J. O. (2000). The concept of sexual hygiene, *Humanity: Jos Journal of General Studies* 2, (2), 143-155.
- World Health Organisation (2004). *Key issues in the implementation of programmes for adolescent sexual and reproductive health*, Available at http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/New_Publications/ADH/WHO_FCH_CAH_04.3.pdf (Accessed October 31, 2010)
- UNESCO and UNAIDS (2000), *Migrant populations and HIV/AIDS – the development and implementation of programmes: theory, methodology and practice*, 2, UNAIDS Best Practice – Key Material. Available at http://www.ippfwhr.org/publications/serial_article_e.asp. (Accessed Oct. 31, 2010).

Adolescent Sexuality and Culture: South African Mothers' Perspective

Pilot Mudhovozi

*Department of Psychology
University of Venda, Thohoyandou, South Africa
Email: peemudhovozi@yahoo.com*

Mpho Ramarumo

*Department of Psychology
University of Venda, Thohoyandou, South Africa*

and

Tholene Sodi

University of Limpopo

Abstract

This study explores South African mothers' perspective on adolescent sexuality within their cultural prism. Forty-four (44) mothers were purposefully selected for the study. Data was collected through six focus group discussions. The results indicated that culturally embedded reasons inhibited mothers from effectively imparting knowledge about sexuality to their daughters. Insufficient information, lack of role models and fear of sensitising their daughters to sexuality issues were other inhibitory factors.

Keywords: Adolescent, sexuality, mothers, HIV and AIDS, sexual behaviour, culture.

Introduction

Research in South Africa shows that there is a high level of sexual activity among teenagers and also a high rate of teenage pregnancy, with 30 per cent of 19 year olds having already given birth. Research shows also high HIV and AIDS prevalence rates estimated to be between 23-27 per cent for females aged 15-24 and 8-15 per cent for males of the same age (UNAIDS, 2000). Given these statistics, the questions arise: do teenagers have any form of sex education? How do they learn about sex? According to Nduna, Jama, and Jewkes (2001), parents find it very difficult to talk about issues of sex with their children who, as a result, have little option but to seek information elsewhere, normally from their peers. This also raises another question, especially about mothers who are saddled with the most responsibility in the socialization of their children, the female children in particular: how do they perceive the sexual education of their children? This study addresses these questions and attempts to understand sexual socialization

from a cultural perspective. In the context of a high level of sexual activity and high prevalence of teenage pregnancy mentioned above, it becomes important to examine the cultural factors that may influence the attitudes of mothers in terms of the role they are expected to play as 'sexuality' socializing agents. The key assumption of a cultural framework is that senior family members are supposed to be the socializing agents of appropriate behaviours to the children. Children learn appropriate behaviour and societal expectation at home. One thus expects that mothers should assume the role of imparting sexual knowledge to their daughters so that they will be able to make informed decisions about when to start sexual activities and to take precautions to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS. Generally, research has shown that parents' attitudes to sexuality and sexual communication to their children exert significant influences on the children's attitudes towards sexuality, as well as their initiation and participation in sexual activity, and use of contraceptives (Jaccard, Ditus & Gordon, 1998).

Culture and sexuality education

It has been a practice in African societies for adolescents to be educated about sexuality. This has usually been through initiation schools. Senior members of a family also played an important role in educating youth about sexuality. Therefore, one can argue that there has never been silence on issues of sexuality. Schapera reports the following about the Kgatla society in the 1930s, despite considerable exposure to Christianity, "I was continually struck by the open importance they attached to the sexual aspect. Certain standards of decency must be observed in speech and dress but sexual behaviour is not a topic that must be veiled in deliberate obscurity.... the physical relations between men and women are spoken about freely and with relatively little embarrassment even in mixed company for sex are considered a normal factor in human life... nor is any attempt to keep it a sacred mystery where young people are concerned. The ignorance until recently held to be so desirable in European girls before marriage is never looked for among Kgatla girls. From an early age children are familiar with the nature of copulation and much of their play consist of games with a definitely sexual character" (1949:180) cited in Delius and Glaser (2002).

Similar observation has been made about the Pedi; Petje (cited in Delius & Glaser, 2002), who grew up in the Sekhukhuneland, found that in this ethnic group, parents largely ignore forms of sexual play amongst young children. These children often sleep in the same room with their parents and surely become exposed to watching sexual activities between their parents. Among the Zulu, the onset of puberty is marked by rite of passage. In these societies, the onset of puberty called for attention on how to cope with adolescent sexuality that could easily result in pregnancy (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Youth played pretend marriages wherein they learned about relationships and explored sex, although full sexual intercourse was prohibited between boys and girls.

They were allowed to practice a limited form of intercourse without full penetration. Peers monitored each other's relationships and group leaders regulated limitations. One can also argue that this sexual socialization is found in all South African ethnic groups. The practice can be found also in other parts of Africa. In parts of East and Central Africa, traditional rituals of initiation prepared young people for their adult role, including education on the responsibilities of sex, marriage and child-bearing. Because sexuality contributed to social cohesion, communities developed 'rules' concerning the expression of sexuality as well as mechanisms for controlling sexual behaviour. Because sexual behaviour has the potential to both cause harm, infection for example, as well as good, communities developed codes of conduct relating to when, where and with whom sexual relationships might take place. These principles were communicated to young people through initiation ceremonies (Fuglesang, 1997). In Tanzania, for example, initiation rites for girls were led by a ceremonial leader or 'Somo', an older woman recognized as knowledgeable and experienced in child-bearing and rearing. She advised young women from puberty throughout married life. Menstruation and the codes of conduct associated with it were explained to young girls, as well as information about pregnancy and ways of preventing conception. Importantly, sex education was contextualized in terms of preparation for adult life (Fuglesang, 1997). However, these rituals have lost their significance and the transition from childhood to adulthood has been complicated by the development of the phase of adolescence, as well as by the decline of traditional sources of authority, such as an extended family (Balmer, Gikundi, Billingsley, Kihuho, Kimani, Wang'ondu & Njoroge, 1997).

This decline has implications. In Zimbabwe, for example, extended family members, including 'tetes' or paternal aunts, are no longer available for advice to young women, and young men lack the guidance they used to receive from village elders, as a consequence of rural to urban migration and urbanization (Runganga and Aggleton, 1998). According to Petchesky and Judd (1998), parents now seem reluctant to talk to young people about sex and this possibly happens as a result of the fear to encourage sexual activity. Mothers usually withhold important information about sexuality and reproduction from their daughters and instead impart messages of danger, fear and shame. When parents talk about sexuality it is often limited to warnings about associated danger and the importance of preserving honour by maintaining virginity.

Many adults have difficulty acknowledging adolescents as sexual beings and, therefore, adolescent sexuality is viewed as something that needs to be controlled. This seems to apply across societies and cultures worldwide. Families and parents tend to deny young people information about sex and reproduction. For example in India and Nicaragua, parents and children report that they do not talk to each other about sex (George & Jaswal, 1995; Zelaya, Marin, Garcia, Berglund, Liljestrand & Persson, 1997). Often, parents and family members do this with the belief that they are protecting young people from information that they believe may lead to sexual experimentation. However,

evidence suggests that young people who openly communicate about sexuality with their parents, especially mothers, are less likely to be sexually active or, if girls, become less likely to fall pregnant before marriage (Gupta, Weiss & Mane, 1996).

Adolescents' sexual behaviours

In many of these countries, the pattern of sexual activity seems to be similar; the majority of young people are sexually active by the age of twenty and premarital sex is common among those aged 15-24. It has been estimated that half of all HIV and AIDS infections worldwide have occurred among those aged under 25 years (WHO, 1995). Many adolescents are infected with HIV because of physiological vulnerability, peer pressure, their tendency to engage in risk taking behaviour, inability to negotiate safer sex practices and difficulties in accessing health information and services (SAHR, 2000). Adolescents' knowledge on reproductive function and sexuality is generally poor.

A great number of youth are at risk with respect to HIV and AIDS. Sexual behaviour in the early adolescents group is said to be due to early maturation, its accompanying sexual feelings, more permissible societal attitudes and the mass media messages (Durkin, 1995). Therefore, it is important for children to obtain information about sexuality before they reach adolescence. Current intervention programs target preadolescents because, by waiting until adolescence, some of the target population would have been involved in negative risk-taking behaviours, thereby decreasing any effort to curb teenage pregnancy. Children and adolescent need accurate and comprehensive education about sexuality to practice healthy sexual behaviours as adults. Early, exploitative or risky sexual activity may lead to health and social problems such as unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS. This study focused on mothers and sought to investigate the influence of culture in mothers' expected role of teaching sexual issues to their adolescent daughters.

Method

Research Design

The qualitative method was used researchers used because it offers richly descriptive reports of individuals' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings, as well as the meanings and interpretations given to events and experiences (Holloway, 1997; Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experiences of the participating mothers, and as such it was a method best suited to pick up the differences in attitudes of mothers towards discussing sexuality issues with their daughters.

Participants and Setting

A purposefully selected sample of forty-four (44) mothers (mean age = 44.1 years; SD = 4.8; age range = 35 to 54 years) who have adolescent daughters aged between 12 and 19 years. The participants were drawn from VhaVenda ethnic group, hence they had similar cultural background. Their level of education ranged from high school (45%) to tertiary (55%). They were grouped according to their age groups and level of education.

Instrument

There were six focus groups; each has between six and eight women who have adolescent children. The focus groups provided a good context to explore the expected role of the mothers in imparting knowledge about sexuality to their daughters. It is a well-tested method of interview. Due to the nature and the sensitivity of the study, we felt that the participants would feel intimidated by face-to-face interview. Asking them directly how they feel about their expected role in imparting sexual knowledge to their adolescence may be intimidating for them since they might feel challenged. The other reason is that sexuality is a sensitive issue so the rationale for using group interview was to ease the sensitivity by the presence of other people. The fact that several mothers were present at the same time in a room definitely eased some of those concerns.

In sum, we believe that traditional methodologies were not deemed appropriate for this study. The focus group limited the imposition of our ideas and beliefs onto the mothers and amplified their power while also diminishing our influence on the conversations. It allowed us to observe the interaction among the participants and witness how they were building on each other's words, ideas and feelings.

Ethical Issues

The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, so also was the role that the participants were expected to play; the procedures of the meetings were also explained to the participants. The rights of the participants as volunteers were spelt to them. They were given an opportunity to ask questions around their participation or the study. An Informed Consent form was signed by participants to indicate their agreement to participate in the study and that a tape record may be used. The researcher facilitated the groups following the steps proposed by Krueger (1994), namely:

- The researcher introduced herself and welcomed the participants;
- Group members introduced themselves and told a few things about themselves;

- An overview of the topic was given;
- Ground rules were established;
- Uncertainties or concerns from participants were checked;
- Questions were asked; and
- The researcher summarized the proceedings and closed.

Open-ended questions asked during the focus group centered on the following:

- Opinions held about imparting sexual knowledge to adolescents, and the reasons why mothers think their daughter should obtain information about sexuality.
- Feelings about expected role of imparting sexual knowledge to daughters.
- Difficulty surrounding discussion of sexuality topics, and possible solutions to engage in order to make the discussions easier.
- Thoughts around community perceptions of parents who talk to their daughters openly about sex.
- Feelings about being probed by daughters to talk about sex.
- Thoughts around the influence of cultural expectations on the view of a child as a sexual person.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, the process of data analysis starts during data collection. As data collection went on, analysis of it simultaneously took place. This involved looking at frequently recurring pattern of responses and themes. After the data were collected, the researcher looked at all the protocols and categorized common themes as they appeared. There were major themes and themes that developed as the process of analysis was proceeding.

Transcribed interviews were translated from Venda to English and back, for validation purposes by an external postgraduate student. The data were analyzed using the following phases:

Phase 1: Interpretation of the transcript

The researcher read the protocols several times to get an understanding of the participants' general expression and language. When reading the protocols repeatedly, the question emerged namely, what are these people saying? Responses were then coded.

Phase 2: Logbook

The logbook was used to record all responses according to the topic of interest. Every response was written under specific codes for easy development of themes for later use in the interpretation. The themes were developed by thematic analysis of the responses. After developing the themes, they were conceptualized from English phrases into psychological themes.

Phase 3: Writing the results

The results were written from the logbook, developed themes and also from the notes that were taken while reading the transcripts as a whole. Only responses that were considered important were included in the write up. The emerged themes were discussed as major themes when writing of results of the study.

Phase 4: Interpretation

During this phase of analysis, the researcher specifically looked at the problem that was studied and the results of the focus group. What came up led to the writing of the report and recommendations were made.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive data

Table 1. Demographic details

Group number	Mothers' age	Daughters' age	Residential area	Home Language	Highest level of education	Marital status
1	40-48	12 -19	Makwarela	Tshivenda	Tertiary	Married
2	38-45	12 -19	Vondwe	Tshivenda	Secondary	Married
3	40-48	12 -19	Dzimauli	Tshivenda	Tertiary	Married
4	35-40	12 -17	Tshixwadza	Tshivenda	Tertiary	Married
5	46-52	12-19	Shayandima	Tshivenda	Secondary	Married
6	48-54	12 -19	Thohoyandou	Tshivenda	Secondary	Married

Table 1 shows that the sample consisted of forty-four (44) mothers whose ages ranged between 35-45 years (34%), 40-48 years (36%) and 46-54 years (30%). Their mean age was 44 (SD: 4.8). Participants in the present study shared the same level of education, background and socio-economic status. This was done for the purposes of making the participants comfortable with each other. All the mothers who participated in the study had adolescent daughters aged between 12-19 years.

Participants were included in the sample because they were both Venda speaking and mothers with adolescent daughters between the ages of 12-19. The sample consisted of 45 percent of mothers who had high school qualification and 55 percent who had tertiary education. Below are tables on the demographic details of the participants.

Table 2. Mothers' expressed attitudes towards the use of contraceptives

Responses	Frequency of responses	Frequency of responses in Percentages
Discourage contraceptive use	25	57
Encourage provision of information about contraceptives	28	64
Encourage contraceptive use with a sexual active child	4	9
Encouraging contraceptive use is seen as a bad behaviour	35	80
Discourage providing information about contraceptives	10	23

The most important issue discussed was the belief that encouraging contraceptive use had bad influence on children (80%). However, 64% of the participants were in favour of providing information about contraception. Fifty-seven percent of participants reported that it discourages contraceptive use among adolescents. Interestingly, 23%, which consisted of mothers with high school education only, discouraged providing information about contraception. Only 9% of the participants (tertiary education) reported that it would encourage a child who was sexually active to use contraceptives.

Table 3. Mothers’ perceptions of how the community views sexuality communication

Responses	Frequency of responses	Frequency of responses in percentages
Seen as a taboo ‘muila’	13	30
Wish for something bad to happen	19	43
Jealous because they cannot talk about it	11	25
Seen as irresponsible	4	9
Seen as inciting the child with sexual ideas	18	41
Some no longer see it as a taboo	10	23
See it as a bad influence	11	25
Community criticizes mothers who talk	10	23
Some do not want to change their negative attitudes	4	9
Think it encourages disrespect	7	16

Table 3 shows that society most prominently perceived sexuality communication as inciting a child with sexual ideas and also as a taboo. Forty three percent of the participants reported that society might wish for something bad to happen, with 25% saying that the society is jealous. Participants were hopeful that the society was changing, with 23% saying that society no longer sees communication about sexuality as taboo.

Table 4. Views on adolescent sexuality

Responses	Total no of responses	Frequency of responses in percentages
Acknowledge but with a clear indication of need for abstinence	20	45
Encourage sex only after marriage	27	61
Difficulty in encouraging sexuality	19	23
Difficulty acknowledging sexuality in adolescents	31	70

Table 4 shows that the majority (70%) of the participants in this study reported difficulty in acknowledging that its daughters were involved in sexual activity. Sixty one percent reported that it would rather encourage its daughters to wait until they were married. Forty five percent said it acknowledged that its daughters were involved in sexual activity but there was clear indication of the need for abstinence. Twenty three percent reported difficulty in encouraging sexual activity.

Major themes that emerged from the study

The thematic analysis of all the protocols done revealed the following themes;

Parental concerns, another theme that emerged, was about comfort level in communicating about sexuality, where some participants felt comfortable and others not. Participants seemed to possess conservative attitudes towards contraceptive use among young people.

Participants' perceptions on societal expectations are double bound in that on one hand they expected parents to socialize their children and on the other they criticized parents who communicate openly about sexuality.

Another theme was that participants denied adolescent sexuality as an inevitable phase of development. Additional themes included cultural taboo, lack of role models and insufficient knowledge. The themes will be discussed fully below.

Awareness of reality

Participants in this study appeared to be aware of the harsh realities in their lives as primary socializing agents for their children. They were aware of the generational gap between their daughters and themselves. They were also aware that there is a need for preventive

education, as well as the need to provide information on sexuality before their daughters got involved in sexual issues. The following sub-themes emerged under the present theme:

Generational relevance for the present cultural values

Most participants felt that the generation in which their children live is different from that of theirs in that in their days they could rely on their grandmothers for such education; nowadays children have new value systems calling for a different approach.

'I think it is good these days even though traditionally it was the aunts and the grandmothers who used to talk to the child, I think that the mother should take the responsibility to talk to her child about sexuality issues.'

It also seemed that considerable changes in values has occurred between generations where teenage girls were previously not exposed to sexual material and knowledge as it is presently. Teenagers are these days exposed to sexual material through books, school and media. Such awareness of generational differences made participants acknowledge the difference with a duty-bound attitude to instruct their daughters and to teach them about safer sex behaviour and, where possible, to encourage abstinence. They are reluctant to provide them with information about safer sex behaviour. This aspect will be discussed in the latter parts of the thesis; and

Need for preventive education

The participants also believed that there was need for preventive education as shown in the following quotation:

'I think she should know so that even if she becomes sexually active she would have heard about the consequences.'

'We should be very open to our children about these issues because if we do not tell them they will blame us in the future for having not told them.'

'I think that children should know about sexuality before they become involved in something they do not know about.'

Participants realized that they needed to be proactive in providing information to their daughters. They pointed out the need to talk to their children about the potential dangers of sex before they indulge in self-exploration. Participants pointed out also that they think they should also emphasize abstinence in sexuality communication with their daughters. This was reflected in the following manner:

'I think we have to tell them, especially these days because of HIV/AIDS. We have to tell them to abstain for their own good. We should tell them that sexual intercourse is not good for them and they should abstain.'

'I also told her that she should not get involved in sexual activities because she would fall pregnant.'

'I also think that whatever parents tell their children about sexuality should focus on abstinence.'

Parental concerns

The results of this study indicate that mothers have several concerns when it comes to their daughters and sexual knowledge. Most participants seemed to be concerned about the effect of peer group on their daughters. As mentioned above, the participants recognize the power of peer pressure in influencing the sexual behaviour of the adolescents. Mothers seem concerned that peer group may negatively influence their daughters by providing information that is contrary to what they would like their daughters to know. They were also concerned that other people in their communities might influence their daughters to engage in sexual activities only because those people wish for something bad to happen to their daughters.

The other concern was that the society does not seem to understand that children need to be provided with information about sexuality. The society does not support mothers who are able to talk to their daughters about such sensitive issues. The participants were also concerned that the community criticizes mothers who talk to their daughters about sexuality. These concerns may have a particular effect on sexual communication at home because sometimes it might lead to confusion. A mother might not know what is right and wrong when it comes to communicating about sexuality. This is also linked to the fact that Africans traditionally led a communal life wherein inputs of other people matter a great deal.

Conservative attitudes toward contraception

In all the focus groups, participants appeared to have conservative attitudes towards contraceptive use among adolescents. They strongly maintained that they were against the use of contraceptives by this age group. They also reported that they discouraged their daughters from using contraceptives. However, most of them believed that these adolescents ought to be provided with the information about contraceptives even though others felt that they could not even start talking about them, let alone suggest it to their daughters. The following responses attest to that:

'I will never encourage her to use contraceptives because they are not good especially for young people.'

'I would discourage her to even think about using contraceptives and I will tell her that they are bad.'

'I think I can tell her although not really implying that she should go and use contraceptives...'

'I will never encourage my child to use contraceptives...'

'If she wants to use contraceptives, she can use them but it would be without my approval and my knowledge because if she asked me I will not allow it.'

'We use those opportunities to tell them that contraceptives are not for young people and that they should just abstain.'

'We cannot encourage them to use those things, we just discourage the thought of using them...And by suggesting it to her I am bewitching my own child.'

Even though the prevailing attitude could be classified as being conservative, there were other participants who seemed to have liberal attitudes with regard to providing information about contraception. Although they discouraged the use of contraceptives, most of them believed that they should tell their children about the advantages and the disadvantages of contraception. Most of them emphasized that they would rather focus on discouraging the use of contraceptives. Those with conservative attitudes considered it bad behaviour to encourage contraceptive use and did not even want to suggest it. They saw it as having a bad influence on the child and even regarded the whole exercise as being like 'bewitching your own children.' There was also a position that a child might blame 'you' as a mother in the future if she was unable to conceive'. There was a general belief that mothers should provide adolescents with the information but should not suggest the use of contraceptives.

Mothers' perceptions of societal expectation on sexual communication

Participants seemed to think that some communities still perceived sexual communication as taboo and they generally exhibited negative attitudes towards mothers who talked to their daughter about sexual issues. However, there was an indication that things were changing and that some people no longer perceive it as taboo. Participants also mentioned that some communities criticized and perceived such communication as bad influence and incitement to the child to get involved in sexual activities. Others thought that such communication influences children to have sex and encourages disrespect. The following extracts attest to the perceptions above:

'There are some people who will look at you somehow and think that you are encouraging your daughter to go and experiment'

'Some communities do not understand because they cannot do it and they are like jealous that you are able to talk to your daughter about sexual issues.'

'Some might think that you are strange and this is because they think it is a taboo to talk to your own daughter about sexuality...'

'Sometimes you find that they might think that as a mother you are inciting your daughter to go and experiment with those things that are telling her...'

'There are some people who are always looking at you and wishing that something goes wrong so that they will laugh at you.'

However, there are other communities that do not see it as a taboo anymore, that is, they are changing their general attitude.

Denial of adolescent sexuality as an inevitable phase of development

It appears that participants acknowledged that their daughters are sexual beings but that they found it difficult to condone sexual activity before marriage. They mentioned that even though they understood that daughters are sexual people with sexual ideas, feelings and fantasies, they should wait until they were married to explore those ideas and feelings. They maintained that they found it very difficult to encourage sexual activity even if the adolescent appeared physically mature. However, there were some participants who found it difficult to acknowledge that their daughters were sexual beings. They put it this way:

'Even though I acknowledge that my daughter is a sexual being I will never encourage her to get involved in sexual activities. I think she will always be a child who should abstain from sexual activities'

'Sometimes you can understand that the child might get a boyfriend at university and they may want to try it but it is not something that you will encourage and like but by then you will not be able to tell her what to do and what not to do. Then she will be old enough to make her own decisions but you will still guide her'

'We do acknowledge that culturally teenagers were not seen as sexual beings because soon after their first menstruation they got married, but these days they delay marriage because they have to go to school and they become sexually active before they got married. There is a stage where as a mother you will acknowledge that she is now old enough to have sex but do not encourage it'

'I think that as Vendas we find it difficult to acknowledge that children should get involved in sexual activities'

'It is a difficult thing to do as a mother, you wish that your daughter would remain virgin until she got married and you will always emphasize that she should abstain. You cannot encourage her to have sex'

Cultural taboo

Cultural issues that emerged during those discussions were that, because of culture and the way the participants were socialized, they still found sexuality a difficult topic to discuss. This was found to be due to their religion. They also found it very difficult to recommend the use of contraceptives to their daughters, let alone to talk about safer sex practice.

'In our culture, the child is encouraged to grow and maybe go to school before she can get involved in such activities. We like a child to grow and become mature before she gets married and a child remains a child until she gets married, she is not given that freedom to be on her own before she gets married.'

They also mentioned that they focused on teaching their daughters about the virtues of virginity and that they should forget about sexual activities until they were married. They believed that they should concentrate on telling their daughters to remain virgins until marriage because that will secure their husbands and make them proud of themselves. This has been a cultural practice among Africans, and especially the Vendas, i.e. children should be taught about the importance of remaining virgin.

The participants seemed to have understood that even if they respected their cultural standards, some things forfeited cultural consistency with present demands. They acknowledged that the times have changed and, consequently making, mothers solely responsible for talking to daughters about sexual issues.

Previously discussed research indicated that it was difficult for mothers to talk about sexuality with their daughters because mothers thought that daughters would think that they are prying or that they talked too much (Hollander, 2000). In this study, mothers seemed to have a concern that their daughters sometimes think they talked too much when alluding to issues of sexuality but this did not discourage the mothers.

Inadequate levels of competence resulting in cultural role models

The other issue that emerged was that participants did not feel completely comfortable to talk to their daughters about sexuality because they lacked role models, as they themselves were not told about sexuality when they grew up. The following quotes attest to the above statement:

‘It is difficult because we do not know how to talk to them and what to tell them’

‘The problem is that we ourselves were not told anything about sexuality when we grew up’

The participants thought that it was important to talk to their daughters about sexuality even though they were not told about it themselves. Research reflects that some parents’ lack of role models was reason enough for them not to talk to their daughters about sexuality issues (Hollander, 2000). Although the participants in this study indicated lack of role models in talking to their children about sexuality, it should be noted that there are some cultural practices among other ethnic groups, such as among the Zulu ethnic group, wherein some rituals are performed to welcome girls into adulthood. This ceremony is called ‘*Umemulo*’ and it is a symbolic gesture to signal to the young girl that now she has come of age and she can start courting. During this ceremony the lady goes through physiological, social and moral training. Even though participants did not know how much information to tell their daughters, they still took the responsibility on themselves to talk to their daughters about consequences of sexual activities at a young age.

Insufficient knowledge

Insufficient knowledge about sexuality on the part of the mother was another issue that was raised in the group discussions. Most participants were not knowledgeable about what information they should share with their daughters. This insufficient knowledge could be attributed to lack of role models on the part of the mothers. It could also be attributed to the fact that most parents were not comfortable about sexuality and that they might not try to find out more about sexuality than the myths that they held about sexuality. This makes the task of educating their daughters about sex daunting and consequently leads to the difficulty that most participants reported.

It was also found that participants have negative attitudes toward contraceptive use by their daughters. They seemed to fear that talking to their children about birth control might incite them towards premature use of birth control and sexual activity. This is consistent with Klein and Gordon (1992), who maintained that the inconsistency and incongruity that exist between parents acknowledgement of the importance of sexuality education for their children and what they practice, emanate from fear that talking about sexuality or teaching about AIDS or birth control might give their children ideas. There is also a belief by parents that by withholding information on sexuality they will protect young people who may otherwise indulge in premature sexual experimentation. Most participants from this study did not appear to take pre-emptive action to assist young people to obtain contraceptives when they become sexually active. For instance, one of the mothers said:

'I will never encourage my child to use contraceptives but if she has a child I can talk to her about using them because she would have had a child by then.'

This is a demonstration of an absurdity where mothers would rather talk about contraceptives after their daughters had already fallen into the trap to have children as a result of lack of guidance. This attitude may be perpetrated by the extent to which children or fertility is valued in the African culture where the use of contraceptives might be feared to have consequences of infertility (Garenne, Tollman, Kahn, Collins and Nwoga, 2001).

When asked if they acknowledge that their daughters were sexual beings some participants responded negatively. However, there were others who seemed to acknowledge that their children were sexual persons even though it was with clear indication of the discouragement of sexual activity. According to Jaccard and Dittus, (1991), most parents do not acknowledge that their daughters are biologically ready to have sex with need for basic information on safer sex and therefore view their children as being sexually immature.

Mothers seem not to be prepared to encourage sexual activities. One participant said:

Even if my daughter were 21 years old, I do not think that I would ever encourage her to go and have sex, to me she will always be a child and in my opinion children are not supposed to have sex before they are married.

Adults discourage young people from becoming sexually active by upholding virtues of virginity and by discouraging the use of contraceptives (Ponton, 2001). In the present study the findings revealed that participants strongly emphasized abstinence until marriage and undoubtedly encouraging virginity. According to Rosenthal and Feldman, (1999), most parents feel that it is appropriate for them to instruct young people to abstain from sexual activities.

During the focus group discussions, participants maintained that sometimes the society thinks that by providing sexuality information might lead to incitement of the youth with sexual ideas and subsequent experimentation. This finding is consistent with findings by Friedman (1993) who maintained that some adults believed that young people are by their nature sexually promiscuous and by providing young people with sexual knowledge they will become sexually active.

It became apparent that seeing sexual matters as taboo by some mothers was predominant among older parents and who had teenagers as their last born daughters. They reported that their difficulty to see things differently as being the result of their own upbringing. They seemed to believe that by talking to their daughters about sexual matters they might be giving them ideas and that their daughters would probably laugh at them or do not take them seriously. The other issue that seemed to be of vital concern was that some mothers think that by talking to their daughters about sexuality, their daughters would lose respect for them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, mothers in this study seem to have difficulties in talking about sexuality issues with their teenage daughters. This is so because they feel they are not well prepared themselves to handle these matters due to lack of role models, lack of information and also their own understanding of sexual behaviour. The other prominent factor was the fear of inciting them with sexual ideas. We would like to comment further on educational programme that such efforts have failed to equip youth with the requisite information and skills necessary to handle complex developmental tasks at a younger age, leaving youth ill prepared and vulnerable to the negative consequence of sexual behaviour (Croft & Asmussen, 1992). Adolescents possess some knowledge of HIV/AIDS and sexuality, but misinformation abounds.

Hutchinson (2002) maintained that although all sexually active persons are at some risk for negative sexual outcomes or sexual risk, adolescents are, as a group at great risk.

Recent studies have challenged popular beliefs that parents have no influence over the sexual behaviour of the adolescent children. Some studies (Jaccard, Dittus & Gordon, 1998) found that parents' sexual values and sexual communication with their children exert significant influences on adolescents' attitudes toward sexuality, their initiation and participation in sexual activity and their use of condoms and contraceptives.

References

- Aggleton, P. and Rivers, K. (1998). 'Behavioural interventions for adolescents' in L. Gibney, R. DiClemente and S. Vermund (Eds.) *Preventing HIV infection in developing countries*. New York: Plenum publishers.
- Aggleton, P. and Warwick, I. (1997). 'Young people, sexuality, HIV and AIDS education'. In L. Sherr (Ed.) *AIDS and adolescents*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Harwood Academic publishers.
- Alan Guttmacher Institute (1994). *Sex and American teenagers*. New York, Author.
- Balmer, D.H., Gikundi, E., Billingsley, M.C., Kihuho, F.G., Kimani, M., Wang'ondy, J. & Njoroge, H. (1997). Adolescent knowledge, values and coping strategies: implications for health in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of adolescent health*, 21, 33- 38
- Bang, R. A., Bang, A. T., Baitule, M. Choudhary, Y., Sarmukaddam, S. and Tale, O. (1989). High prevalence of gynaecological diseases in rural Indian women. *Lancet*, 1(8629), 8-88.
- Blanche, M.S. and Durrheim, K. (1999). *Research in practice applied methods for social science*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Brown, J.D. and Keller, S.N. (2000). Can the mass media be healthy sex educators. *Family planning perspectives*, 32(5), 255-256.
- Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research design qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Croft, C.A. and Asmussen, L. (1992). Perceptions of mothers, youth and educators: a path toward détente regarding sexuality education. *Family relation*, 41(4), 452-459
- Delius, P. and Glaser, C. (2002). Sexual socialization in South Africa: a historical perspective. *African studies*, 61(1), 28-54.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (1998). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. London: Sage Publications.
- De Vos, A.S. (Ed) (1998). *Research at grass roots: a prime for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Durkin, K. (1995). *Developmental social psychology: from infancy to old age*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Friedman, H.L. (1993). Overcoming obstacles to good adolescent health. *Network*, 14(2), 4-5.

- Fuglesang, M. (1997). Lessons for life—past and present modes of sexuality education in Tanzania society. *Social science and medicine*, 44(8), 1245-1254.
- Garenne, M., Tollman, S., Kahn, K., Collins, T. and Nwoga, S. (2001). Understanding marital and premarital fertility in rural South Africa. *Journal of Southern African studies*, 27 (2), 277-291
- George, A. and Jaswal, S. (1995). 'Understanding sexuality: ethnographic study of poor women in Bombay'. Women and AIDS research report no 12. Washington DC: International Center for Research on Women. Gupta, G. R., Weiss, E. and Mane, P. (1996). Talking about sex: a prerequisite for AIDS prevention. In L.D. Long and E.M. Ankrah (Eds.). *Women's experiences: an international perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hoffman, N. D. and Futterman, M. D. (1996). Youth and HIV/AIDS in J. Mann and D. Tarantola (Eds.). *AIDS in the world II: Global dimensions, social roots and responses*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hollander, D. (2000). Has there been a talk about sex? Teenagers and their mothers often disagree. *Family planning perspective*, 32(4), 199-202.
- Holloway, I. (1997). *Basic concepts for qualitative research*. London: Blackwell science.
- Huberman, B. K. (2003). Age appropriate sexuality education: what to tell your children and when with Barbara Huberman. *Live events transcript archive @ WebMD Health*.
- Hutchinson, M.K. (2002). The influence of sexual risk communication between parents and daughters on sexual risk behaviour. *Family relations*, 51(2), 238-247.
- Jaccard, J., Dittus, P.J., and Gordon, V.V. (1998). Parents adolescents congruency in reports of adolescence sexual behaviour and in communications about sexual behaviour. *Child Development*, 69 (1), 247-261.
- Jaccard, J. and Dittus, P.J. 1991). *Parent-teen communication: toward the prevention of unintended pregnancies*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Klein, M., and Gordon, S. (1992). Sex education. In C. E. Walker and M. C. Roberts (Eds.), *Handbook of clinical psychology* (2nd ed., 933-949). New York: Wiley.
- Krueger, R.A. (1994). *Focus groups: a practical guide to applied research* (2nd Ed). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Lovelife. (2002). Lovelife report on the effectiveness of sex education in South Africa. Johannesburg.
- Malinowski, B. (1932). *The sexual lives of savages in North-Western Melanisia*. London: Routledge.
- Mashego, T. A. B. (2000). Perceptions of father-daughter incest in African families with special reference to the mothers' role: A cultural contextualization for intervention. *Unpublished PhD thesis*. University of the North, South Africa.
- Nduna, M., Jama, N. and Jewkes, R. (2001). "Stepping stones: preliminary findings". *Paper presented at AIDS in context conference*. Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand,

- Patton, M. Q. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. London: SAGE.
- Petchesky, R. P. and Judd, K. (Eds.) (1998). *Negotiating reproductive rights: women's perspectives across countries and cultures*. New York: Zed Books
- Ponton, L. (2001). The sex lives of teenagers: revealing the secret world of adolescent boys and girls. *Child and adolescent behaviour letter*: The Brown University.
- Rafferty, Y., and Radosh, A. (1997). Attitudes about AIDS education and condom availability among parents of high school students in New York City: A focus group approach. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 9(1), 14-30.
- Rosenthal, D.A. and Feldman, S.S. (1999). The importance of importance: adolescents' perceptions of parental communication about sexuality. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 835-851.
- Runganga, A. O. Aggleton, P. (1998). Migration, the family and the transformation of a sexual culture. *Sexualities*, 1(1), 63-81.
- SAHR. (2000). *National Youth Policy*. Reproductive Health Research Unit.
- SEICUS (2001). Issues answers: facts sheet on sexuality education. *SEICUS Report*, 29
- UNAIDS (2000). *Report of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic*. Geneva, Switzerland.
- Vasconcelos, A., Neto, A., Valenca, A., Braga, C., Pacheco, M., Dantas, S., Simonetti, V. and Garcia, V. (1993). Sexuality and AIDS prevention among adolescents from low-income communities in Recife, Brazil. *Women and AIDS research program reports-in-brief*. Washington DC: International center for research on women.
- World Health Organization (1995). *Women and AIDS: an agenda for action*. Geneva: Author.
- Zelaya, E., Marin, F.M., Garcia, J. Berglund, S., Liljestrand, J. and Persson, L.A. (1997). Gender and social differences in adolescent sexuality and reproduction in Nicaragua. *Journal of adolescent health*, 21, 39-46.